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**COLLECTED WORKS**

THE WORKS OF JOHN WESLEY  
VOLUME 8  
ADDRESSES, ESSAYS, LETTERS  
*by John Wesley*

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Publishers Notes

THE WORKS  
OF  
JOHN WESLEY

THIRD EDITION

*complete and unabridged*

1878 EDITION

VOLUME 8

ADDRESSES, ESSAYS, LETTERS

AN

# EARNEST APPEAL

TO

## MEN OF REASON AND RELIGION.

*Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth!*  
~~John~~ John 7:51.

1. **ALTHOUGH** it is with us a “very small thing to be judged of you or of man’s judgment,” seeing we know God will “make our innocency as clear as the light, and our just dealing as the noon day;” yet are we ready to give any that are willing to hear a plain account, both of our principles and actions; as having “renounced the hidden things of shame, and desiring nothing more. “than by manifestation of the truth to commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”
2. We see (and who does not?) the numberless follies and miseries of our fellow-creatures. We see, on every side, either men of no religion at all, or men of a lifeless, formal religion. We are grieved at the sight; and should greatly rejoice, if by any means we might convince some that there is a better religion to be attained, — a religion worthy of God that gave it. And this we conceive to be no other than love; the love of God and of all mankind; the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved *us*, as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth, as our own soul.
3. This love we believe to be the medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness going hand in hand. There is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering, the whole image of God; and at the same time a peace that passeth all understanding, and joy unspeakable and full of glory.

*Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind;  
Each prayer accepted, and each wish resign'd;  
Desires composed, affections ever even,  
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heaven.*

4. This religion we long to see established in the world, a religion of love, and joy, and peace, having its seat in the inmost soul, but ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing forth, not only in all innocence, (for love worketh no ill to his neighbor,) but likewise in every kind of beneficence, spreading virtue and happiness all around it.
5. This religion have we been following after for many years, as many know, if they would testify: But all this time, seeking wisdom, we found it not; we were spending our strength in vain. And being now under full conviction of this, we declare it to all mankind; for we desire not that others should wander out of the way as we have done before them: But rather that they may profit by our loss, that they may go (though we did not, having then no man to guide us) the straight way to the religion of love, even by faith.
6. Now, faith (supposing the Scripture to be of God) is, “the demonstrative evidence of things unseen,” the supernatural evidence of things invisible, not perceivable by eyes of flesh, or by any of our natural senses or faculties. Faith is that divine evidence whereby the spiritual man discerneth God, and the things of God. It is with regard to the spiritual world, what sense is with regard to the natural. It is the spiritual sensation of every soul that is born of God.
7. Perhaps you have not considered it in this view. I will, then, explain it a little further. Faith, according to the scriptural account, is the eye of the newborn soul. Hereby every true believer in God “seeth him who is invisible.” Hereby (in a more particular manner, since life and immortality have been brought to light by the gospel) he “seeth the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;” and “beholdeth what manner of love it is which the Father hath bestowed upon us that we,” who are born of the Spirit, “should be called the sons of God.”

It is the ear of the soul, whereby a sinner “hears the voice of the Son of God, and lives;” even that voice which alone wakes the dead, “Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.”

It is (if I may be allowed the expression) the palate of the soul; for hereby a believer “tastes the good word, and the powers of the world to come;” and “hereby he both tastes and sees that God is gracious,” yea, “and merciful to him a sinner.”

It is the feeling of the soul, whereby a believer perceives, through the “power of the Highest overshadowing him,” both the existence and the presence of Him in whom “he lives, moves, and has his being;” and indeed the whole invisible world, the entire system of things eternal. And hereby, in particular, he feels “the love of God shed abroad in his heart.”

**8.** By this faith we are saved from all uneasiness of mind, from the anguish of a wounded spirit, from discontent, from fear and sorrow of heart, and from that inexpressible listlessness and weariness, both of the world and of ourselves, which we had so helplessly labored under for many years; especially when we were out of the hurry of the world, and sunk into calm reflection. In this we find that love of God, and of all mankind, which we had elsewhere sought in vain. This we know and feel, and therefore cannot but declare, saves every one that partakes of it, both from sin and misery, from every unhappy and every unholy temper.

*Soft peace she brings, wherever she arrives;  
She builds our quiet, as she forms our lives;  
Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,  
And opens in each breast a little heaven.*

**9.** If you ask, “Why then have not all men this faith? all, at least, who conceive it to be so happy a thing? Why do they not believe immediately?”

We answer, (on the Scripture hypothesis,) “It is the gift of God.” No man is able to work it in himself. It is a work of omnipotence. It requires no less power thus to quicken a dead soul, than to raise a body that lies in the grave. It is a new creation and none can create a soul anew, but He who at first created the heavens and the earth.

**10.** May not your own experience teach you this? Can you give yourself this faith? Is it now in your power to see, or hear, or taste, or feel God? Have you already, or can you raise in yourself, any perception of God, or of an invisible world? I suppose you do not deny that there is an invisible

world; you will not charge it in poor old Hesiod to Christian prejudice of education, when he says, in those well-known words,

*“Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth  
Unseen, whether we wake, or if we sleep.”*

Now, is there any power in your soul whereby you discern either these, or Him that created them? Or, can all your wisdom and strength open an intercourse between yourself and the world of spirits? Is it in your power to burst the veil that is on your heart, and let in the light of eternity? You know it is not. You not only do not, but cannot, by your own strength, thus believe. The more you labor so to do, the more you will be convinced “it is the gift of God.”

**11.** It is the free gift of God, which he bestows, not on those who are worthy of his favor, not on such as are previously holy, and so fit to be crowned with all the blessings of his goodness; but on the ungodly and unholy; on those who till that hour were fit only for everlasting destruction; those in whom was no good thing, and whose only plea was, “God be merciful to me, a sinner!” No merit, no goodness in man precedes the forgiving love of God. His pardoning mercy supposes nothing in us but a sense of mere sin and misery; and to all who see, and feel, and own their wants, and their utter inability to remove them, God freely gives faith, for the sake of Him in whom he is always “well pleased.”

**12.** This is a short, rude sketch of the doctrine we teach. These are our fundamental principles; and we spend our lives in confirming others herein, and in a behavior suitable to them.

Now, if you are a reasonable man, although you do not believe the Christian system to be of God, lay your hand upon your breast, and calmly consider what it is that you can here condemn? What evil have we done to *you*, that you should join the common cry against us? Why should *you* say, “Away with such fellows from the earth; it is not fit that they should live?”

**13.** It is true, your judgment does not fall in with ours. We believe the Scripture to be of God. This you do not believe. And how do you defend yourselves against them who urge you with the guilt of unbelief? Do you not say, “Every man *must* judge according to the light he has,” and that “if

he be true to this, he ought not to be condemned?" Keep then to this, and turn the tables. *Must* not *we* also judge according to the light we have? You can in nowise condemn us without involving yourselves in the same condemnation. According to the light *we* have, we cannot but believe the Scripture is of God; and while we believe this, we dare not turn aside from it, to the right hand or to the left.

**14.** Let us consider this point a little farther. You yourself believe there is a God. You have the witness of this in your own breast. Perhaps sometimes you tremble before him. You believe there is such a thing as right and wrong; that there is a difference between moral good and evil. Of consequence you must allow, there is such a thing as conscience: I mean, that every person, capable of reflection, is conscious to himself, when he looks back on anything he has done, whether it be good or evil. You must likewise allow, that every man is to be guided by his own conscience, not another's. Thus far, doubtless, you may go, without any danger of being a volunteer in faith.

**15.** Now then, be consistent with yourself. If there be a God, who, being just and good, (attributes inseparable from the very idea of God,) is "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," ought we not to do whatever we believe will be acceptable to so good a Master? Observe: If we believe, if we are fully persuaded of this in our mind, ought we not thus to seek him, and that with all diligence? Else, how should we expect any reward at his hands?

**16.** Again: Ought we not to do what we believe is morally good, and to abstain from what we judge is evil? By good I mean, conducive to the good of mankind, tending to advance peace and goodwill among men, promotive of the happiness of our fellow-creatures; and by evil, what is contrary thereto. Then surely you cannot condemn our endeavoring, after our power, to make mankind happy; (I now speak only with regard to the present world;) our striving, as we can, to lessen their sorrows, and to teach them, in whatsoever state they are, therewith to be content.

**17.** Yet again: are we to be guided by our own conscience, or by that of other men? You surely will not say that any man's conscience can preclude mine. You, at least, will not plead for robbing us of what you so strongly claim for yourselves: I mean, the right of private judgment, which

is indeed unalienable from reasonable creatures. You well know, that, unless we faithfully follow the dictates of our own mind, we cannot have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man.

**18.** Upon your own principles, therefore, you must allow us to be, at least, innocent. Do you find any difficulty in this? You speak much of prepossession and prejudice; beware you are not entangled therein yourselves! Are you not prejudiced against us, because we believe and strenuously defend that system of doctrines which you oppose? Are you not enemies to us, because you take it for granted we are so to you? Nay, God forbid! I once saw one, who, from a plentiful fortune, was reduced to the lowest extremity. He was lying on a sickbed, in violent pain, without even convenient food, or one friend to comfort him: So that when his merciful landlord, to complete all, sent one to take his bed from under him, I was not surprised at his attempt to put an end to so miserable a life. Now, when I saw that poor man weltering in his blood, could I be angry at him? Surely, no. No more can I at you. I can no more hate than I can envy you. I can only lift up my heart to God for you, (as I did then for him,) and, with silent tears, beseech the Father of Mercies, that he would look on you in your blood, and say unto you, “Live.”

**19.** “Sir,” said that unhappy man, at my first interview with him, “I scorn to deceive you or any man. You must not tell me of your Bible; for I do not believe one word of it. I know there is a God; and believe he is all in all, the *Anima mundi*,<sup>f1</sup> the

### *Totam*

*Mens agitans molem, et magno se corpore miscens.*<sup>f2</sup>

But farther than this I believe not: All is dark; my thought is lost. But I hear,” added he, “you preach to a great number of people every night and morning. Pray, what would you do with them? Whither would you lead them? What religion do you preach? What is it good for?” I replied, “I do preach to as many as desire to hear, every night and morning. You ask, what I would do with them: I would make them virtuous and happy, easy in themselves, and useful to others. Whither would I lead them? To heaven; to God the Judge, the lover of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. What religion do I preach? The religion of love; the law of kindness brought to light by the gospel. What is this good for? To make all

who receive it enjoy God and themselves: To make them like God; lovers of all; contented in their lives; and crying out at their death, in calm assurance, ‘O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be unto God, who giveth me the victory, through my Lord Jesus Christ.’”

**20.** Will you object to such a religion as this, that it is not reasonable? Is it not reasonable then to love God? Hath he not given you life, and breath, and all things? Does he not continue his love to you, filling your heart with food and gladness? What have you which you have not received of him? And does not love demand a return of love? Whether, therefore, you do love God or no, you cannot but own it is reasonable so to do; nay, seeing he is the Parent of all good, to love him with all your heart.

**21.** Is it not reasonable also to love our neighbor, every man whom God hath made? Are we not brethren, the children of one Father? Ought we not, then, to love one another? And should we only love them that love us? Is that acting like our Father which is in heaven? He causeth his sun to shine on the evil and oh the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. And can there be a more equitable rule than this: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself?” You will plead for the reasonableness of this; as also for that golden rule, (the only adequate measure of brotherly love, in all our words and actions,) “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them?”

**22.** Is it not reasonable, then, that, as we have opportunity, we should do good unto all men; not only friends, but enemies; not only to the deserving, but likewise to the evil and unthankful? Is it not right that all our life should be one continued labor of love? If a day passes without doing good, may one not well say, with Titus, *Amici, diem peridi!*<sup>f3</sup> And is it enough, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit those who are sick or in prison? Should we have no pity for those

*Who sigh beneath guilt's horrid stain,  
The worst confinement, and the heaviest chain?*

Should we shut up our compassion toward those who are of all men most miserable, because they are miserable by their own fault? If we have found a medicine to heal even that sickness, should we not, as we have freely received it, freely give? Should we not pluck them as brands out of the

fire? the fire of lust, anger, malice, revenge? Your inmost soul answers, “It should be done; it is reasonable in the highest degree.”

Well, this is the sum of our preaching, and of our lives, our enemies themselves being the judges. If therefore you allow, that it is reasonable to love God, to love mankind, and to do good to all men, you cannot but allow that religion which we preach and live to be agreeable to the highest reason.

**23.** Perhaps, all this you can bear. It is tolerable enough; and if we spoke only of being saved by love, you should have no great objection: But you do not comprehend what we say of being saved by faith. I know you do not. You do not in any degree comprehend what we mean by that expression: Have patience then, and I will tell you yet again. By those words, “We are saved by faith,” we mean, that the moment a man receives that faith which is above described, he is saved from doubt and fear, and sorrow of heart, by a peace that passes all understanding; from the heaviness of a wounded spirit, by joy unspeakable; and from his sins, of whatsoever kind they were, from his vicious desires, as well as words and actions, by the love of God, and of all mankind, then shed abroad in his heart.

**24.** We grant, nothing is more unreasonable, than to imagine that such mighty effects as these can be wrought by that poor, empty, insignificant thing, which the world calls faith, and you among them. But supposing there be such a faith on the earth as that which the Apostle speaks of, such an intercourse between God and the soul, what is too hard for such a faith? You yourselves may conceive that “all things are possible to him that” thus “believeth;” to him that thus “walks with God,” that is now a citizen of heaven, an inhabitant of eternity. If therefore you will contend with us, you must change the ground of your attack. You must flatly deny there is any faith upon earth: But perhaps this you might think too large a step. You cannot do this without a secret condemnation in your own breast. O that you would at length cry to God for that heavenly gift! whereby alone this truly reasonable religion, this beneficent love of God and man, can be planted in your heart.

**25.** If you say, “But those that profess this faith are the most unreasonable of all men;” I ask, Who are those that profess this faith?

Perhaps you do not personally know such a man in the world. Who are they that so much as profess to have this “evidence of things not seen?” that profess to “see Him that is invisible,” to hear the voice of God, and to have his Spirit ever “witnessing with their spirits, that they are the children of God?” I fear you will find few that even profess this faith, among the large numbers of those who are called believers.

**26.** “However, there are enough that profess themselves Christians.” Yea, too many, God knoweth; too many that confute their vain professions by the whole tenor of their lives. I will allow all you can say on this head, and perhaps more than all. It is now some years since I was engaged unawares in a conversation with a strong reasoner, who at first urged the wickedness of the American Indians, as a bar to our hope of converting them to Christianity. But when I mentioned their temperance, justice, and veracity, (according to the accounts I had then received,) it was asked, “Why, if those Heathens are such men as these, what will they gain by being made Christians? What would they gain by being such Christians as we see everywhere round about us?” I could not deny they would lose, not gain, by such a Christianity as this. Upon which she added, “Why, what else do you mean by Christianity?” My plain answer was, “What do you apprehend to be more valuable than good sense, good nature, and good manners? All these are contained, and that in the highest degree, in what I mean by Christianity. Good sense (so called) is but a poor, dim shadow of what Christians call faith. Good nature is only a faint, distant resemblance of Christian charity. And good manners, if of the most finished kind that nature, assisted by art, can attain to, is but a dead picture of that holiness of conversation which is the image of God visibly expressed. All these, put together by the art of God, I call Christianity.” “Sir, if this be Christianity,” said my opponent in amaze, “I never saw a Christian in my life.”

**27.** Perhaps it is the same case with *you*. If so, I am grieved for you, and can only wish, till you do see a living proof of this, that you would not say you see a Christian. For this is scriptural Christianity, and this alone. Whenever, therefore, you see an unreasonable man, you see one who perhaps calls himself by that name, but is no more a Christian than he is an angel. So far as he departs from true, genuine reason, so far he departs from Christianity. Do not say, “This is only asserted, not proved.” It is

undeniably proved by the original charter of Christianity. We appeal to this, to the written word. If any man's temper, or words, or actions, are contradictory to right reason, it is evident to a demonstration, they are contradictory to this. Produce any possible or conceivable instance, and you will find the fact is so. The lives, therefore, of those who are *called* Christians, is no just objection to Christianity.

**28.** We join with you then in desiring a religion founded on reason, and every way agreeable thereto. But one question still remains to be asked, What do you mean by *reason*? I suppose you mean the eternal reason, or the nature of things; the nature of God, and the nature of man, with the relations necessarily subsisting between them. Why, this is the very religion *we* preach; a religion evidently founded on, and every way agreeable to, eternal reason, to the essential nature of things. Its foundation stands on the nature of God and the nature of man, together with their mutual relations. And it is every way suitable thereto; to the nature of God; for it begins in knowing him: And where, but in the true knowledge of God, can you conceive true religion to begin? It goes on in loving him and all mankind; for you cannot but imitate whom you love: It ends in serving him; in doing his will; in obeying him whom we know and love.

**29.** It is every way suited to the nature of man; for it begins in a man's knowing himself; knowing himself to be what he really is, — foolish, vicious, miserable. It goes on to point out the remedy for this, to make him truly wise, virtuous, and happy; as every thinking mind (perhaps from some implicit remembrance of what it originally was) longs to be.

It finishes all, by restoring the due relations between God and man; by uniting for ever the tender Father, and the grateful, obedient son; the great Lord of all, and the faithful servant; doing not his own will, but the will of Him that sent him.

**30.** But perhaps by reason you mean the faculty of reasoning, of inferring one thing from another.

There are many, it is confessed, (particularly those who are styled Mystic Divines,) that utterly decry the use of reason, thus understood, in religion; nay, that condemn all reasoning concerning the things of God, as utterly destructive of true religion.

But we can in nowise agree with this. We find no authority for it in holy writ. So far from it, that we find there both our Lord and his Apostles continually reasoning with their opposers. Neither do we know, in all the productions of ancient and modern times, such a chain of reasoning or argumentation, so close, so solid, so regularly connected, as the Epistle to the Hebrews. And the strongest reasoner whom we have ever observed (excepting only Jesus of Nazareth) was that Paul of Tarsus; the same who has left that plain direction for all Christians: “In malice,” or wickedness, “be ye children; but in understanding,” or reason, “be ye men.”

**31.** We therefore not only allow, but earnestly exhort, all who seek after true religion, to use all the reason which God hath given them, in searching out the things of God. But your reasoning justly, not only on this, but on any subject whatsoever, pre-supposes true judgments already formed, whereon to ground your argumentation. Else, you know, you will stumble at every step; because *ex falso non sequitur verum*, “it is impossible, if your premises are false, to infer from them true conclusions.”

**32.** You know, likewise, that before it is possible for you to form a true judgment of them, it is absolutely necessary that you have a clear apprehension of the things of God, and that your ideas thereof be all fixed, distinct, and determinate. And seeing our ideas are not innate, but must all originally come from our senses, it is certainly necessary that you have senses capable of discerning objects of this kind: Not those only which are called natural senses, which in this respect profit nothing, as being altogether incapable of discerning objects of a spiritual kind; but spiritual senses, exercised to discern spiritual good and evil. It is necessary that you have *the hearing ear*, and the *seeing eye*, emphatically so called; that you have a new class of senses opened in your soul, not depending on organs of flesh and blood, to be “the evidence of things not seen,” as your bodily senses are of visible things; to be the avenues to the invisible world, to discern spiritual objects, and to furnish you with ideas of what the outward “eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard.”

**33.** And till you have these internal senses, till the eyes of your understanding are opened, you can have no apprehension of divine things, no idea of them at all. Nor, consequently, till then, can you either judge

truly, or reason justly, concerning them; seeing your reason has no ground whereon to stand, no materials to work upon.

**34.** To use the trite instance: As you cannot reason concerning colors, if you have no natural sight, because all the ideas received by your other senses are of a different kind; so that neither your hearing, nor any other sense, can supply your want of sight, or furnish your reason in this respect with matter to work upon: So you cannot reason concerning spiritual things, if you have no spiritual sight; because all your ideas received by your outward senses are of a different kind; yea, far more different from those received by faith or internal sensation, than the idea of color from that of sound. These are only different species of one genus, namely, sensible ideas, received by external sensation; whereas the ideas of faith differ *toto genere* from those of external sensation. So that it is not conceivable, that external sensation should supply the want of internal senses; or furnish your reason in this respect with matter to work upon.

**35.** What then will your reason do here? How will it pass from things natural to spiritual; from the things that are seen to those that are not seen; from the visible to the invisible world? What a gulf is here! By what art will reason get over the immense chasm? This cannot be till the Almighty come in to your succor, and give you that faith you have hitherto despised. Then upborn, as it were, on eagles' wings, you shall soar away into the regions of eternity; and your enlightened reason shall explore even "the deep things of God;" God himself "revealing them to you by his Spirit."

**36.** I expected to have received much light on this head, from a treatise lately published, and earnestly recommended to me; I mean, "Christianity not founded on Argument." But on a careful perusal of that piece, notwithstanding my prejudice in its favor, I could not but perceive, that the great design uniformly pursued throughout the work was, to render the whole of the Christian Institution both odious and contemptible. In order to this, the author gleans up, with great care and diligence, the most plausible of those many objections that have been raised against it by late writers, and proposes them with the utmost strength of which he was capable. To do this with the more effect, he personates a Christian: He makes a show of defending an avowed doctrine of Christianity, namely,

the supernatural influence of the Spirit of God; and often, for several sentences together, (indeed, in the beginning of almost every paragraph,) speaks so like a Christian, that not a few have received him according to his wish. Meanwhile, with all possible art and show of reason, and in the most labored language, he pursues his point throughout, which is to prove, that “Christianity is contrary to reason;” or, that “no man acting according to the principles of reason can possibly be a Christian.”

**37.** It is a wonderful proof of the power that smooth words may have even on serious minds, that so many have mistook such a writer as this for a friend of Christianity; since almost every page of his tract is filled with gross falsehood and broad blasphemy; and these supported by such exploded fallacies, and common-place sophistry, that a person of two or three years’ standing in the university might give them a sufficient answer, and make the author appear as irrational and contemptible as he labors to make Christ and his Apostles.

**38.** I have hitherto spoken to those chiefly, who do not receive the Christian system as of God. I would add a few words to another sort of men; — though not so much with regard to our principles or practice, as with regard to their own: To you who do receive it, who believe the Scripture, but yet do not take upon you the character of religious men. I am therefore obliged to address myself to you likewise under the character of men of reason.

**39.** I would only ask, Are you such indeed? Do you answer the character under which you appear? If so, you are consistent with yourselves; your principles and practice agree together.

Let us try whether this is so or not. Do you not take the name of God in vain? Do you remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy? Do you not speak evil of the ruler of your people? Are you not a drunkard, or a glutton, faring as sumptuously as you can everyday; making a God of your belly? Do you not avenge yourself? Are you not a whoremonger or adulterer? Answer plainly to your own heart, before God the Judge of all.

Why then do you say you believe the Scripture? If the Scripture is true, you are lost. You are in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Your damnation slumbereth not. You are heaping up to yourself wrath against

the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Doubtless, if the Scripture is true, and you remain thus, it had been good for you if you had never been born.

**40.** How is it that you call yourselves men of reason? Is reason inconsistent with itself? You are the farthest of all men under the sun from any pretense to that character. A common swearer, a Sabbath-breaker, a whoremonger, a drunkard, who says he believes the Scripture is of God, is a monster upon earth, the greatest contradiction to his own, as well as to the reason of all mankind. In the name of God, (that worthy name whereby you are called, and which you daily cause to be blasphemed,) turn either to the right hand or to the left. Either profess you are an infidel, or be a Christian. Halt no longer thus between two opinions. Either cast off the Bible, or your sins. And, in the mean time, if you have any spark of your boasted reason left, do not “count us your enemies,” (as I fear you have done hitherto, and as thousands do wherever we have declared, “They who do such things shall not inherit eternal life,”) “because we tell you the truth;” seeing these are not our words, but the words of Him that sent us; yea, though, in doing this, we use “great plainness of speech,” as becomes the ministry we have received. “For we are not as many who corrupt” (cauponize, soften, and thereby adulterate,) “the word of God. But as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”

**41.** But, it may be, you are none of these. You abstain from all such things. You have an unspotted reputation. You are a man of honor, or a woman of virtue. You scorn to do an unhandsome thing, and are of an unblamable life and conversation. You are harmless (if I understand you right) and useless from morning to night. You do no hurt, — and no good to any one, no more than a straw floating upon the water. Your life glides smoothly on from year to year; and from one season to another, having no occasion to work,

*You waste away  
In gentle inactivity the day.*

**42.** I will not now shock the easiness of your temper by talking about a future state; but suffer me to ask you a question about present things: Are you now happy?

I have seen a large company of reasonable creatures, called Indians, sitting in a row on the side of a river, looking sometimes at one another, sometimes at the sky, and sometimes at the bubbles on the water. And so they sat, (unless in the time of war,) for a great part of the year, from morning to night.

These were, doubtless, much at ease. But can you think they were happy? And how little happier are you than they?

**43.** You eat, and drink, and sleep, and dress, and dance, and sit down to play. You are carried abroad. You are at the masquerade, the theater, the opera-house, the park, the levee, the drawing-room. What do you do there? Why, sometimes you talk; sometimes you look at one another. And what are you to do tomorrow, the next day, the next week, the next year? You are to eat, and drink, and sleep, and dance, and dress, and play again. And you are to be carried abroad again, that you may again look at one another! And is this all? Alas, how little more happiness have you in this, than the Indians in looking at the sky or water!

Ah, poor, dull round! I do not wonder that Colonel M—— (or any man of reflection) should prefer death itself, even in the midst of his years, to such a life as this; and should frankly declare that he chose to go out of the world, because he found nothing in it worth living for.

**44.** Yet it is certain there is business to be done: And many we find in all places (not to speak of the vulgar, the drudges of the earth) who are continually employed therein. Are you of that number? Are you engaged in trade, or some other reputable employment? I suppose, profitable too; for you would not spend your time and labor and thought for nothing. You are then making your fortune; you are getting money. True; but money is not your ultimate end. The treasuring up gold and silver, for its own sake, all men own, is as foolish and absurd, as grossly unreasonable, as the treasuring up spiders, or the wings of butterflies. You consider this but as a means to some farther end. And what is that? Why, the enjoying yourself, the being at ease, the taking your pleasure, the living like a gentleman; that is, plainly, either the whole or some part of the happiness above described.

Supposing then your end to be actually attained; suppose you have your wish before you drop into eternity: Go and sit down with Thleeanowhee and his companions on the river-side. — After you have toiled for fifty years, you are just as happy as they.

**45.** Are you, can you, or any reasonable man, be satisfied with this? You are not. It is not possible you should. But what else can you do? You would have something better to employ your time; but you know not where to find it upon earth.

And, indeed, it is obvious that the earth, as it is now constituted, even with the help of all European arts, does not afford sufficient employment to take up half the waking hours of half its inhabitants.

What then can you do? How can you employ the time that lies so heavy upon your hands? This very thing which you seek declare we unto you. The thing you want is the religion we preach. That alone leaves no time upon our hands. It fills up all the blank spaces of life. It exactly takes up all the time we have to spare, be it more or less; so that “he that hath much hath nothing over; and he that has little has no lack.”

**46.** Once more: Can you, or any man of reason, think you was made for the life you now lead? You cannot possibly think so; at least, not till you tread the Bible under foot. The oracles of God bear thee witness in every page, (and thine own heart agreeth thereto,) that thou wast made in the image of God, an incorruptible picture of the God of glory. And what art thou, even in thy present state? An everlasting spirit, going to God. For what end then did he create thee, but to dwell with him, above this perishable world, to know him, to love him, to do his will, to enjoy him for ever and ever? O look more deeply into thyself! and into that Scripture, which thou professest to receive as the word of God, as “right concerning all things.” There thou wilt find a nobler, happier state described, than it ever yet entered into thy heart to conceive. But God hath now revealed it to all those who “rejoice evermore, and pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks,” and do his “will on earth as it is done in heaven.” For this thou wast made. Hereunto also thou art called. O be not disobedient to the heavenly calling! At least be not angry with those who would fain bring thee to be a living witness of that religion, “whose ways are” indeed “ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace.”

**47.** Do you say in your heart? — “I know all this already. I am not barely a man of reason. I am a religious man; for I not only avoid evil and do good, but use all the means of grace. I am constantly at church, and at the sacrament too. I say my prayers everyday. I read many good books. I fast — every thirtieth of January, and Good-Friday.” Do you indeed? Do you do all this? This you may do, you may go thus far, and yet have no religion at all; no such religion as avails before God: Nay, much farther than this; than you have ever gone yet, or so much as thought of going. For you may “give all your goods to feed the poor,” yea, “your body to be burned,” and yet very possibly, if St. Paul be a judge, “have no charity,” no true religion.

**48.** This religion, which alone is of value before God, is the very thing you want. You want (and in wanting this, you want all) the religion of love. You do not love your neighbor as yourself, no more than you love God with all your heart. Ask your own heart now if it be not so. It is plain you do not love God. If you did, you would be happy in him. But you know you are not happy. Your formal religion no more makes you happy, than your neighbor’s gay religion does him. O how much have you suffered for want of plain dealing! Can you now bear to hear the naked truth? You have “the form of godliness, but not the power.” You are a mere whited wall. Before the Lord your God, I ask you, Are you not? Too sure; for your “inward parts are very wickedness.” You love “the creature more than the Creator.” You are “a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God.” *A lover of God!* You do not love God at all, no more than you love a stone. You love the world; therefore the love of the Father is not in you.

**49.** You are on the brink of the pit, ready to be plunged into everlasting perdition. Indeed you have a zeal for God; but not according to knowledge. O how terribly have you been deceived! posting to hell, and fancying it was heaven. See, at length, that outward religion, without inward, is nothing; is far worse than nothing, being, indeed, no other than a solemn mockery of God. And inward religion you have not. You have not the faith “that worketh by love.” Your faith (so called) is no living, saving principle. It is not the Apostle’s faith, “the substance,” or subsistence, “of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” So far from it, that this faith is the very thing which you call enthusiasm. You are not content with being without it, unless you blaspheme it too. You even revile that “life which is

hid with Christ in God;" all seeing, tasting, hearing, feeling God. These things are foolishness unto you. No marvel; "for they are spiritually discerned."

**50.** O no longer shut your eyes against the light! Know, you have a name that you live, but are dead. Your soul is utterly dead in sin; dead in pride, in vanity, in self-will, in sensuality, in love of the world. You are utterly dead to God. There is no intercourse between your soul and God. "You have neither seen him," (by faith, as our Lord witnessed against them of old time,) "nor heard his voice at any time." You have no spiritual "senses exercised to discern spiritual good and evil." You are angry at infidels, and are all the while as mere an infidel before God as they. You have "eyes that see not, and ears that hear not." You have a callous, unfeeling heart.

**51.** Bear with me a little longer: My soul is distressed for you. "The God of this world hath blinded your eyes," and you are "seeking death in the error of your life." Because you do not commit gross sin, because you give alms, and go to the church and sacrament, you imagine that you are serving God: Yet, in very deed, you are serving the devil; for you are doing still your own will, not the will of God your Savior. You are pleasing yourself in all you do. Pride, vanity, and self-will (the genuine fruits of an earthly, sensual, devilish heart) pollute all your words and actions. You are in darkness, in the shadow of death. O that God would say to you in thunder, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!"

**52.** But, blessed be God, he hath not yet left himself without witness:

*All are not lost! There be, who faith prefer,  
Though few, and piety to God!*

who know the power of faith, and are no strangers to that inward, vital religion, "the mind that was in Christ; righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Of you who "have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," I would be glad to learn if we have "erred from the faith," or walked contrary to "the truth as it is in Jesus." "Let the righteous smite me friendly, and reprove me;" if haply that which is amiss may be done away, and what is wanting supplied, till we all come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

**53.** Perhaps the first thing that now occurs to your mind relates to the doctrine which we teach. You have heard that we say, “Men may live without sin.” And have you not heard that the Scripture says the same; — we mean, without committing sin? Does not St. Paul say plainly, that those who believe “do not continue in sin,” that they can not “live any longer therein?” (~~☞~~ Romans 6:1, 2.) Does not St. Peter say, “He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live to the desires of men, but to the will of God?” (~~☞~~ 1 Peter 4:1, 2.) And does not St. John say expressly, “He that committeth sin is of the devil? For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: And he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” (~~☞~~ 1 John 3:8, etc.) And again: “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not.” (~~☞~~ 5:18.)

**54.** You see then it is not we that say this, but the Lord. These are not our words, but his. And who is he that replieth against God? Who is able to make God a liar? Surely he will be justified in his saying, and clear when he is judged! Can you deny it? Have you not often felt a secret check when you was contradicting this great truth? And how often have you wished for what you was taught to deny? Nay, can you help wishing for it this moment? Do you not now earnestly desire to cease from sin? to commit it no more? Does not your soul pant after this glorious liberty of the sons of God? And what strong reason have you to expect it! Have you not had a foretaste of it already? Do you not remember the time when God first lifted up the light of his countenance upon you? Can it ever be forgotten the day when the candle of the Lord first shone upon your head?

*Butter and honey did you eat;  
And, lifted up on high,  
You saw the clouds beneath your feet,  
And rode upon the sky.*

*Far, far above all earthly things  
Triumphantly you rode;  
You soar'd to heaven on eagles' wings,  
And found, and talk'd with God.*

You then had power not to commit sin. You found the Apostle's words strictly true, “He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked

one toucheth him not.” But those whom you took to be experienced Christians telling you, this was only the time of your espousals, this could not last always, you must come down from the mount, and the like, shook your faith. You looked at men more than God, and so became weak, and like another man. Whereas, had you then had any to guide you according to the truth of God, had you then heard the doctrine which now you blame, you had never fallen from your steadfastness; but had found, that, in this sense also, “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

**55.** Have you not another objection nearly allied to this, namely, that we preach perfection? True; but what perfection? The term you cannot object to; because it is scriptural. All the difficulty is, to fix the meaning of it according to the word of God. And this we have done again and again, declaring to all the world, that Christian perfection does not imply an exemption from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations; but that it does imply the being so crucified with Christ, as to be able to testify, “I live not, but Christ liveth in me,” (~~ROM~~ Galatians 2:20,) and hath “purified my heart by faith.” (~~ACTS~~ Acts 15:9.) It does imply “the casting down every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” It does imply “the being holy, as he that hath called us is holy, in all manner of conversation;” (~~ROM~~ 2 Corinthians 10:5; ~~ROM~~ 1 Peter 1:15;) and, in a word, “the loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and serving him with all our strength.”

**56.** Now, is it possible for any who believe the Scripture to deny one tittle of this? You cannot. You dare not. You would not for the world. You know it is the pure word of God. And this is the whole of what we preach; this is the height and depth of what we (with St. Paul) call perfection; — a state of soul devoutly to be wished by all who have tasted of the love of God. O pray for it without ceasing! It is the one thing you want. Come with boldness to the throne of grace; and be assured that when you ask this of God, you shall have the petition you ask of him. We know indeed that to man, to the natural man, this is impossible. But we know also, that as no word is impossible with God, so “all things are possible to him that believeth.”

**57.** For “we are saved by faith.” But have you not heard this urged as another objection against us, that we preach salvation by faith alone? And does not St. Paul do the same thing? “By grace,” saith he, “ye are saved through faith.” Can any words be more express? And elsewhere, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.” (~~4161~~ Acts 16:31.)

What we mean by this (if it has not been sufficiently explained already) is, that we are saved from our sins, only by a confidence in the love of God. As soon as we “behold what manner of love it is which the Father hath bestowed upon us, we love him,” (as the Apostle observes,) “because he first loved us.” And then is that commandment written in our heart, “That he who loveth God love his brother also;” from which love of God and man, meekness, humbleness of mind, and all holy tempers, spring. Now, these are the very essence of salvation, of Christian salvation, salvation from sin; and from these outward salvation flows, that is, holiness of life and conversation. Well, and are not these things so? If you know in whom you have believed, you need no further witnesses.

**58.** But perhaps you doubt whether that faith whereby we are thus saved implies such a trust and confidence in God as we describe. You cannot think faith implies assurance; an assurance of the love of God to our souls, of his being now reconciled to us, and having forgiven all our sins. And this we freely confess, that, if number of voices is to decide the question, we must give it up at once: For you have on your side, not only some who desire to be Christians indeed; but all nominal Christians in every place; and the Romish Church, one and all. Nay, these last are so vehement in your defense, that, in the famed Council of Trent, they have decreed, “If any man hold (*fiduciam*) trust, confidence, or assurance of pardon, to be essential to faith, let him be accursed.”

**59.** Thus does that Council anathematize the Church of England; for she is convicted hereof by her own confession. The very words in the Homily on Salvation are, “Even the devils believe that Christ was born of a virgin; that he wrought all kind of miracles, declaring himself very God; that for our sakes he suffered a most painful death, to redeem us from death everlasting. These articles of our faith the devils believe; and so they believe all that is written in the Old and New Testament. And yet, for all

this faith, they be but devils. They remain still in their damnable estate, lacking the very true, Christian faith.

“The right and true Christian faith is, not only to believe the Holy Scriptures, and the articles of our faith, are true; but also to have a sure trust and confidence, to be saved from everlasting damnation through Christ.” Or, (as it is expressed a little after,) “a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God.”

**60.** Indeed, the Bishop of Rome saith, “If any man hold this, let him be an Anathema Maranatha.” But it is to be hoped, Papal anathemas do not move *you*. You are a member of the Church of England. Are you? Then the controversy is at an end. Then hear the Church: “Faith is a sure trust which a man hath in God, that his sins are forgiven.” Or, if you are not, whether you hear our Church or no, at least hear the Scriptures. Hear believing Job, declaring his faith, “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” Hear Thomas (when having seen, he believed) crying out, “My Lord and my God!” Hear St. Paul clearly describing the nature of his faith, “The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Hear (to mention no more) all the believers who were with Paul when he wrote to the Colossians, bearing witness, “We give thanks unto the Father, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (~~Col~~ 1:12, 13, 14.)

**61.** But what need have we of distant witnesses? You have a witness in your own breast. For am I not speaking to one that loves God? How came you then to love him at first? Was it not because you knew that he loved you? Did you, could you, love God at all, till you tasted and saw that he was gracious; that he was merciful to you a sinner? What avails then controversy, or strife of words? Out of thy own mouth! You own you had no love to God till you was sensible of his love to you. And whatever expressions any sinner who loves God uses, to denote God’s love to him, you will always upon examination find, that they directly or indirectly imply forgiveness. Pardoning love is still at the root of all. He who was offended is now reconciled. The new song which God puts in every mouth

is always to that effect: “O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away. Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust, and not be afraid: For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he is also become my salvation.” (~~2311~~ Isaiah 12:1, 2.)

**62.** A confidence then in a pardoning God is essential to saving faith. The forgiveness of sins is one of the first of those unseen things whereof faith is the evidence. And if you are sensible of this, will you quarrel with us concerning an indifferent circumstance of it? Will you think it an important objection, that we assert that this faith is usually given in a moment? First, let me entreat you to read over that authentic account of God’s dealings with men, the Acts of the Apostles. In this treatise you will find how he wrought from the beginning on those who received remission of sins by faith. And can you find one of these (except, perhaps, St. Paul) who did not receive it in a moment? But abundance you find of those who did, besides Cornelius and the three thousand. (~~4011~~ Acts 2:41.) And to this also agrees the experience of those who now receive the heavenly gift. Three or four exceptions only have I found in the course of several years; — perhaps you yourself may be added to that number, and one or two more whom you have known. But all the rest of those who from time to time among us have believed in the Lord Jesus were in a moment brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

**63.** And why should it seem a thing incredible to you, who have known the power of God unto salvation, (whether he hath wrought thus in your soul or no; “for there are diversities of operations, but the same Spirit,”) that “the dead should hear the voice of the Son of God,” and in that moment live? Thus he useth to act, to show that when he willeth, to do is present with him. “Let there be light,” said God; “and there was light. He spoke the word, and it was done. Thus the heavens and the earth were created, and all the hosts of them.” And this manner of acting in the present case highly suits both his power and love. There is therefore no hindrance on God’s part; since “as his majesty is, so is his mercy.” And whatever hindrance there is on the part of man, when God speaketh, it is not. Only ask then, O sinner, “and it shall be given thee,” even the faith that brings salvation: And that without any merit or good work of thine; for “it is not of works, lest any man should boast.” No; it is of grace, of

grace alone. For “unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness.”

**64.** “But by talking thus you encourage sinners.” I do encourage them — to repent; and do not you? Do not you know how many heap sin upon sin, purely for want of such encouragement; because they think they can never be forgiven, there is no place for repentance left? Does not your heart also bleed for them? What would you think too dear to part with? What would you not do, what would you not suffer, to bring one such sinner to repentance? Could not your love “endure all things” for them? Yes, — if you believed it would do them good; if you had any hope that they would be better. Why do you not believe it would do them good? Why have you not a hope that they will be better? Plainly, because you do not love them enough; because you have not that charity which not only endureth, but at the same time believeth and hopeth, all things.

**65.** But that you may see the whole strength of this objection, I will show you, without any disguise or reserve, how I encourage the chief of sinners. My usual language to them runs thus: —

O ye that deny the Lord that bought you, yet hear the word of the Lord! You seek rest, but find none. Even in laughter your heart is in heaviness. How long spend ye your labor for that which is not bread, and your strength for that which satisfieth not? You know your soul is not satisfied. It is still an aching void. Sometimes you find, in spite of your principles, a sense of guilt, an awakened conscience. That grisly phantom, religion, (so you describe her,) will now and then haunt you still. Righteousness looking down from heaven is indeed to us no unpleasing sight. But how does it appear to you?

*Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans?*<sup>f4</sup>

How often are you in fear of the very things you deny? How often in racking suspense? What, if there be an hereafter, a judgment to come, an unhappy eternity? Do you not start at the thought? Can you be content to be always thus? Shall it be said of you also? —

*“Here lies a dicer, long in doubt  
If death could kill the soul or not:  
Here ends his doubtfulness, at last  
Convinced: But, O, the die is cast!”*

Or, are you already convinced there is no hereafter? What a poor state then are you in now? taking a few more dull turns upon earth, and then dropping into nothing! What kind of spirit must you be of, if you can sustain yourself under the thought! under the expectation of being in a few moments swept away by the stream of time, and then for ever

*swallow’d up, and lost  
In the wide womb of uncreated night!*

But neither indeed are you certain of this; nor of anything else. It may be so; it may not. A vast scene is behind:

But clouds and darkness rest upon it. All is doubt and uncertainty. You are continually tossed to and fro, and have no firm ground for the sole of your foot. O let not the poor wisdom of man any longer exalt itself against the wisdom of God! You have fled from him long enough; at length, suffer your eyes to be opened by Him that made them. You want rest to your soul. Ask it of Him who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not! You are now a mere riddle to yourself, and your condition full of darkness and perplexity. You are one among many restless inhabitants of a miserable, disordered world, “walking in a vain shadow, and disquieting yourself in vain.” But the light of God will speedily disperse the anxiety of your vain conjectures. By adding heaven to earth, and eternity to time, it will open such a glorious view of things as will lead you, even in the present world, to a peace which passeth all understanding.

**66.** O ye gross, vile, scandalous sinners, hear ye the word of the Lord. “Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live.” O make haste; delay not the time! “Come, and let us reason together: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool. Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments, red in his apparel?” It is He on whom the Lord “hath laid the iniquities of us all!” Behold, behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away thy sins! See the

only-begotten Son of the Father, “full of grace and truth!” He loveth thee. He gave himself for thee. Now his bowels of compassion yearn over thee! O believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved!” “Go in peace, sin no more!”

**67.** Now, cannot you join in all this? Is it not the very language of your heart? O when will you take knowledge, that our whole concern, our constant labor, is, to bring all the world to the religion which you feel; to solid, inward, vital religion! What power is it then that keeps us asunder? “Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? If it be, give me thy hand. Come with me, and see,” and rejoice in, “my zeal for the Lord.” No difference between us (if thou art a child of God) can be so considerable as our agreement is. If we differ in smaller things, we agree in that which is greatest of all. How is it possible then that you should be induced to think or speak evil of us? How could it ever come into your mind to oppose us, or weaken our hands? How long shall we complain of the wounds which we receive in the house of our friends? Surely the children of this world are still “wiser in their generation than the children of light.” Satan is not divided against himself: Why are they who are on the Lord’s side? How is it that wisdom is not justified of her own children?

**68.** Is it because you have heard that we only make religion a cloak for covetousness; and because you have heard abundance of particulars alleged in support of that general charge? It is probable you may also have heard how much we have gained by preaching already; and, to crown all, that we are only Papists in disguise, who are undermining and destroying the Church.

**69.** You have heard this. Well; and can you believe it? Have you then never heard the fifth chapter of St. Matthew? I would to God you could believe it. What is written there? How readest thou? “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name’s sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: For great is your reward in heaven: For so persecuted they the Prophets that were before you;” namely, by “reviling them, and saying all manner of evil of them falsely.” Do not you know that this, as well as all other scriptures, must needs be fulfilled? If so, take knowledge that this day also it is fulfilled in your ears. For our Lord’s sake, and for the sake of his gospel

which we preach, “men do revile us and persecute us, and” (blessed be God, who giveth us to rejoice therein) “say all manner of evil of us falsely.” And how can it be otherwise? “The disciple is not above his Master. It is enough for the disciple, that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?”

**70.** This only we confess, that we preach inward salvation, now attainable by faith. And for preaching this (for no other crime was then so much as pretended) we were forbid to preach any more in those churches, where, till then, we were gladly received. This is a notorious fact. Being thus hindered from preaching in the places we should first have chosen, we now declare the “grace of God which bringeth salvation,” in all places of his dominion; as well knowing, that God dwelleth not only in temples made with hands. This is the real, and it is the only real, ground of complaint against us. And this we avow before all mankind, we do preach this salvation by faith. And not being suffered to preach it in the usual places, we declare it wherever a door is opened, either on a mountain, or a plain, or by a river-side, (for all which we conceive we have sufficient precedent,) or in prison, or, as it were, in the house of Justus, or the school of one Tyrannus. Nor dare we refrain. “A dispensation of the gospel is committed to me; and woe is me, if I preach not the gospel.”

**71.** Here we allow the fact, but deny the guilt. But in every other point alleged, we deny the fact, and call upon the world to prove it, if they can. More especially, we call upon those who for many years saw our manner of life at Oxford. These well know that “after the straitest sect of our religion we lived Pharisees;” and that the grand objection to us for all those years was, the being righteous overmuch; the reading, fasting, praying, denying ourselves, — the going to church, and to the Lord’s table, — the relieving the poor, visiting those that were sick and in prison, instructing the ignorant, and laboring to reclaim the wicked, — more than was necessary for salvation. These were our open, flagrant crimes, from the year 1729 to the year 1737; touching which our Lord shall judge in that day.

**72.** But, waving the things that are past, which of you now convinceth us of sin? Which of you (I here more especially appeal to my brethren, the

Clergy) can personally convict us of any ungodliness or unholiness of conversation? Ye know in your own hearts, (all that are candid men, all that are not utterly blinded with prejudice,) that we “labor to have a conscience void of offense both toward God and toward man.” Brethren, I would to God that in this ye were even as we. But indeed (with grief I speak it) ye are not. There are among yourselves ungodly and unholy men; openly, undeniably such; drunkards, gluttons, returners of evil for evil, liars, swearers, profaners of the day of the Lord. Proof hereof is not wanting, if ye require it. Where then is your zeal against these? A Clergyman, so drunk he can scarce stand or speak, may, in the presence of a thousand people, <sup>f5</sup> set upon another Clergyman of the same Church, both with abusive words and open violence. And what follows? Why, the one is still allowed to dispense the sacred signs of the body and blood of Christ: But the other is not allowed to receive them, — because he is a field Preacher.

**73.** O ye pillars and fathers of the Church, are these things well-pleasing to Him who hath made you Overseers over that flock which he hath purchased with his own blood? O that ye would suffer me to boast myself a little! Is there not a cause? Have ye not compelled me? Which of your Clergy are more unspotted in their lives, which more unwearied in their labors, than those whose “names ye cast out as evil,” whom ye count “as the filth and off-scouring of the world?” Which of them is more zealous to spend and be spent, for the lost sheep of the house of Israel? Or who among them is more ready to be offered up for their flock “upon the sacrifice and service of their faith?”

**74.** Will ye say, (as the historian of Catiline,) *Si sic pro patria!* “If this were done in defence of the Church, and not in order to undermine and destroy it!” That is the very position I undertake to prove, — that we are now defending the Church, even the Church of England, in opposition to all those who either secretly undermine or more openly attempt to destroy it.

**75.** That we are Papists, (we who are daily and hourly preaching that very doctrine which is so solemnly anathematized by the whole Church of Rome,) is such a charge that I dare not waste my time in industriously confuting it. Let any man of common sense only look on the title-pages of

the sermons we have lately preached at Oxford, and he will need nothing more to show him the weight of this senseless, shameless accusation; — unless he can suppose the Governors both of Christ Church and Lincoln College, nay, and all the University, to be Papists too.

**76.** You yourself can easily acquit us of this; but not of the other part of the charge. You still think we are secretly undermining, it not openly destroying, the Church.

What do you mean by the Church? A visible Church (as our article defines it) is a company of faithful or believing people; — *coetus credentium*. This is the essence of a Church; and the properties thereof are, (as they are described in the words that follow,) “among whom the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered.” Now then, (according to this authentic account,) what is the Church of England? What is it indeed, but the faithful people, the true believers in England? It is true, if these are scattered abroad, they come under another consideration: But when they are visibly joined, by assembling together to hear the pure word of God preached, and to eat of one bread, and drink of one cup, they are then properly the visible Church of England.

**77.** It were well if this were a little more considered by those who so vehemently cry out, “The Church! the Church!” (as those of old, “The temple of the Lord! the temple of the Lord!”) not knowing what they speak, nor whereof they affirm. A provincial or national Church, according to our article, is the true believers of that province or nation. If these are dispersed up and down, they are only a part of the invisible Church of Christ. But if they are visibly joined by assembling together to hear his word and partake of his supper, they are then a visible Church, such as the Church of England, France, or any other.

**78.** This being premised, I ask, How do we undermine or destroy the Church, — the provincial, visible Church of England? The article mentions three things as essential to a visible Church. First: Living faith; without which, indeed, there can be no Church at all, neither visible nor invisible. Secondly: Preaching, and consequently hearing, the pure word of God, else that faith would languish and die. And, Thirdly, a due administration of the sacraments, — the ordinary means whereby God increaseth faith. Now

come close to the question: In which of these points do we undermine or destroy the Church?

Do we shut the door of faith? Do we lessen the number of believing people in England? Only remember what faith is, according to our Homilies, viz., “a sure trust and confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favor of God.” And we appeal to all mankind, Do we destroy this faith, which is the life and soul of the Church? Is there, in fact, less of this faith in England, than there was before we went forth? I think this is an assertion which the father of lies himself will scarce dare to utter or maintain.

With regard then to this First point, it is undeniable we neither undermine nor destroy the Church. The Second thing is the preaching and hearing the pure word of God. And do we hinder this? Do we hinder any Minister from preaching the pure word of God? If any preach not at all, or not the pure word of God, is the hindrance in us, or in themselves? or do we lessen the number of those that hear the pure word of God? Are then the hearers thereof (whether read or preached) fewer than they were in times past? Are the usual places of public worship less frequented by means of our preaching? Wheresoever our lot has been cast for any time, are the churches emptier than they were before? Surely, none that has any regard left either for truth or modesty will say that in this point we are enemies to, or destroyers of, the Church.

The Third thing requisite (if not to the being, at least) to the well-being of a Church, is the due administration of the sacraments, particularly that of the Lord’s supper. And are we, in this respect, undermines or destroyers of the Church? Do we, either by our example or advice, draw men away from the Lord’s table? Where we have labored most, are there the fewest communicants? How does the fact stand in London, Bristol, Newcastle? O that you would no longer shut your eyes against the broad light which encompasses you on every side!

**79.** I believe you are sensible, by this time, not only how weak this objection is, but likewise how easy it would be terribly to retort every branch of it upon most of those that make it; whether we speak of true living faith, of preaching the pure word of God, or of the due administration of the sacraments, both of baptism and the Lord’s supper.

But I spare you. It sufficeth that our God knoweth, and will make manifest in that day, whether it be by reason of us or you that “men abhor the offering of the Lord.”

**80.** Others object that we do not observe the laws of the Church, and thereby undermine it. What laws? the Rubrics or Canons? In every parish where I have been Curate yet, I have observed the Rubrics with a scrupulous exactness, not for wrath, but for conscience’ sake. And this, so far as belongs to an unbeneficed Minister, or to a private member of the Church, I do now. I will just mention a few of them, and leave you to consider which of us has observed, or does observe, them most.

**(1.)** Days of fasting or abstinence to be observed:

The forty days of Lent;  
The Ember days at the four seasons;  
The three Rogation days;  
All Fridays in the year, except Christmas-day.

**(2.)** “So many as intend to be partakers of the holy communion shall signify their names to the Curate, at least some time the day before:

“And if any of these be an open and notorious evil liver, the Curate shall advertise him, that in anywise he presume not to come to the Lord’s table, until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented.

**(3.)** “Then (after the Nicene Creed) the Curate shall declare unto the people what holidays or *fasting-days* are in the week following to be observed.

**(4.)** “The Minister shall first receive the communion in both kinds himself, and *then proceed to deliver the same to the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in like manner*, if any be present, and *after that*, to the people.

**(5.)** “In cathedral and collegiate churches, and colleges, where there are many Priests and Deacons, they shall *all receive the communion with the Priest every Sunday at the least*.

**(6.)** “The children to be baptized must be ready at the font *immediately after the last Lesson*.

(7.) “The Curates of every parish shall warn the people, that without great necessity they procure not their children to be baptized *at home in their houses*.

(8.) “The Curate of every parish shall diligently *upon Sundays and holidays, after the Second Lesson at Evening Prayer, openly in the church*, instruct and examine so many children as he shall think convenient, in some part of the Catechism.

(9.) “Whensoever the Bishop shall give notice for children to be brought unto him for their confirmation, the Curate of every parish shall either bring or *send in writing, with his hand subscribed thereunto, the names of all such persons* within his parish, as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop.”

**81.** Now, the question is not whether these Rubrics ought to be observed, (you take this for granted in making the objection,) but whether in fact they have been observed by you, or me, most. Many can witness I have observed them punctually, yea, sometimes at the hazard of my life; and as many, I fear, that you have not observed them at all, and that several of them you never pretended to observe. And is it you that are accusing me for not observing the Rubrics of the Church? What grimace is this! “O tell it not in Gath! Publish it not in the streets of Askelon!”

**82.** With regard to the Canons, I would, in the first place, desire you to consider two or three plain questions:

**First.** Have you ever read them over?

**Secondly.** How can these be called the Canons of the Church of England, seeing they were never legally established by the Church, never regularly confirmed in any full Convocation?

**Thirdly.** By what right am I required to observe such Canons as were never legally established?

And then I will join issue with you on one question more, viz., Whether you or I have observed them most.

To instance only in a few:

**“Canon 29.** — No person shall be admitted godfather or godmother to any child, before the said person hath received the holy communion.

**“Can. 59.** — Every Parson, Vicar, or Curate, upon *every Sunday and holiday, before Evening Prayer, shall, for half an hour, or more,* examine and instruct the youth and ignorant persons of his parish.

**“Can. 64.** — Every Parson, Vicar, or Curate, shall declare to the people every Sunday, whether there be any holidays or *fasting-days* the week following.

**“Can. 68.** — No Minister shall *refuse* or *delay* to christen any child that is brought to the church to him upon Sundays or holidays to be christened, or to bury any corpse that is brought to the church or church-yard.”

(N.B. Inability to pay fees does not alter the case.)

**“Can. 75.** — No ecclesiastical persons shall spend their time idly, by day or by night, playing at *dice, cards, or tables.*”

Now, let the Clergyman who has observed only these five Canons for one year last past, and who has read over all the Canons in his congregation; (as the King’s ratification straitly enjoins him to do once every year;) let him, I say, cast the first stone at us, for not observing the Canons (so called) of the Church of England.

**83.** “However, we cannot be,” it is said, “friends to the Church, because we do not obey the Governors of it, and submit ourselves (as at our ordination we promised to do) to all their godly admonitions and injunctions.”<sup>f6</sup> I answer, In every individual point of an indifferent nature, we do and will, by the grace of God, obey the Governors of the Church. But the testifying the gospel of the grace of God is not a point of an indifferent nature. “The ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus,” we are at all hazards to fulfill. It is the burden of the Lord which is laid upon us here; and we are “to obey God rather than man.” Nor yet do we in any ways violate the promise which each of us made, when it was said unto him, “Take thou authority to preach the word of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy ghost.” We then promised to *submit* (mark the words) *to the Godly admonitions and*

*injunctions of our Ordinary.* But we did not, could not, promise to obey such injunctions as we know are contrary to the word of God.

**84.** “But why then,” say some, “do you leave the Church?” *Leave the Church!* What can you mean? Do we leave so much as the Church walls? Your own eyes tell you we do not. Do we leave the ordinances of the Church? You daily see and know the contrary. Do we leave the fundamental doctrine of the Church, namely, salvation by faith? It is our constant theme, in public, in private, in writing, in conversation. Do we leave the practice of the Church, the standard whereof are the ten commandments? which are so essentially in-wrought in her constitution, (as little as you may apprehend it,) that whosoever breaks one of the least of these is no member of the Church of England. I believe you do not care to you the cause on this issue. Neither do you mean this by leaving the Church. In truth, I cannot conceive what you mean. I doubt you cannot conceive yourself. You have retailed a sentence from somebody else, which you no more understand than he. And no marvel; for it is a true observation,

Nonsense is never to be understood.

**85.** Nearly related to this is that other objection, that we divide the Church. Remember, the Church is the faithful people, or true believers. Now, how do we divide these? “Why, by our societies.” Very good. Now the case is plain. “We divide them,” you say, “by uniting them together.” Truly, a very uncommon way of dividing. “O, but we divide those who are thus united with each other, from the rest of the Church!” By no means. Many of them were before joined to all their brethren of the Church of England (and many were not, until they knew us) by “assembling themselves together,” to hear the word of God, and to eat of one bread, and drink of one cup. And do they now forsake that assembling themselves together? You cannot, you dare not, say it. You know they are more diligent therein than ever; it being one of the fixed rules of our societies, that every member attend the ordinances of God; that is, do not divide from the Church. And if any member of the Church does thus divide from or leave it, he hath no more place among us.

**86.** I have considered this objection the more at large, because it is of most weight with sincere minds. And to all these, if they have fairly and

impartially weighed the answer as well as the objection, I believe it clearly appears, that we are neither undermining nor destroying, neither dividing nor leaving, the Church. So far from it, that we have great heaviness on her account, yea, continual sorrow in our hearts. And our prayer to God is, that he would repair the breaches of Zion, and build the walls of Jerusalem; that this our desolate Church may flourish again, and be the praise of the whole earth.

**87.** But perhaps you have heard that we in truth regard no Church at all; that gain is the true spring of all our actions; that I, in particular, am well paid for my work, having thirteen hundred pounds a year (as a reverend author accurately computes it) at the Foundery alone, over and above what I receive from Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, and other places; and that whoever survives me will see I have made good use of my time; for I shall not die a beggar.

**88.** I freely own this is one of the best-devised objections which has ever yet been made; because it not only puts us upon proving a negative, (which is seldom an easy task,) but also one of such a kind as scarce admits of any demonstrative proof at all. But for such proof as the nature of the thing allows, I appeal to my manner of life which hath been from the beginning. Ye who have seen it (and not with a friendly eye) for these twelve or fourteen years last past, or for any part of that time, have ye ever seen anything like the love of gain therein? Did I not continually remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive?" Ye of Oxford, do ye not know these things are so? What gain did I seek among you? Of whom did I take anything? From whom did I covet silver, or gold, or apparel? To whom did I deny anything which I had, even to the hour that I departed from you? Ye of Epworth and Wroote, among whom I ministered for nearly the space of three years, what gain did I seek among you? Or of whom did I take or covet anything? Ye of Savannah and Frederica, among whom God afterwards proved me, and showed me what was in my heart, what gain did I seek among you? Of whom did I take anything? Or whose food or apparel did I covet, (for silver or gold had ye none, no more than I myself for many months,) even when I was in hunger and nakedness? Ye yourselves, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, know that I lie not.

**89.** “But,” it is said, “things are fairly altered now. Now I cannot complain of wanting anything; having the yearly income of a Bishop of London, over and above what I gain at other places.” At what other places, my friend? Inform yourself a little better, and you will find that both at Newcastle, Bristol, and Kingswood, and all other places, where any collection is made, the money collected is both received and expended by the stewards of those several societies, and never comes into my hands at all, — neither first nor last. And you, or any who desire it, shall read over the accounts kept by any of those stewards, and see with your own eyes, that by all these societies I gain just as much as you do.

**90.** The case in London stands thus: — In November, 1739, two gentlemen, then unknown to me, (Mr. Ball and Mr. Watkins,) came and desired me, once and again, to preach in a place called the Foundry, near Moorfields. With much reluctance I at length complied. I was soon after pressed to take that place into my own hands. Those who were most earnest therein lent me the purchase-money, which was one hundred and fifteen pounds. Mr. Watkins and Mr. Ball then delivered me the names of several subscribers, who offered to pay, some four or six, some ten shillings a year towards the repayment of the purchase-money, and the putting the buildings into repair. This amounted one year to near two hundred pounds, the second to about one hundred and forty pounds, and so the last.

**91.** The united society began a little after, whose weekly contribution for the poor is received and expended by the stewards, and comes not into my hands at all. But there is also a quarterly subscription of many of the society, which is nearly equal to that above mentioned.

**92.** The uses to which these subscriptions have been hitherto applied, are, First, the payment of that one hundred and fifteen pounds: Secondly, the repairing (I might almost say, rebuilding) that vast, uncouth heap of ruins, the Foundry: Thirdly, the building galleries both for men and women: Fourthly, the enlarging the society-room to near thrice its first bigness. All taxes and occasional expenses are likewise defrayed out of this fund. And it has been hitherto so far from yielding any overplus, that it has never sufficed for these purposes. So far from it, that I am still in debt, on these accounts, near three hundred pounds. So much have I hitherto gained by

preaching the gospel! besides a debt of one hundred and fifty pounds, still remaining on account of the school built at Bristol; and another of above two hundred pounds, on account of that now building at Newcastle. I desire any reasonable man would now sit down and lay these things together, and let him see, whether, allowing me a grain of common sense, if not of common honesty, he can possibly conceive, that a view of *gain* would induce me to act in this manner.

**93.** You can never reconcile it with any degree of common sense, that a man who wants nothing, who has already all the necessities, all the conveniences, nay, and many of the superfluities, of life, and these not only independent on any one, but less liable to contingencies than even a gentleman's freehold estate; that such an one should calmly and deliberately throw up his ease, most of his friends, his reputation, and that way of life which of all others is most agreeable both to his natural temper and education; that he should toil day and night, spend all his time and strength, knowingly destroy a firm constitution, and hasten into weakness, pain, diseases, death — to gain a debt of six or seven hundred pounds!

**94.** But suppose the balance on the other side, let me ask you one plain question: For what gain (setting conscience aside) will *you* be obliged to act thus? to live exactly as I do? For what price will you preach (and that with all your might, not in an easy, indolent, fashionable way) eighteen or nineteen times every week; and this throughout the year? What shall I give you to travel seven or eight hundred miles, in all weathers, every two or three months? For what salary will you abstain from all other diversions, than the doing good, and the praising God? I am mistaken if you would not prefer strangling to such a life, even with thousands of gold and silver.

**95.** And what is the comfort you have found out for me in these circumstances? Why, that I shall not die a beggar. So now I am supposed to be heaping up riches, that I may leave them behind me. *Leave them behind me!* For whom? my wife and children? Who are they? They are yet unborne. Unless thou meanest the children of faith whom God hath given me. But my heavenly Father feedeth them. Indeed, if I lay up riches at all, it must be to leave behind me; seeing my Fellowship is a provision for life. But I cannot understand this. What comfort would it be to my soul, now launched into eternity; that I had left behind me gold as the dust, and silver

as the sand of the sea? Will it follow me over the great gulf? or can I go back to it? Thou that liftest up thy eyes in hell, what do thy riches profit thee now? Will all thou once hadst under the sun gain thee a drop of water to cool thy tongue? O the comfort of riches left behind to one who is tormented in that flame! You put me in mind of those celebrated lines, (which I once exceeding admired,) addressed by way of consolation to the soul of a poor self-murderer: —

*Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be dress'd,  
And the green turf lie light upon thy breast!  
Here shall the year its earliest beauties show:  
Here the first roses of the spring shall blow:  
While angels with their silver wings o'ershade  
The place now sacred by thy relics made.*

**96.** I will now simply tell you my sense of these matters, whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear. Food and raiment I have; such food as I choose to eat, and such raiment as I choose to put on. I have a place where to lay my head. I have what is needful for life and godliness. And I apprehend this is all the world can afford. The kings of the earth can give me no more. For as to gold and silver, I count it dung and dross; I trample it under my feet. I (yet not I, but the grace of God that is in me) esteem it just as the mire in the streets. I desire it not; I seek it not; I only fear lest any of it should cleave to me, and I should not be able to shake it off before my spirit returns to God. It must indeed pass through my hands; but I will take care (God being my helper) that the mammon of unrighteousness shall only pass through; it shall not rest there. None of the accursed thing shall be found in my tents when the Lord calleth me hence. And hear ye this, all you who have discovered the treasures which I am to leave behind me: If I leave behind me ten pounds, (above my debts, and my books, or what may happen to be due on account of them,) you and all mankind bear witness against me, that I lived and died a thief and a robber.

**97.** Before I conclude, I cannot but entreat yon who know God to review the whole matter from the foundation. Call to mind what the state of religion was in our nation a few years since. In whom did you find the holy tempers that were in Christ? bowels of mercies, lowliness, meekness, gentleness, contempt of the world, patience, temperance, long-suffering? a

burning love to God, rejoicing evermore, and in everything giving thanks; and a tender love to all mankind, covering, believing, hoping, enduring all things? Perhaps you did not know one such man in the world. But how many that had all unholy tempers? What vanity and pride, what stubbornness and self-will, what anger, fretfulness, discontent, what suspicion and resentment, what inordinate affections, what irregular passions, what foolish and hurtful desires, might you find in those who were called the *best* of men, in those who made the strictest profession of religion? And how few did you know who went so far as the profession of religion, who had even the “form of godliness!” Did you not frequently bewail, wherever your lot was cast, the general want of even outward religion? How few were seen at the public worship of God! how much fewer at the Lord’s table! And was even this little flock zealous of good works, careful, as they had time, to do good to all men? On the other hand, did you not with grief observe outward irreligion in every place? Where could you be for one week without being an eye or an ear witness of cursing, swearing, or profaneness, of sabbath-breaking or drunkenness, of quarreling or brawling, of revenge or obscenity? Were these things done in a corner? Did not gross iniquity of all kinds overspread our land as a flood? yea, and daily increase, in spite of all the opposition which the children of God did or could make against it?

**98.** If you had been then told that the jealous God would soon arise and maintain his own cause; that he would pour down his Spirit from on high, and renew the face of the earth; that he would shed abroad his love in the hearts of the outcasts of men, producing all holy and heavenly tempers, expelling anger, and pride, and evil desire, and all unholy and earthly tempers; causing outward religion, the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love, to flourish and abound; and, wherever it spread, abolishing outward irreligion, destroying all the works of the devil: If you had been told that this living knowledge of the Lord would in a short space of time overspread our land; yea, and daily increase, in spite of all the opposition which the devil and his children did or could make against it; would you not have vehemently desired to see that day, that you might bless God and rejoice therein?

**99.** Behold, the day of the Lord is come! He is again visiting and redeeming his people. Having eyes, see ye not? Having ears, do ye not hear, neither

understand with your hearts? At this hour the Lord is rolling away our reproach. Already his standard is set up. His Spirit is poured forth on the outcasts of men, and his love shed abroad in their hearts. Love of all mankind, meekness, gentleness, humbleness of mind, holy and heavenly affections, do take place of hate, anger, pride, revenge, and vile or vain affections. Hence, wherever the power of the Lord spreads, springs outward religion in all its forms. The houses of God are filled; the table of the Lord is thronged on every side. And those who thus show their love of God, show they love their neighbor also, by being careful to maintain good works, by doing all manner of good, as they have time, to all men. They are likewise careful to abstain from all evil. Cursing, sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, with all other (however fashionable) works of the devil, are not once named among them. All this is plain, demonstrable fact. For this also is not done in a corner. Now, do you acknowledge the day of your visitation? Do you bless God and rejoice therein?

**100.** What hinders? Is it this, — that men say all manner of evil of those whom God is pleased to use as instruments in his work? O ye fools, did we suppose the devil was dead? or that he would not fight for his kingdom? And what weapons shall he fight with, if not with lies? Is he not a liar, and the father of it? Suffer ye then thus far. Let the devil and his children say all manner of evil of us. And let them go on deceiving each other, and being deceived. But we need not be deceived also; or if you are, if you will believe all they say, be it so, — that we are weak, silly, wicked men; without sense, without learning, without even a desire or design of doing good; yet I insist upon the fact: Christ is preached, and sinners are converted to God. This none but a madman can deny. We are ready to prove it by a cloud of witnesses. Neither, therefore, can the inference be denied, that God is now visiting his people. O that all men may know, in this their day, the things that make for their peace!

**101.** Upon the whole, to men of the world I would still recommend the known advice of Gamaliel: “Refrain from these men, and let them alone: For if this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.” But unto you whom God hath chosen out of the world, I say, Ye are our brethren, and of our father’s house; it behoveth you, in whatsoever manner ye are able, “to strengthen our hands in God.” And this ye are all able to

do; to wish us good luck in the name of the Lord, and to pray continually that none of “these things may move us,” and that “we may not count our lives dear unto ourselves, so that we may finish our course with joy, and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus!”

Written in the year 1744.

## PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY.

*HAPPY the souls who first believed,  
To Jesus and each other cleaved,  
Join'd by the unction from above,  
In mystic fellowship of love!*

*Meek, simple followers of the Lamb,  
They lived and spake and thought the same;  
Brake the commemorative bread,  
And drank the Spirit of their Head.*

*On God they cast their every care:  
Wrestling with God in mighty prayer.  
They claim'd the grace, through Jesus given;  
By prayer they shut and open'd heaven.*

*To Jesus they perform'd their vows:  
A little Church in every house,  
They joyfully conspired to raise  
Their ceaseless sacrifice of praise.*

*Propriety was there unknown,  
None call'd what he possess'd his own;  
Where all the common blessings share,  
No selfish happiness was there.*

*With grace abundantly endued,  
A pure, believing multitude!  
They all were of one heart and soul,  
And only love inspired the whole.*

*O what an age of golden days!  
O what a choice, peculiar race!  
Wash'd in the Lamb's all-cleansing blood,  
Anointed kings and priests to God.*

*Where shall I wander now to find  
The successors they left behind?  
The faithful whom I seek in vain,  
Are 'minished from the sons of men.*

*Ye different sects, who all declare,  
"Lo, here is Christ!" or, "Christ is there!"  
Your stronger proofs divinely give,  
And show me where the Christians live.*

*Your claim, alas! ye cannot prove,  
Ye want the genuine mark of love:  
Thou only, Lord, thine own canst show;  
For sure thou hast a Church below.*

*The gates of hell cannot prevail,  
The Church on earth can never fail:  
Ah! join me to thy secret ones!  
Ah! gather all thy living stones!*

*Scatter'd o'er all the earth they lie,  
Till thou collect them with thine eye,  
Draw by the music of thy name,  
And charm into a beauteous frame.*

*For this the pleading Spirit groans,  
And cries in all thy banish'd ones:  
Greatest of gifts, thy love, impart,  
And make us of one mind and heart!*

*Join every soul that looks to thee  
In bonds of perfect charity:  
Now, Lord, the glorious fulness give.  
And all in all for ever live!*

## **PART 2.**

*Jesus, from whom all blessings flow,  
Great Builder of thy Church below,  
If now thy Spirit moves my breast,  
Hear, and fulfil thy own request!*

*The few that truly call thee Lord,  
And wait thy sanctifying word,  
And thee their utmost Savior own,  
Unite, and perfect them in one.*

*Gather them in on every side,  
And in thy tabernacle hide;  
Give them a resting-place to find,  
A covert from the storm and wind.*

*O find them out some calm recess,  
Some unfrequented wilderness!  
Thou, Lord, the secret place prepare,  
And hide and feed "the woman" there.*

*Thither collect thy little flock,  
Under the shadow of their Rock:  
The holy seed, the royal race,  
The standing monuments of thy grace.*

*O let them all thy mind express,  
Stand forth thy chosen witnesses!  
Thy power unto salvation show,  
And perfect holiness below:*

*The fulness of thy grace receive,  
And simply to thy glory live;  
Strongly reflect the light divine,  
And in a land of darkness shine.*

*In them let all mankind behold  
How Christians lived in days of old;  
Mighty their envious woes to move,  
A proverb of reproach — and love.*

*O make them of one soul and heart,  
The all-conforming mind impart;  
Spirit of peace and unity,  
The sinless mind that was in thee.*

*Call them into thy wondrous light,  
Worthy to walk with thee in white;  
Make up thy jewels, Lord, and show  
The glorious, spotless Church below.*

*From every sinful wrinkle free,  
Redeem'd from all iniquity;  
The fellowship of saints make known;  
And O, my God, might I be one!*

*O might my lot be cast with these,  
The least of Jesu's witnesses!  
O that my Lord would count me meet  
To wash his dear disciples' feet!*

*This only thing do I require,  
 Thou know'st 'tis all my heart's desire,  
 Freely what I receive to give,  
 The servant of thy Church to live:*

*After my lowly Lord to go,  
 And wait upon the saints below;  
 Enjoy the grace to angels given,  
 And serve the royal heirs of heaven.*

*Lord, if I now thy drawings feel,  
 And ask according to thy will,  
 Confirm the prayer, the seal impart,  
 And speak the answer to my heart!*

*Tell me, or thou shalt never go,  
 "Thy prayer is heard, it shall be so:" —  
 The word hath passed thy lips, — and I  
 Shall with thy people live and die.*

# A FARTHER APPEAL

## TO

### MEN OF REASON AND RELIGION.

*Let the righteous smite me friendly, and reprove me.* <sup><495></sup> *Psalm 141:5.*

#### PART 1.

IN a former treatise I declared, in the plainest manner I could, both my principles and practice; and answered some of the most important, as well as the most common, objections to each. But I have not yet delivered my own soul. I believe it is still incumbent upon me to answer other objections, particularly such as have been urged by those who are esteemed religious or reasonable men.

These partly relate to the *doctrines* I teach, partly to my *manner* of teaching them, and partly to the *effects* which are supposed to follow from teaching these doctrines in this manner.

#### I.

**1.** I will briefly mention what those doctrines are, before I consider the objections against them. Now, all I teach respects either the nature and condition of justification, the nature and condition of salvation, the nature of justifying and saving faith, or the Author of faith and salvation.

**2.** First: The nature of justification. It sometimes means our acquittal at the last day. (<sup><412></sup> Matthew 12:37.) But this is altogether out of the present question; that justification whereof our Articles and Homilies speak, meaning present forgiveness, pardon of sins, and, consequently, acceptance with God; who therein “declares his righteousness” (or mercy, by or) “for the remission of the sins that are past;” saying, “I will be

merciful to thy unrighteousness, and thine iniquities I will remember no more.” (☞Romans 3:25; ☞Hebrews 8:12.)

I believe the condition of this is faith: (☞Romans 4:5, etc.:) I mean, not only, that without faith we cannot be justified; but, also, that as soon as any one has true faith, in that moment he is justified.

Good works follow this faith, but cannot go before it: (☞Luke 6:43:) Much less can sanctification, which implies a continued course of good works, springing from holiness of heart. But it is allowed, that entire sanctification goes before our justification at the last day. (☞Hebrews 12:14.)

It is allowed, also, that repentance, and “fruits meet for repentance,” go before faith. (☞Mark 1:15; ☞Matthew 3:8.) Repentance absolutely must go before faith; fruits meet for it, if there be opportunity. By repentance, I mean conviction of sin, producing real desires and sincere resolutions of amendment; and by “fruits meet for repentance,” forgiving our brother; (☞Matthew 6:14, 15;) ceasing from evil, doing good; (☞Luke 3:3, 4, 9, etc.:) using the ordinances of God, and in general obeying him according to the measure of grace which we have received. (☞Matthew 7:7; ☞25:29.) But these I cannot as yet term good works; because they do not spring from faith and the love of God.

**3.** By salvation I mean, not barely, according to the vulgar notion, deliverance from hell, or going to heaven; but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity; a recovery of the divine nature; the renewal of our souls after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and truth. This implies all holy and heavenly tempers, and, by consequence, all holiness of conversation.

Now, if by salvation we mean a present salvation from sin, we cannot say, holiness is the condition of it; for it is the thing itself. Salvation, in this sense, and holiness, are synonymous terms. We must therefore say, “We are saved by faith.” Faith is the sole condition of this salvation. For without faith we cannot be thus saved. But whosoever believeth is saved already.

Without faith we cannot be thus saved; for we cannot rightly serve God unless we love him. And we cannot love him unless we know him; neither can we know God unless by faith. Therefore, salvation by faith is only, in other words, the love of God by the knowledge of God; or, the recovery of the image of God, by a true, spiritual acquaintance with him.

**4.** Faith, in general, is a divine, supernatural ελεγχος<sup>f7</sup> of things not seen, not discoverable by our bodily senses, as being either past, future, or spiritual. Justifying faith implies, not only a divine ελεγχος, that God “was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,” but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for my sins, that he loved me, and gave himself for me. And the moment a penitent sinner believes this, God pardons and absolves him.

And as soon as his pardon or justification is witnessed to him by the Holy Ghost, he is saved. He loves God and all mankind. He has “the mind that was in Christ,” and power to “walk as he also walked.” From that time (unless he make shipwreck of the faith) salvation gradually increases in his soul. For “so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and it springeth up, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.”

**5.** The first sowing of this seed I cannot conceive to be other than instantaneous; whether I consider experience, or the word of God, or the very nature of the thing; — however, I contend not for a circumstance, but the substance: If you can attain it another way, do. Only see that you do attain it; for if you fall short, you perish everlastingly.

This beginning of that vast, inward change, is usually termed, the new birth. Baptism is the outward sign of this inward grace, which is supposed by our Church to be given with and through that sign to all infants, and to those of riper years, if they repent and believe the gospel. But how extremely idle are the common disputes on this head! I tell a sinner, “You must be born again.” “No,” say you: “He was born again in baptism. Therefore he cannot be born again now.” Alas, what trifling is this! What, if he was *then* a child of God? He is *now* manifestly a child of the devil; for the works of his father he doeth. Therefore, do not play upon words. He must go through an entire change of heart. In one not yet baptized, you yourself would call that change, the new birth. In him, call it what you

will; but remember, meantime, that if either he or you die without it, your baptism will be so far from profiting you, that it will greatly increase your damnation.

**6.** The author of faith and salvation is God alone. It is he that works in us both to will and to do. He is the sole Giver of every good gift, and the sole Author of every good work. There is no more of power than of merit in man; but as all merit is in the Son of God, in what he has done and suffered for us, so all power is in the Spirit of God. And therefore every man, in order to believe unto salvation, must receive the Holy Ghost. This is essentially necessary to every Christian, not in order to his working miracles, but in order to faith, peace, joy, and love, — the ordinary fruits of the Spirit.

Although no man on earth can explain the particular manner wherein the Spirit of God works on the soul, yet whosoever has these fruits, cannot but know and *feel* that God has wrought them in his heart.

Sometimes He acts more particularly on the understanding, opening or enlightening it, (as the Scripture speaks,) and revealing, unveiling, discovering to us “the deep things of God.”

Sometimes He acts on the wills and affections of men; withdrawing them from evil, inclining them to good, inspiring (breathing, as it were) good thoughts into them: So it has frequently been expressed, by an easy, natural metaphor, strictly analogous to **רוח**, **πνευμα**, *spiritus*, and the words used in most modern tongues also, to denote the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity. But however it be expressed, it is certain all true faith, and the whole work of salvation, every good thought, word, and work, is altogether by the operation of the Spirit of God.

## II.

**1.** I come now to consider the principal objections which have lately been made against these doctrines.

I know nothing material which has been objected as to the nature of justification; but many persons seem to be very confused in their thoughts

concerning it, and speak as if they had never heard of any justification antecedent to that of the last day. To clear up this, there needs only a closer inspection of our Articles and Homilies; wherein justification is always taken for the present remission of our sins.

But many are the objections which have been warmly urged against the condition of justification, faith alone; particularly in two treatises, the former entitled, “The Notions of the Methodists *fully* disproved;” the second, “The Notions of the Methodists *farther* disproved:” In both of which it is vehemently affirmed,

(1.) That this is not a scriptural doctrine;

(2.) That it is not the doctrine of the Church of England.

It will not be needful to name the former of these any more; seeing there is neither one text produced therein to prove this doctrine unscriptural, nor one sentence from the Articles or Homilies to prove it contrary to the doctrine of the Church. But so much of the latter as relates to the merits of the *cause*, I will endeavor to consider calmly. As to what is *personal*, I leave it as it is. “God be merciful to me, a sinner!”

2. To prove this doctrine unscriptural, — That faith alone is the condition of justification, — you allege, that “sanctification, according to Scripture, must go before it:” To evince which, you quote the following texts, which I leave as I find them: “Go, disciple all nations, — teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.” (<sup><418></sup>Matthew 28:19, 20.) “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (<sup><4136></sup>Mark 16:16.) “Preach repentance and remission of sins.” (<sup><4247></sup>Luke 24:47.) “Repent, and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins.” (<sup><4128></sup>Acts 2:38.) “Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” (<sup><4189></sup>3:19.) “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” (<sup><3014></sup>Hebrews 10:14.) You add, “St. Paul taught ‘repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;’” (<sup><421></sup>Acts 20:21;) and calls ‘repentance from dead works, and faith toward God,’ first principles. (<sup><3011></sup>Hebrews 6:1.)”

You subjoin: “But ‘ye are washed,’ says he, ‘but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.’ By ‘washed,’ is meant their baptism; and by their baptism is meant, first, their sanctification, and then their justification.” This is a flat

begging the question; you take for granted the very point which you ought to prove. “St. Peter also,” you say, “affirms that ‘baptism doth save us,’ or justify us.” Again you beg the question; you take for granted what I utterly deny, viz., that *save* and *justify* are here synonymous terms. Till this is proved, you can draw no inference at all; for you have no foundation whereon to build.

I conceive these and all the scriptures which can be quoted to prove sanctification antecedent to justification, (if they do not relate to our final justification,) prove only, (what I have never denied,) that repentance, or conviction of sin, and fruits meet for repentance, precede that faith whereby we are justified: But by no means, that the love of God, or any branch of true holiness, must or can precede faith.

**3.** It is objected, Secondly, that justification by faith alone is not the doctrine of the Church of England.

“You believe,” says the writer above-mentioned, “that no good work can be previous to justification, nor, consequently, a condition of it. But, God be praised, our Church has nowhere delivered such *abominable* doctrine.” (Page 14.)

“The Clergy contend for inward holiness, as previous to the first justification; — this is the doctrine they universally inculcate, and which you cannot oppose without contradicting the doctrine of our Church.” (Page 26.)

“All your strongest persuasives to the love of God will not blanch over the deformity of that doctrine, that men may be justified by faith alone; — unless you publicly recant this *horrid* doctrine, your faith is vain.” (Page 27.)

“If you will vouchsafe to purge out this *venomous* part of your principles, in which the *wide, essential, fundamental, irreconcilable difference*, as you very justly term it, mainly consists, then there will be found, so far, no disagreement between you and the Clergy of the Church of England.” (*Ibid.*)

**4.** In order to be clearly and fully satisfied what the doctrine of the Church of England is, (as it stands opposite to the doctrine of the Antinomians, on

the one hand, and to that of justification by works, on the other,) I will simply set down what occurs on this head, either in her Liturgy, Articles, or Homilies: —

“Spare thou them, O God, which *confess their faults*: Restore thou them that are *penitent*, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“He pardoneth and absolveth all them that *truly repent*, and *unfeignedly believe* his holy gospel.”

“Almighty God, who dost forgive the sins of them that are *penitent*, create and make in us new and contrite hearts; that we, *worthily lamenting our sins*, and *acknowledging our wretchedness*, may obtain of thee perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (*Collect for Ash-Wednesday.*)

“Almighty God — hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with *hearty repentance and true faith* turn unto him.” (*Communion Office.*)

“Our Lord Jesus Christ hath left power to absolve all sinners who *truly repent and believe* in him.” (*Visitation of the Sick.*)

“Give him *unfeigned repentance* and steadfast *faith*, that his sins may be blotted out.” (*Ibid.*)

“He is a merciful receiver of all true *penitent* sinners, and is ready to pardon us, if we come unto him with *faithful repentance*.” (*Communion Office.*)

Infants, indeed, our Church supposes to be justified in baptism, although they cannot then either believe or repent. But she expressly requires both repentance and faith in those who come to be baptized when they are of riper years.

As earnestly, therefore, as our Church inculcates justification by faith alone, she nevertheless supposes repentance to be previous to faith, and fruits meet for repentance; yea, and universal holiness to be previous to final justification, as evidently appears from the following words: —

“Let us beseech him — that the rest of our life may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy.”

*(Absolution.)*

“May we seriously apply our hearts to that holy and heavenly wisdom here, which may in the end bring us to life everlasting.”

*(Visitation of the Sick.)*

“Raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, — that at the last day we may be found acceptable in thy sight.”

*(Burial Office.)*

“If we from henceforth walk in his ways, — seeking always his glory, Christ will set us on his right hand.” *(Communion Office.)*

**5.** We come next to the Articles of our Church: The former part of the Ninth runs thus: —

### **OF ORIGINAL OR BIRTH-SIN.**

“Original Sin — is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, — whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation.”

### **ARTICLE X. — OF FREE-WILL.**

“The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a goodwill, and working with us when we have that goodwill.”

### **ARTICLE XI. — OF THE JUSTIFICATION OF MAN.**

“We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a

most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as most largely is expressed in the Homily Justification.”

I believe this Article relates to the *meritorious cause* of justification, rather than to the *condition* of it. On this, therefore, I do not build anything concerning it, but on those that follow.

## ARTICLE XII. — OF GOOD WORKS.

“Albeit, that good works, which are the fruits of faith and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith: Insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree may be known by the fruit.”

We are taught here,

- (1.) That good works in general follow after justification.
- (2.) That they spring out of a true and lively faith, that faith whereby we are justified.
- (3) That true, justifying faith may be as evidently known by them as a tree discerned by the fruit.

Does it not follow, that the supposing any good work to go before justification is full as absurd as the supposing an apple, or any other fruit, to grow before the tree?

But let us hear the Church, speaking yet more plainly: —

## ARTICLE XIII. — OF WORKS DONE BEFORE JUSTIFICATION.

“Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit,” (that is, before justification, as the title expresses it,) “are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesu Christ. Yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not they have the nature of sin.”

Now, if all works done before justification have the nature of sin, (both because they spring not of faith in Christ, and because they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done,) what becomes of sanctification previous to justification? It is utterly excluded; seeing whatever is previous to justification is not good or holy, but evil and sinful.

Although, therefore, our Church does frequently assert that we ought to repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, if ever we would attain to that faith whereby alone we are justified; yet she never asserts (and here the hinge of the question turns) that these are good works, so long as they are previous to justification. Nay, she expressly asserts the direct contrary, viz., that they have all the nature of sin. So that this “horrid, scandalous, wicked, abominable, venomous, blasphemous doctrine,” is nevertheless the doctrine of the Church of England.

**6.** It remains to consider what occurs in the Homilies, first with regard to the meritorious cause of our justification, agreeable to the eleventh; and then with regard to the condition of it, agreeable to the twelfth and thirteenth Articles: —

“These things must go together in our justification; — upon God’s part, his great mercy and grace; upon Christ’s part, the satisfaction of God’s justice; and upon our part, true and lively faith in the merits of Jesus Christ.” (*Homily on Salvation. Part I.*)

“So that the grace of God doth not shut out the justice (or righteousness) of God in our justification; but only shutteth out the righteousness of man, — as to deserving our justification.

“And therefore St. Paul declareth nothing on the behalf of man, concerning his justification, but only a true faith.

“And yet that faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love, to be joined with faith (that is, afterwards; *see below*) in every man that is justified: Neither doth faith shut out the righteousness of our good works, necessarily to be done afterwards. But it excludeth them so that we may not do them to this intent, — to be made just (or, to be justified) by doing them.

“That we are justified by faith alone, is spoken to take away clearly all merit of our works, and wholly to ascribe the merit and deserving of our justification unto Christ only.” (*Ibid.* Part II.)

“The true meaning of this saying, ‘We be justified by faith only,’ is this, ‘We be justified by the *merits* of Christ only, and not of our own works.’” (*Ibid.* Part III.)

**7.** Thus far touching the meritorious cause of our justification; referred to in the Eleventh Article. The Twelfth and Thirteenth are a summary of what now follows, with regard to the condition of it: —

“Of justifying, true faith, three things are specially to be noted: First, that it bringeth forth good works: Secondly, that without it can no good works be done: Thirdly, what good works it doth bring forth.” (*Sermon on Faith.* Part I.)

“Without faith can no good work be done, accepted and pleasant unto God. For ‘as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself,’ saith our Savior Christ, ‘except it abide in the vine, so cannot you, except you abide in me.’ Faith giveth life to the soul; and they be as much dead to God that lack faith, as they be to the world whose bodies lack souls. Without faith all that is done of us is but dead before God. Even as a picture is but a dead representation of the thing itself, so be the works of all unfaithful (unbelieving) persons before God. They be but shadows of lively and good things, and not good things indeed. For true faith doth give life to the works, and without faith no work is good before God.” (*Ibid.* Part III.)

“We must set no good works before faith, nor think that before faith a man may do any good works. For such works are as the course of an horse that runneth out of the way, which taketh great labor, but to no purpose.” (*Ibid.*)

“Without faith we have no virtues, but only the shadows of them. All the life of them that lack the true faith is sin.” (*Ibid.*)

“As men first have life, and after be nourished, so must our faith go before, and after be nourished with, good works. And life may be

without nourishment, but nourishment cannot be without life.”  
*(Homily of Works annexed to Faith. Part I.)*

“I can show a man that by faith without works lived and came to heaven. But without faith never man had life. The thief on the cross only believed, and the most merciful God justified him. Truth it is, if he had lived and not regarded faith and the works thereof, he should have lost his salvation again. But this I say, faith by itself saved him. But works by themselves never justified any man.

“Good works go not before in him which shall afterwards be justified. But good works do follow after when a man is first justified.” *(Homily on Fasting. Part I.)*

**8.** From the whole tenor then of her Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies, the doctrine of the Church of England appears to be this: —

- (1.) That no good work, properly so called, can go before justification.
- (2.) That no degree of true sanctification can be previous to it.
- (3.) That as the meritorious cause of justification is the life and death of Christ, so the condition of it is faith, faith alone. And,
- (4.) That both inward and outward holiness are consequent on this faith, and are the ordinary, stated condition of final justification.

**9.** And what more can *you* desire, who have hitherto opposed justification by faith alone, merely upon a principle of conscience; because you was zealous for holiness and good works? Do I not effectually secure these from contempt at the same time that I defend the doctrines of the Church? I not only allow, but vehemently contend, that none shall ever enter into glory who is not holy on earth, as well in heart, as “in all manner of conversation.” I cry aloud, “Let all that have believed, be careful to maintain good works;” and, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from all iniquity.” I exhort even those who are conscious they do not believe: “Cease to do evil, learn to do well: The kingdom of heaven is at hand;” therefore, “repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.” Are not these directions the very same in substance which you yourself would give to persons so circumstanced? What means then this endless strife of words? Or what doth your arguing prove?

**10.** Many of those who are perhaps as zealous of good works as you, think I have allowed you too much. Nay, my brethren, but how can we help allowing it, if we allow the Scriptures to be from God? For is it not written, and do not you yourselves believe, “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord?” And how then, without fighting, about words, can we deny that holiness is a condition of final acceptance? And as to the first acceptance or pardon, does not all experience, as well as Scripture, prove that no man ever yet truly believed the gospel who did not first repent? that none was ever yet truly “convinced of righteousness,” who was not first “convinced of sin?” Repentance, therefore, in this sense, we cannot deny to be necessarily previous to faith. Is it not equally undeniable, that the running back into known, willful sin, (suppose it were drunkenness or uncleanness,) stifles that repentance or conviction? And can that repentance come to any good issue in his soul, who resolves not to forgive his brother; or who obstinately refrains from what God convinces him is right, whether it be prayer or hearing his word? Would you scruple yourself to tell one of these, “Why, if you *will* thus drink away all conviction, how should you ever truly know your want of Christ; or, consequently, believe in him? If you will not forgive your brother his trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses. If you will not ask, how can you expect to receive? If you will not hear, how can ‘faith come by hearing?’ It is plain you ‘grieve the Spirit of God;’ you will not have him to reign over you. Take care that he does not utterly depart from you. For ‘unto him that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not,’ that is, uses it not, ‘shall be taken away, even that which he hath.’” Would you scruple, on a proper occasion, to say this? You could not scruple it if you believe the Bible. But in saying this, you allow all which I have said, viz., that previous to justifying faith, there must be repentance, and, if opportunity permit, “fruits meet for repentance.”

**11.** And yet I allow you this, that although both repentance and the fruits thereof are in some sense necessary before justification, yet neither the one nor the other is necessary in the same sense, or in the same degree, with faith. Not in the same degree; for in whatever moment a man believes (in the Christian sense of the word) he is justified, his sins are blotted out, “his faith is counted to him for righteousness.” But it is not so at whatever moment he repents, or brings forth any or all the fruits of repentance.

Faith alone, therefore, justifies; which repentance alone does not, much less any outward work. And, consequently, none of these are necessary to justification, in the same degree with faith.

Nor in the same sense. For none of these has so direct, immediate a relation to justification as faith. This is proximately necessary thereto; repentance, remotely, as it is necessary to the increase or continuance of faith. And even in this sense these are only necessary on supposition, — if there be time and opportunity for them; for in many instances there is not; but God cuts short his work, and faith prevents the fruits of repentance. So that the general proposition is not overthrown, but clearly established by these concessions; and we conclude still, both on the authority of Scripture and the Church, that faith alone is the proximate condition of justification.

### III.

**1.** I was once inclined to believe that none would openly object against what I had anywhere said of the nature of salvation. How greatly then was I surprised some months ago, when I was shown a kind of circular letter, which one of those whom “the Holy Ghost hath made overseers” of his Church, <sup>f8</sup> I was informed, had sent to all the Clergy of his diocese!

Part of it ran (nearly, if not exactly) thus: —

“There is great indiscretion in preaching up a sort of religion, as the true and only Christianity, which, in their own account of it, consists in an enthusiastic ardor, to be understood or attained by very few, and not to be practiced without breaking in upon the common duties of life.”

O, my Lord, what manner of words are these! Supposing candor and love out of the question, are they the words of truth? I dare stake my life upon it, there is not one true clause in all this paragraph.

The propositions contained therein are these: —

**(1.)** That the religion I preach consists in enthusiastic ardor.

- (2.) That it can be attained by very few.
- (3.) That it can be understood by very few.
- (4.) That it cannot be practiced without breaking in upon the common duties of life.
- (5.) And that all this may be proved by my own account of it.

I earnestly entreat your Grace to review my own account of it, as it stands in any of my former writings; or to consider the short account which is given in this; and if you can thence make good any one of those propositions, I do hereby promise, before God and the world, that I will never preach more.

At present I do not well understand what your Grace means by “an enthusiastic ardor.” Surely you do not mean the love of God! No, not though a poor, pardoned sinner should carry it so far as to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength! But this alone is the ardor which I preach up as the foundation of the true and only Christianity. I pray God so to fill your whole heart therewith, that you may praise him for ever and ever.

But why should your Grace believe that the love of God can be attained by very few; or, that it can be understood by very few? All who attain it understand it well. And did not He who is loving to every man design that every man should attain true love? “O that all would know, in this their day, the things that make for their peace!”

And cannot the love both of God and our neighbor be practiced, without breaking in upon the common duties of life? Nay, can any of the common duties of life be rightly practiced without them? I apprehend not. I apprehend I am then laying the true, the only foundation for all those duties, when I preach, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.”

2. With this letter was sent (I believe to every Clergyman in the diocese) the pamphlet, entitled, “Observations on the Conduct and Behavior of a certain Sect, usually distinguished by the name of *Methodists*.” It has been generally supposed to be wrote by a person who is every way my superior. Perhaps one reason why he did not inscribe his name was, that

his greatness might not make me afraid; and that I might have liberty to stand as it were on even ground, while I answer for myself.

In considering, therefore, such parts of these “Observations” as fall in my way, I will take that method which I believe the author desires, using no ceremony at all; but speaking as to an equal, that it may the more easily be discerned where the truth lies.

The first query relating to doctrine is this: —

“Whether notions in religion may not be heightened to such extremes, as to lead some into a disregard of religion itself, through despair of attaining such exalted heights: And whether others who have imbibed those notions may not be led by them into a disregard and disesteem of the common duties and offices of life; to such a degree, at least, as is inconsistent with that attention to them, and that diligence in them, which Providence has made necessary to the well-being of private families and public societies, and which Christianity does not only require in all stations, and in all conditions, but declares at the same time, that the performance even of the lowest offices in life, as unto God, (whose providence has placed people in their several stations,) is truly a serving of Christ, and will not fail of its reward in the next world.”

You have interwoven so many particulars in this general question, that I must divide and answer them one by one.

**Query 1.** Whether notions in religion may not be heightened to such extremes, as to lead some into a disregard of religion itself.

**Answer.** They may. But that I have *so* heightened them, it lies upon you to prove.

**Q. 2.** Whether others may not be led into a disregard of religion, through despair of attaining such exalted heights.

**A.** What heights? the loving God with all our heart? I believe this is the most exalted height in man or angel. But I have not heard that any have been led into a disregard of religion through despair of attaining this.

**Q. 3.** Whether others who have imbibed these notions may not be led by them into a disregard and disesteem of the common duties and offices of life.

**A.** My notions are, True religion is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves; and in that love abstaining from all evil, and doing all possible good to all men. Now, it is not possible, in the nature of things, that any should be led by these notions into either a disregard or disesteem of the common duties and offices of life.

**Q. 4.** But may they not be led by them into such a degree, at least, of disregard for the common duties of life as is inconsistent with that attention to them, and diligence in them, which Providence has made necessary?

**A.** No; quite the reverse. They lead men to discharge all those duties with the strictest diligence and closest attention.

**Q. 5.** Does not Christianity require this attention and diligence in all stations and in all conditions?

**A.** Yes.

**Q. 6.** Does it not declare that the performance even of the lowest offices of life, as unto God, is truly “a serving of Christ;” and will not fail of its reward in the next world?

**A.** It does. But whom are you confuting? Not me; for this is the doctrine I preach continually.

**3.** Query the Second: — “Whether the enemy of Christianity may not find his account in carrying Christianity, which was designed for a rule to all stations and all conditions, to such heights as make it practicable by a very few, in comparison, or rather, by none.”

I answer,

**(1.)** The height to which we carry Christianity (as was but now observed) is this: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.”

**(2.)** The enemy of Christianity cannot find his account in our carrying it to this height.

**(3.)** You will not say, on reflection, that Christianity, even in this height, is practicable by very few, or rather, by none: You yourself will confess this *is* a rule (as God designed it should) for all stations and all conditions.

Query the Third: — “Whether, in particular, the carrying the doctrine of justification by faith alone to such a height as not to allow that a sincere and careful observance of moral duties is so much as a condition of our acceptance with God, and of our being justified in his sight: Whether this, I say, does not naturally lead people to a disregard of those duties, and a low esteem of them; or, rather, to think them no part of the Christian religion.”

I trust justification by faith alone has been so explained above, as to secure not only a high esteem but also a careful and sincere observance of all moral duties.

**4.** Query the Fourth: — “Whether a due and regular attendance on the public offices of religion, paid by good men in a serious and composed way, does not answer the true ends of devotion, and is not a better evidence of the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, than those sudden agonies, roarings, screamings, tremblings, droppings down, ravings, and madresses, into which their hearers have been cast.”

I must answer this query likewise part by part.

**Query 1.** Whether a due and regular attendance on the public offices of religion, paid in a serious and composed way, by good (that is, well-meaning) men, does not answer the true ends of devotion.

**Answer.** I suppose, by devotion, you mean public worship; by the true ends of it, the love of God and man; and by a due and regular attendance on the public offices of religion, paid in a serious and composed way, the going as often as we have opportunity to our parish church, and to the sacrament there administered. If so, the question is, whether this attendance on those offices does not produce the love of God and man. I answer, Sometimes it does; and sometimes it does not. I myself thus

attended them for many years; and yet am conscious to myself that during that whole time I had no more of the love of God than a stone. And I know many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of serious persons, who are ready to testify the same thing.

**Q. 2.** But is not this a better evidence of the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, than those sudden agonies?

**A.** All these persons, as well as I, can testify also that this is no evidence at all of the cooperation of the Holy Spirit. For some years I attended these public offices, because I would not be punished for non-attendance. And many of these attended them, because their parents did before them, or because they would not lose their character: Many more, because they confounded the means with the end, and fancied this *opus operatum* would bring them to heaven. How many thousands are now under this strong delusion! Beware, you bring not their blood on your own head!

**Q. 3.** However, does not this attendance better answer those ends, than those roarings, screaming? etc.

**A.** I suppose you mean, better than an attendance on that preaching, which has often been accompanied with these.

I answer,

**(1.)** There is no manner of need to set the one in opposition to the other; seeing we continually exhort all who attend on our preaching to attend the offices of the Church. And they do pay a more regular attendance there than ever they did before.

**(2.)** Their attending the Church did not, in fact, answer those ends at all till they attended this preaching also.

**(3.)** It is the preaching of remission of sins through Jesus Christ, which alone answers the true ends of devotion. And this will always be accompanied with the co-operation of the Holy Spirit; though not always with sudden agonies, roarings, screaming, tremblings, or droppings down. Indeed, if God is pleased at any time to permit any of these, I cannot hinder it. Neither can this hinder the work of his

Spirit in the soul; which may be carried on either with or without them. But,

(4.) I cannot apprehend it to be any reasonable proof, that “this is not the work of God,” that a convinced sinner should “fall into an extreme agony, both of body and soul;” (*Journal III*;) that another should “roar for the disquietness of her heart;” that others should scream or “cry with a loud and bitter cry, ‘What must we do to be saved?’” that others should “exceedingly tremble and quake;” and others, in a deep sense of the majesty of God, “should fall prostrate upon the ground.”

Indeed, by picking out one single word from a sentence, and then putting together what you had gleaned in sixty or seventy pages, you have drawn a terrible group for them who look no farther than those two lines in the “Observations.” But the bare addition of half a line to each word, just as it stands in the place from which you quoted it, reconciles all both to Scripture and reason; and the spectre-form vanishes away.

You have taken into your account ravings and madresses too. As instances of the former, you refer to the case of John Haydon, and of Thomas Maxfield. I wish you would calmly consider his reasoning on that head, who is not prejudiced in my favor: “What influence sudden and sharp awakenings may have upon the body, I pretend not to explain. But I make no question, Satan, so far as he gets power, may exert himself on such occasions, partly to hinder the good work in the persons who are thus touched with the sharp arrows of conviction, and partly to disparage the work of God, as if it tended to lead people to distraction.”

For instances of madness you refer to pages 88, 90, 91, 92, 93. The words in page 88 are these: —

“I could not but be under some concern, with regard to one or two persons, who were tormented in an unaccountable manner, and seemed to be indeed lunatic as well as ‘sore vexed.’ Soon after I was sent for to one of these, who was so strangely ‘torn of the devil,’ that I almost wondered her relations did not say, Much religion ‘hath made thee mad.’ We prayed God to bruise Satan under her feet. Immediately ‘we had the petition we asked of him.’ She cried out vehemently, ‘He is gone! he is gone!’ and was filled

with the Spirit of 'love, and of a sound mind.' I have seen her many times since strong in the Lord. When I asked, abruptly, 'What do you desire now?' she answered, 'Heaven.' I asked, 'What is in your heart?' She replied, 'God.' I asked, 'But how is your heart when anything provokes you?' She said, 'By the grace of God, I am not provoked at anything. All the things of this world pass by me as shadows.'" Are these the words of one that is beside herself? Let any man of reason judge!

Your next instance (p. 90) stands thus: —

"About noon I came to Usk, where I preached to a small company of poor people, on, 'The Son of man is come to save that which is lost.' One gray-headed man wept and trembled exceedingly; and another who was there, (I have since heard,) as well as two or three who were at the Devauden, are gone quite distracted; that is, (my express words, that immediately follow, specify what it was which some accounted distraction,) 'they mourn and refuse to be comforted, until they have redemption through his blood.'"

If you think the case mentioned pp. 92, 93, to be another instance of madness, I contend not. It was because I did not understand that uncommon case that I prefaced it with this reflection: "The fact I nakedly relate, and leave every man to his own judgment upon it." Only be pleased to observe, that this madness, if such it was, is no more chargeable upon me than upon you. For the subject of it had no relation to, or commerce with, me; nor had I ever seen her before that hour.

**5. Query the Fifth:** — "Whether those exalted strains in religion, and an imagination of being already in a state of perfection, are not apt to lead men to spiritual pride, and to a contempt of their fellow-Christians; while they consider them as only going on in what they call the low and imperfect way, (that is, as growing in grace and goodness only by degrees,) even though it appear by the lives of those who are considered by them as in that low and imperfect way, that they are persons who are gradually working out their salvation by their own honest endeavors, and through the ordinary assistances of God's grace; with an humble reliance upon the merits of Christ for the pardon of their sins, and the acceptance of their sincere though imperfect services."

I must divide this query too; but first permit me to ask, What do you mean by “those exalted strains in religion?” I have said again and again, I know of no more exalted strain than, “I will love thee, O Lord my God:” Especially according to the propriety of David’s expression, **יְהוָה אֱרַחֲמֶךָ**: *Ex intimis visceribus diligam te, Domine.*<sup>f9</sup> This premised, let us go on step by step.

**Query 1.** Whether the preaching of “loving God from our inmost bowels,” is not apt to lead men to spiritual pride, and to a contempt of their fellow-Christians.

**Answer.** No: But, so far as it takes place, it will humble them to the dust.

**Q. 2.** Whether an imagination of being already in a state of perfection is not apt to lead men into spiritual pride.

**A.**

(1.) If it be a false imagination, it is spiritual pride.

(2.) But true Christian perfection is no other than humble love.

**Q. 3.** Do not men who imagine they have attained this despise others, as only going on in what they account the low and imperfect way, that is, as growing in grace and goodness by degrees?

**A.**

(1.) Men who only imagine they have attained this may probably despise those that are going on in any way.

(2.) But the growing in grace and goodness by degrees is no mark of a low and imperfect way. Those who are fathers in Christ grow in grace by degrees, as well as the new-born babes.

**Q. 4.** Do they not despise those who are working out their salvation with an humble reliance upon the merits of Christ for the pardon of their sins, and the acceptance of their sincere though imperfect services?

**A.**

(1.) They who really love God despise no man. But,

(2.) They grieve to hear many talk of thus relying on Christ, who, though perhaps they are grave, honest, moral men, yet by their own words appear not to love God at all; whose souls cleave to the dust; who love the world; who have no part of the mind that was in Christ.

6. Query the Sixth: — “Whether the same exalted strains and notions do not tend to weaken the natural and civil relations among men, by leading the interiors, into whose heads those notions are infused, to a disesteem of their superiors; while they consider them as in a much lower dispensation than themselves; though those superiors are otherwise sober and good men, and regular attendants on the ordinances of religion.”

I have mentioned before what those exalted notions are. These do not tend to weaken either the natural or civil relations among men; or to lead inferiors to a disesteem of their superiors, even where those superiors are neither good nor sober men.

Query the Seventh: — “Whether a gradual improvement in grace and goodness is not a better foundation of comfort, and of an assurance of a gospel new-birth, than that which is founded on the doctrine of a sudden and instantaneous change; which if there be any such thing, is not easily distinguished from fancy and imagination; the workings whereof we may well suppose to be more strong and powerful, while the person considers himself in the state of one who is admitted as a candidate for such a change, and is taught in due time to expect it.”

Let us go one step at a time.

**Query 1.** Whether a gradual improvement in grace and goodness is not a good foundation of comfort.

**Answer.** Doubtless it is, if by grace and goodness be meant the knowledge and love of God through Christ.

**Q. 2.** Whether it be not a good foundation of an assurance of a gospel new-birth.

**A.** If we daily grow in this knowledge and love, it is a good proof that we are born of the Spirit. But this does in nowise supersede the previous

witness of God's Spirit with ours, that we are the children of God. And this is properly the foundation of the assurance of faith.

**Q. 3.** Whether this improvement is not a better foundation of comfort, and of an assurance of a gospel new-birth, than that which is founded on the doctrine of a sudden and instantaneous change.

**A.** A better foundation than that. *That!* What? To what substantive does this refer? According to the rules of grammar, (for all the substantives are in the genitive case, and, consequently, to be considered as only parts of that which governs them,) you must mean a better foundation than that foundation which is founded on this doctrine. As soon as I understand the question, I will endeavor to answer it.

**Q. 4.** Can that sudden and instantaneous change be easily distinguished from fancy and imagination?

**A.** Just as easily as light from darkness; seeing it brings with it a peace that passeth all understanding, a joy unspeakable, full of glory, the love of God and all mankind filling the heart, and power over all sin.

**Q. 5.** May we not well suppose the workings of imagination to be more strong and powerful in one who is taught to expect such a change?

**A.** Perhaps we may; but still the tree is known by its fruits. And such fruits as those above-mentioned imagination was never yet strong enough to produce, nor any power, save that of the Almighty.

**7.** There is only one clause in the Eighth Query which falls under our present inquiry.

“They make it their principal employ, wherever they go, to instill into people a few favorite tenets of their own; and this with such diligence and zeal as if the whole of Christianity depended upon them, and all efforts toward the true Christian life, without a belief of those tenets, were vain and ineffectual.”

I plead guilty to this charge. I do make it my principal, nay, my whole employ, and that wherever I go, to instill into the people a few favorite tenets; — only, be it observed, they are not my own, but His that sent me.

And it is undoubtedly true that this I do, (though deeply conscious of my want both of zeal and diligence,) as if the whole of Christianity depended upon them, and all efforts without them were void and vain.

I frequently sum them all up in one: “In Christ Jesus” (that is, according to his gospel) “neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.” But many times I instill them one by one, under these or the like expressions: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;” as thy own soul; as Christ loved us. “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. While we have time, let us do good unto all men; especially unto them that are of the household of faith. Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them.”

These are my favorite tenets, and have been for many years. O that I could instill them into every soul throughout the land! Ought they not to be instilled with such diligence and zeal, as if the whole of Christianity depended upon them? For who can deny, that all efforts toward a Christian life, without more than a bare belief, without a thorough experience and practice of these, are utterly vain and ineffectual?

**8.** Part of your Ninth query is to the same effect: —

“A few young heads set up their own schemes as the great standard of Christianity; and indulge their own notions to such a degree, as to perplex, unhinge, terrify, and distract the minds of multitudes of people, who have lived from their infancy under a gospel ministry, and in the regular exercise of a gospel worship. And all this, by persuading them that they neither are nor can be true Christians, but by adhering to their doctrines.”

What do you mean by *their own* schemes, their *own* notions, *their* doctrines? Are they not yours too? Are they not the schemes, the notions, the doctrines of Jesus Christ; the great fundamental truths of his gospel? Can you deny one of them without denying the Bible? It is hard for you to kick against the pricks!

“They persuade,” you say, “multitudes of people, that they cannot be true Christians but by adhering to their doctrines.” Why, who says they can? Whosoever he be, I will prove him to be an infidel. Do *you* say that any man can be a true Christian without loving God and his neighbor? Surely you have not so learned Christ! It is *your* doctrine as well as mine, and St. Paul’s: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels; though I have all knowledge, and all faith; though I give all my goods to feed the poor, yea, my body to be burned, and have not love, I am nothing.”

Whatever public worship, therefore, people may have attended, or whatever ministry they have lived under from their infancy, they must at all hazards be convinced of this, or they perish for ever; 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 they should be perplexed and terrified now, than that they should sleep on and awake in hell.

**9.** In the Tenth, Twelfth, and Thirteenth queries I am not concerned. But you include me also when you say, in the Eleventh, “They absolutely deny that recreations of any kind, considered as such, are or can be innocent.”

I cannot find any such assertion of mine either in the place you refer to, or any other. But what kinds of recreation are innocent it is easy to determine by that plain rule: “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

I am now to take my leave of you for the present. But first I would earnestly entreat you to acquaint yourself what our doctrines are, before you make any farther *observations* upon them. Surely, touching the *nature* of salvation we agree, — that “pure religion and undefiled is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,” — to do all possible good, from a principle of love to God and man; “and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world,” — inwardly and outwardly to abstain from all evil.

**10.** With regard to the *condition* of salvation, it may be remembered that I allow, not only faith, but likewise holiness or universal obedience, to be

the ordinary condition of final salvation; and that when I say, Faith alone is the condition of present salvation, what I would assert is this:

- (1.) That without faith no man can be saved from his sins; can be either inwardly or outwardly holy. And,
- (2.) That at what time soever faith is given, holiness commences in the soul. For that instant “the love of God” (which is the source of holiness) “is shed abroad in the heart.”

But it is objected by the author of “The Notions of the Methodists disproved,” “St. James says, ‘Can faith save him?’” I answer, Such a faith as is without works cannot “bring a man to heaven.” But this is quite beside the present question.

You object,

- (2.) “St. Paul says that ‘faith made perfect by love,’ St. James, that ‘faith made perfect by works,’ is the condition of salvation.” You mean final salvation. I say so too: But this also is beside the question.

You object,

- (3.) “That the belief of the gospel is called the obedience of faith.” (~~ROM~~ Romans 1:5.) And,

- (4.) that what Isaiah terms *believing*, St. Paul terms *obeying*. Suppose I grant you both the one and the other, what will you infer?

You object,

- (5.) That in one scripture our Lord is styled, “The Savior of them that believe;” and in another, “The Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.”

- (6.) That to the Galatians St. Paul writes, “Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love;” and to the Corinthians, “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping the commandments of God.” And hence you conclude, “There are several texts of Scripture wherein unbelief and disobedience are equivalently used.” Very true;

but can you conclude from thence that we are not “saved by faith alone?”

**11.** You proceed to answer some texts which I had quoted. The first is ~~4000~~ Ephesians 2:8: “By grace ye are saved through faith.” “But,” say you, “faith does not mean here that grace especially so called, but includes also obedience.” But how do you prove this? That circumstance you had forgot, and so run off with a comment upon the context; to which I have no other objection, than that it is nothing at all to the question.

Indeed, some time after, you add, “It is plain then that good works are always, in St. Paul’s judgment, joined with faith;” (so undoubtedly they are; that is, as an effect is always joined with its cause;) “and *therefore* we are not saved by faith alone.” I cannot possibly allow the consequence.

You afterwards cite two more texts, and add, “You see, mere faith cannot be a condition of justification.” You are out of your way. We are no more talking now of justification than of final salvation.

In considering ~~4400~~ Acts 16:31. “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved,” you say again, “Here the word *believe* does not signify faith only. Faith necessarily produces charity and repentance; therefore, these are expressed by the word *believe*,” that is, faith necessarily produces holiness; therefore holiness is a condition of holiness. I want farther proof. That “Paul and Silas spake unto him the word of the Lord,” and that his faith did “in the same hour” work by love, I take to be no proof at all.

You then undertake to show, that confessing our sins is a condition of justification, and that a confidence in the love of God is not a condition. Some of your words are: “This, good Sir, give me leave to say, is the greatest nonsense and contradiction possible. It is impossible you can understand this jargon yourself; and therefore you labor in vain to make it intelligible to others. You soar aloft on eagles’ wings, and leave the poor people to gaze and stare after you.”

This is very pretty, and very lively. But it is nothing to the purpose. For we are not now speaking of justification; neither have I said one word of the condition of justification in the whole tract to which you here refer.

“In the next place,” say you, “if we are saved” (finally you mean) “only by a confidence in the love of God.” Here I must stop you again; you are now running beside the question, on the other hand. The sole position which I here advance is this: True believers are saved from inward and outward sin by faith. By faith alone the love of God and all mankind is shed abroad in their hearts, bringing with it the mind that was in Christ, and producing all holiness of conversation.

## IV.

**1.** I am now to consider what has been lately objected with regard to the nature of saving faith.

The author last mentioned “cannot understand how those texts of St. John are at all to the purpose:” “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God;” (~~Gen~~ 1 John 3:1;) and, “We love him, because he first loved us.” (~~Gen~~ 4:19.) I answer,

**(1.)** These texts were not produced in the “Appeal” by way of proof, but of illustration only. But,

**(2.)** I apprehend they may be produced as a proof, both that Christian faith implies a confidence in the love of God, and that such a confidence has a direct tendency to salvation, to holiness both of heart and life.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!” Are not these words an expression of Christian faith, as direct an one as can well be conceived? And I appeal to every man, whether they do not express the strongest confidence of the love of God. Your own comment puts this beyond dispute: “Let us consider attentively, and with grateful hearts, the great love and mercy of God in calling us to be his sons, and bestowing on us the privileges belonging to such.” Do you not perceive that you have given up the cause? You have yourself taught us that these words imply a “sense of the great love and mercy of God, in bestowing upon us the privileges belonging to his sons.”

The Apostle adds, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

I suppose no one will say, either that these words are not expressive of Christian faith; or that they do not imply the strongest confidence in the love of God. It follows, “And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.”

Hence it appears that this faith is a saving faith, that there is the closest connection between this faith and holiness. This text, therefore, is directly to the purpose, in respect of both the propositions to be proved.

The other is, “We love him, because he first loved us.” And here also, for fear I should fail in the proof, you have drawn it up ready to my hands: —

“God sent his only Son to redeem us from sin, by purchasing for us grace and salvation. By which grace we, through faith and repentance, have our sins pardoned; and therefore we are bound to return the tribute of our love and gratitude, and to obey him faithfully as long as we live.”

Now, that we have our sins pardoned, if we do not know they are pardoned, cannot bind us either to love or obedience. But if we do know it, and by that very knowledge or confidence in the pardoning love of God are both bound and enabled to love and obey him, this is the whole of what I contend for.

**2.** You afterwards object against some other texts which I had cited to illustrate the nature of saving faith. My words were “Hear believing Job declaring his faith: ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth.’” I here affirm two things:

**(1.)** That Job was then a believer.

**(2.)** That he declared his faith in these words. And all I affirm, you allow. Your own words are, “God was pleased to bestow upon him a strong assurance of his favor; to inspire him with a prophecy of the resurrection, and that he should have a share in it.”

I went on, "Hear Thomas (when having seen he believed) crying out, 'My word and my God.'" Hereon you comment thus: "The meaning of which is, that St. Thomas makes a confession both of his faith and repentance." I agree with you. But you add, "In St. Thomas's confession there is not implied an assurance of pardon." You cannot agree with yourself in this; but immediately subjoin, "If it did imply such an assurance, he might well have it, since he had an immediate revelation of it from God himself."

Yet a little before you endeavored to prove that one who was not a whit behind the very chief Apostles had not such an assurance; where, in order to show that faith does not imply this, you said, "St. Paul methinks has fully determined this point, 'I know nothing by myself,' says he; 'yet am I not hereby justified.'" (~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 4:4.) "And if an Apostle, so illuminated, does not think himself justified," then I grant, he has fully determined the point. But before you absolutely fix upon that conclusion, be pleased to remember your own comment that follows, on those other words of St. Paul: "The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Your words are, "And, no question, a person endowed with such extraordinary gifts might arrive at a very eminent degree of assurance." So he did arrive at a very eminent degree of assurance, though he did not think himself justified!

I can scarce think you have read over that chapter to the Colossians; else, surely, you would not assert that those words on which the stress lies (viz., "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,") "do not relate to Paul and Timothy who wrote the Epistle, but to the Colossians, to whom they wrote." I need be at no pains to answer this; for presently after your own words are, "He hath made us," meaning the Colossians, as well as himself, "meet to be inheritors."

**3.** You may easily observe that I quoted the Council of Trent by memory, not having the book then by me. I own, and thank you for correcting, my mistake: But in correcting one you make another; for the decrees of the Sixth Session were not published on the thirteenth of January; but the Session itself began on that day.

I cannot help reciting your next words, although they are not exactly to the present question: —

“The words of the Twelfth Canon of the Council of Trent are, —

“If any man shall say that justifying faith is nothing else but a confidence in the divine mercy, remitting sins for Christ’s sake, and that this confidence is that alone by which we are justified, let him be accursed.” You add, —

“This, Sir, I am sure is true doctrine, and perfectly agreeable to the doctrine of our Church. And so you are not only anathematized by the Council of Trent, but also condemned by our own Church.”

“Our Church holds no such scandalous and disgraceful opinion.” According to our Church, no man can have “the true faith who has not a loving heart. Therefore, faith is not a confidence that any man’s sins are actually forgiven, and he reconciled to God.” (What have the premises to do with the conclusion?)

**4.** To decide this, let our Church speak for herself, — whether she does not suppose and teach, that every particular believer knows that his sins are forgiven, and he himself is reconciled to God.

First, then, our Church supposes and teaches every particular believer to say concerning himself, “In my baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. And I thank God who hath called me to that state of salvation. And I pray to God that I may continue in the same to my life’s end.”

Now, does this person know what he says to be true? If not, it is the grossest hypocrisy. But if he does, then he knows that he in particular is reconciled to God.

The next words I shall quote may be a comment on these: May God write them in our hearts!

“A true Christian man is not afraid to die, who is the very member of Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost, the son of God, and the very inheritor of the everlasting kingdom of heaven. But plainly contrary, he not only puts away the fear of death, but wishes,

desires, and longs heartily for it.” (*Sermon against the Fear of Death. Part I.*)

Can this be, unless he has a sure confidence that he in particular is reconciled to God?

“Men commonly fear death, First, because of leaving their worldly goods and pleasures: Secondly, for fear of the pains of death: And, Thirdly, for fear of perpetual damnation. But none of these causes trouble good men, because they stay themselves by true faith, perfect charity, and sure hope of endless joy and bliss everlasting.” (*Ibid. Part II.*)

“All these therefore have great cause to be full of joy, and not to fear death nor everlasting damnation. For death cannot deprive them of Jesus Christ; death cannot take him from us, nor us from him. Death not only cannot harm us, but also shall profit us, and join us to God more perfectly. And thereof a Christian heart may be surely certified. ‘It is God,’ saith St. Paul, ‘which hath given us an earnest of his Spirit.’ As long as we be in the body we are in a strange country. But we have a desire rather to be at home with God.” (*Ibid.*)

He that runneth may read in all these words the confidence which our Church supposes every particular believer to have, that he himself is reconciled to God.

To proceed: “The only instrument of salvation required on our parts is faith; that is, a sure trust and confidence that God both hath and will forgive our sins, that he hath accepted us again into his favor, for the merits of Christ’s death and passion.” (*Second Sermon on the Passion.*)

“But here we must take heed that we do not halt with God through an unconstant, wavering faith. Peter, coming to Christ upon the water, because he fainted in faith, was in danger of drowning. So we, if we begin to waver or doubt, it is to be feared lest we should sink as Peter did, — not into the water, but into the bottomless pit of hell-fire. Therefore I say unto you, that we must apprehend the merits of Christ’s death by faith, and that with a strong and

steadfast faith; nothing doubting but that Christ by his own oblation hath taken away our sins, and hath restored us again to God's favor." (*Ibid.*)

**5.** If it be still said that the Church speaks only of men in general, but not of the confidence of this or that particular person; even this last poor subterfuge is utterly cut off by the following words: —

"Thou, O man, hast received the body of Christ which was once broken, and his blood which was shed for the remission of thy sin. Thou hast received his body to have within thee the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for to endow thee with grace, and to comfort thee with their presence. Thou hast received his body to endow thee with everlasting righteousness and to assure thee of everlasting bliss." (*Sermon on the Resurrection.*)

I shall add but one passage more, from the first part of the "Sermon on the Sacrament:" —

"Have a sure and constant faith, not only that the death of Christ is available for all the world, but that he hath made a full and sufficient sacrifice for thee, a perfect cleansing of thy sins, so that thou mayest say with the Apostle, 'He loved thee, and gave himself for thee.' For this is to make Christ thine own, and to apply his merits unto thyself."

Let every reasonable man now judge for himself, what is the sense of our Church as to the nature of saving faith. Does it not abundantly appear that the Church of England supposes every particular believer to have a sure confidence that his sins are forgiven, and he himself reconciled to God? Yea, and how can the absolute necessity of this faith, this unwavering confidence, be more strongly or peremptorily asserted, than it is in those words: "If we begin to waver or doubt, it is to be feared lest we sink as Peter did, — not into the water, but into the bottomless pit of hell-fire?"

**6.** I would willingly dismiss this writer here. I had said in the "Earnest Appeal," (what I am daily more and more confirmed in,) that this faith is usually given in a moment. This you greatly dislike. Your argument against it, if put into form, will run thus: —

“They who first apprehended the meaning of the words delivered, then gave their assent to them, then had confidence in the promises to which they assented, and, lastly, loved God, did not receive faith in a moment.

“But the believers mentioned in the Acts first apprehended the meaning of the words, then gave their assent, then had confidence in the promises, and, lastly, loved God: Therefore,

“The believers mentioned in the Acts did not receive faith in a moment.”

I deny the major. They might first apprehend, then assent, then confide, then love, and yet receive faith in a moment; in that moment wherein their general confidence became particular, so that each could say, “My Lord and my God!”

One paragraph more I will be at the pains to transcribe: “You insinuate that the sacraments are only requisite to the well being of a visible Church: Whereas the Church declares that the due administration of them is an essential property thereof. I suppose you hinted this to satisfy your loving disciples, the Quakers.”

This is flat and plain. Here is a fact positively averred; and a reason also assigned for it. Now, do you take yourself to be a man of candor, I had almost said, of common honesty? My very words in the place referred to, are, “A visible Church is a company of faithful people. This is the essence of it. And the properties thereof are, that the pure word of God be preached therein, and the sacraments duly administered.”

7. Before I take my leave I cannot but recommend to you that advice of a wise and good man, —

*“Be calm in arguing; for fierceness makes  
Error a fault, and truth discourtesy.”*

I am grieved at your extreme warmth: You are in a thorough ill-humour from the very beginning of your book to the end. This cannot hurt me; but it may yourself. And it does not at all help your cause. If you denounce against me all the curses from Genesis to the Revelation, they will not amount to one argument. I am willing (so far as I know myself) to be

reproved either by you or any other. But whatever you do, let it be done in love, in patience, in meekness of wisdom.

## V.

**1.** With regard to the Author of faith and salvation, abundance of objections have been made; it being a current opinion, that Christians are not now to receive the Holy Ghost.

Accordingly, whenever we speak of the Spirit of God, of his operations on the souls of men, of his revealing unto us the things of God, or inspiring us with good desires or tempers; whenever we mention the feeling his mighty power “working in us” according to his good pleasure; the general answer we have to expect is, “This is rank enthusiasm. So it was with the Apostles and first Christians. But only enthusiasts pretend to this now.”

Thus all the Scriptures, abundance of which might be produced, are set aside at one stroke. And whoever cites them, as belonging to all Christians, is set down for an enthusiast.

The first tract I have seen wrote expressly on this head, is remarkably entitled, “The Operations of the Holy Spirit imperceptible; and how Men may know when they are under the Guidance and Influence of the Spirit.”

You begin: “As we have some among us who pretend to a more than ordinary guidance by the Spirit,” (indeed I do not; I pretend to no other guidance than is ordinarily given to all Christians,) “it may not be improper to discourse on the operations of God’s Holy Spirit.

“To this end be thou pleased, O gracious Fountain of Truth, to assist me with thy heavenly direction, in speaking of thee.”

Alas, Sir, what need have you to speak any more? You have already granted all I desire, viz., that we may all now enjoy, and know that we do enjoy, the heavenly direction of God’s Spirit.

However, you go on, and observe that the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were granted to the first Christians only, but his ordinary graces to all Christians in all ages; both which you then attempt to enumerate; only

suspending your discourse a little, when “some conceited enthusiasts” come in your way.

**2.** You next inquire, “after what manner these graces are raised in our souls;” and answer, “How to distinguish these heavenly motions from the natural operations of our minds, we have no light to discover; the Scriptures declaring, that the operations of the Holy Spirit are not subject to any sensible feelings or perceptions. For what communication can there be between feelings which are properties peculiar to matter, and the suggestions of the Spirit? All reasonable Christians believe that he works his graces in us in an imperceptible manner; and that there is no sensible difference between his and the natural operations of our minds.”

I conceive this to be the strength of your cause. To support that conclusion, that the operations of the Spirit are imperceptible, you here allege,

**(1.)** “That all reasonable Christians believe this.” So you say; but I want proof.

**(2.)** “That there can be no communications” (I fear you mistook the word) “between the suggestions of the Spirit, and feelings which are properties peculiar to matter.” How! Are the feelings now in question “properties peculiar to matter?” the feeling of peace, joy, love, or any feelings at all? I can no more understand the philosophy than the divinity of this.

**(3.)** “That the Scriptures declare the operations of the Spirit are not subject to any sensible feelings.” You are here disproving, as you suppose, a proposition of mine. But are you sure you understand it? By feeling, I mean, being inwardly conscious of. By the operations of the Spirit, I do not mean the manner in which he operates, but the graces which he operates in a Christian. Now, be pleased to produce those scriptures which declare that a Christian cannot feel or perceive these operations.

**3.** Are you not convinced, Sir, that you have laid to my charge things which I know not? I do not gravely tell you (as much an enthusiast as you over and over affirm me to be) that I sensibly feel (in your sense) the motions of the Holy Spirit. Much less do I make this, any more than

“convulsions, agonies, howlings, roarings, and violent contortions of the body,” either “certain signs of men’s being in a state of salvation,” or “necessary in order thereunto.” You might with equal justice and truth inform the world, and the worshipful the magistrates of Newcastle, that I make *seeing* the wind, or *feeling* the light, necessary to salvation.

Neither do I confound the extraordinary with the ordinary operations of the Spirit. And as to your last inquiry, “What is the best proof of our being led by the Spirit?” I have no exception to that just and scriptural answer which you yourself have given, — “A thorough change and renovation of mind and heart, and the leading a new and holy life.”

**4.** That I confound the extraordinary with the ordinary operations of the Spirit, and therefore am an enthusiast, is also strongly urged, in a charge delivered to his Clergy, and lately published, by the Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry.

An extract of the former part of this I subjoin, in his Lordship’s words: —

“I cannot think it improper to obviate the contagion of those enthusiastical pretensions, that have lately betrayed whole multitudes either into presumption or melancholy. Enthusiasm, indeed, when detected, is apt to create infidelity; and infidelity is so shocking a thing, that many rather run into the other extreme, and take refuge in enthusiasm. But infidelity and enthusiasm seem now to act in concert against our established religion. As infidelity has been sufficiently opposed, I shall now lay before you the weakness of those enthusiastical pretensions.” (pp. 1, 2.)

“Now, to confute effectually, and strike at the root of, those enthusiastical pretensions,

“First, I shall show that it is necessary to lay down some method for distinguishing real from pretended inspiration.” (pp. 3, 5.)

“Many expressions occur in the New Testament concerning the operations of the Holy Spirit. But men of an enthusiastical temper have confounded passages of a quite different nature, and have jumbled together those that relate to the extraordinary operations of the Spirit, with those that relate only to his ordinary influences.

It is therefore necessary to use some method for separating those passages relating to the operations of the Spirit, that have been so misapplied to the service of enthusiastical pretenders.” (pp. 5-7.)

“I proceed therefore to show,

“Secondly, that a distinction is to be made between those passages of Scripture about the blessed Spirit that peculiarly belong to the primitive Church, and those that relate to Christians in all ages.” (p. 7.)

“The exigences of the apostolical age required the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. But these soon ceased. When therefore we meet in the Scripture with an account of those extraordinary gifts, and likewise with an account of his ordinary operations, we must distinguish the one from the other. And that, not only for our own satisfaction, but as a means to stop the growth of enthusiasm.” (pp. 8-10.)

“And such a distinction ought to be made by the best methods of interpreting the Scriptures; which most certainly are an attentive consideration of the occasion and scope of those passages, in concurrence with the general sense of the primitive Church.” (p. 11.)

“I propose, Thirdly, to specify some of the chief passages of Scripture that are misapplied by modern enthusiasts, and to show that they are to be interpreted chiefly, if not only, of the apostolical Church; and that they very little, if at all, relate to the present state of Christians.” (p. 12.)

“I begin,” says your Lordship, “with the original promise of the Spirit, as made by our Lord a little before he left the world.”

I must take the liberty to stop your Lordship on the threshold. I deny that this is the original promise of the Spirit. I expect his assistance, in virtue of many promises some hundred years prior to this.

If you say, “However, this is the original or first promise of the Spirit in the New Testament:” No, my Lord; those words were spoken long before: “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”

Will you reply? — “Well, but this is the original promise made by our Lord.” I answer, Not so, neither; for it was before this Jesus himself stood and cried, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. And this he spake of the Spirit, which they should receive who believed on him.” (Οὐ ἐμελλον λαμβανειν οι πιστευοντες εις αυτον.) If I mistake not, this may more justly be termed, our Lord’s original promise of the Spirit. And who will assert that this is to be “interpreted chiefly, if not only, of the apostolical Church?”

**5.** Your Lordship proceeds: “It occurs in the fourteenth and sixteenth chapters of St. John’s Gospel; in which he uses these words.” In what verses, my Lord? <sup>f10</sup> Why is not this specified? unless to furnish your Lordship with an opportunity of doing the very things where of you before complained, — of “confounding passages of a quite contrary nature, and jumbling together those that relate to the extraordinary operations of the Spirit, with those that relate to his ordinary influences?”

You cite the words thus: “‘When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, and he will show you things to come.’ These are nearly the words that occur. (~~¶B13~~ 16:13.)

“And again: ‘The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.’ These words occur in the fourteenth chapter, at the twenty-sixth verse.”

But, my Lord, I want the original promise still; the original, I mean, of those made in this very discourse. Indeed your margin tells us where it is, (~~¶B16~~ 14:16,) but the words appear not. Taken together with the context, they run thus: —

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.

“And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever:

“Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.” (~~¶B15~~ 14:15-17.)

My Lord, suffer me to inquire why you slipped over this text. Was it not (I appeal to the Searcher of your heart!) because you was conscious to yourself that it would necessarily drive you to that unhappy dilemma, either to assert that *for ever*, **εις τον αιωνα**, meant only sixty or seventy years; or to allow that the text must be interpreted of the ordinary operations of the Spirit, in all future ages of the Church?

And indeed that the promise in this text belongs to all Christians, evidently appears, not only from your Lordship's own concession, and from the text itself, (for who can deny that this Comforter, or Paraclete, is now given to all them that believe?) but also from the preceding, as well as following, words. The preceding are, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father." None, surely, can doubt but these belong to all Christians in all ages. The following words are, "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive." True, the world cannot; but all Christians can and will receive him for ever.

**6.** The second promise of the Comforter, made in this chapter, together with its context, stands thus: —

"Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?"

"Jesus answered, and said unto him, If any man love me, he will keep my word. And my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

"He that loveth me not, keepeth not my word: And the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet with you.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."  
(Verses 22-26.)

Now, how does your Lordship prove that this promise belongs only to the primitive Church? Why,

(1.) you say, “It is very clear from the bare recital of the words.” I apprehend not. But this is the very question, which is not to be begged, but proved.

(2.) You say, “The Spirit’s ‘bringing all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them,’ cannot possibly be applied to any other persons but the Apostles.” *Cannot be applied!* This is a flat begging the question again, which I cannot give up without better reasons.

(3.) “The gifts of prophecy and of being ‘guided into all truth, and taught all things,’ can be applied only to the Apostles, and those of that age who were immediately inspired.” Here your Lordship, in order the more plausibly to beg the question again, “jumbles together the extraordinary with the ordinary operations of the Spirit.”

The gift of prophecy, we know, is one of his extraordinary operations; but there is not a word of it in this text; nor, therefore, ought it to be “confounded with his ordinary operations,” such as the being “guided into all truth,” (all that is necessary to salvation,) and taught all (necessary) things, in a due use of the means he hath ordained. (Verse 26.)

In the same manner, namely, in a serious and constant use of proper means, I believe the assistance of the Holy Ghost is given to all Christians, to “bring all things needful to their remembrance,” whatsoever Christ hath spoken to them in his word. So that I see no occasion to grant, without some kind of proof, (especially considering the occasion of this, and the scope of the preceding verses,) that even “this promise cannot possibly be applied to any other persons but the Apostles.”

7. In the same discourse of our Lord we have a third promise of the Comforter: The whole clause runs thus: —

“If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.

“And when he is come, he will reprove,” or convince, “the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

“Of sin, because they believe not on me;

“Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

“Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

“I have yet many things to say unto you; but ye cannot bear them now: But when he shall come, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you into all truth; and he will show you things to come.” (~~John~~ 16:7-13.)

There is only one sentence here which has not already been considered, “He will show you things to come.”

And this, it is granted, relates to the gift of prophecy, one of the extraordinary operations of the Spirit.

The general conclusion which your Lordship draws is expressed in these words: “Consequently, all pretensions to the Spirit, in the proper sense of the words of this promise, (that is, of these several texts of St. John,) are vain and insignificant, as they are claimed by modern enthusiasts.” And in the end of the same paragraph you add, “None but the ordinary operations of the Spirit are to be now expected, since those that are of a miraculous (or extraordinary) kind are not pretended to, even by modern enthusiasts.”

My Lord, this is surprising. I read it over and over before I could credit my own eyes. I verily believe, this one clause, with unprejudiced persons, will be an answer to the whole book. You have been vehemently crying out all along against those enthusiastical pretenders; nay, the very design of your book, as you openly declare, was “to stop the growth of their enthusiasm; who have had the assurance” (as you positively affirm, page 6) “to claim to themselves the extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit.” And here you as positively affirm that those extraordinary operations “are not pretended to” by them at all!

**8.** Yet your Lordship proceeds: “The next passage of Scripture I shall mention, as peculiarly belonging to the primitive times, though misapplied to the present state of Christians by modern enthusiasts, is what relates to the ‘testimony of the Spirit,’ and ‘praying by the Spirit,’ in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.” (Page 16.)

I believe it incumbent upon me thoroughly to weigh the force of your Lordship’s reasoning on this head. You begin: “After St. Paul had treated

of that spiritual principle in Christians, which enables them ‘to mortify the deeds of the body,’ he says, ‘If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.’ This makes the distinction of a true Christian, particularly in opposition to the Jews.” I apprehend it is just here that your Lordship turns out of the way, when you say, “particularly in opposition to the Jews.” Such a particular opposition I cannot allow, till some stronger proof is produced, than St. Paul’s occasionally mentioning, six verses before, “the imperfection of the Jewish law.”

Yet your Lordship’s mind is so full of this that after repeating the fourteenth and fifteenth verses, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God: For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!” you add, “In the former part of this verse, the Apostle shows again the imperfection of the Jewish law.” This also calls for proof; otherwise it will not be allowed, that he here speaks of the Jewish law at all; not, though we grant that “the Jews were subject to the fear of death, and lived, in consequence of it, in a state of bondage.” For are not all unbelievers, as well as the Jews, more or less, in the same fear and bondage?

Your Lordship goes on: “In the latter part of the verse he shows the superiority of the Christian law to that of the Jews.” (p. 18.) Where is the proof, my Lord? How does it appear that he is speaking either of the Christian or Jewish law in those words, “Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father?” However, you infer, “Christians then are the adopted sons of God, in contradistinction to the Jews, as the former had the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which none of the latter had at that time; and the body of the Jews never had.” No, nor the body of the Christians neither: So that, if this be a proof against the Jews, it is the very same against the Christians.

I must observe farther on the preceding words,

- (1.) That your Lordship begins here, to take the word Christians in a new and peculiar sense, for the whole body of the then Christian Church.

(2.) That it is a bad inference: “As (or because) they had the gifts of the Holy Ghost, therefore they were the sons of God.” On the one hand, if they were the children of God, it was not because they had those gifts. On the other, a man may have all those gifts, and yet be a child of the devil.

9. I conceive, not only that your Lordship has proved nothing hitherto, not one point that has any relation to the question, but that, strictly speaking, you have not attempted to prove any thing, having taken for granted whatever came in your way. In the same manner you proceed, “The Apostle goes on, ‘The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.’ This passage, as it is connected with the preceding one, relates to the general adoption of Christians, or their becoming the sons of God instead of the Jews.” — “This passage relates” — How is that proved? by its connection with the preceding? In nowise, unless it be good arguing to prove *ignotum per ignotius*.<sup>f11</sup> It has not yet been proved, that the preceding passage itself has any relation to this matter.

Your Lordship adds, “But what was the ground of this preference that was given to Christians? It was plainly the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which they had, and which the Jews had not.” This preference given to Christians was just before expressed by their becoming the sons of God instead of the Jews. Were the gifts of the Spirit then the ground of this preference, the ground of their becoming the sons of God? What an assertion is this! And how little is it mended, though I allow that “these miraculous gifts of the Spirit were a testimony that God acknowledged the Christians to be his people, and not the Jews;” since the Christians, who worked miracles, did it, not “by the works of the law,” but by “the hearing of faith!”

Your Lordship concludes, “From these passages of St. Paul, compared together, it clearly follows, that the fore-mentioned testimony of the Spirit was the public testimony of miraculous gifts; and, consequently, the witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God, cannot possibly be applied to the private testimony of the Spirit given to our own consciences, as is pretended by modern enthusiasts.” (p. 20.)

If your conclusion, my Lord, will stand without the premises, it may; but that it has no manner of connection with them. I trust does partly, and will more fully, appear, when we view the whole passage to which you refer; and I believe that passage, with very little comment, will prove, in direct opposition to that conclusion, that the testimony of the Spirit, there mentioned, is not the public testimony of miraculous gifts, but; must be applied to the private testimony of the Spirit, given to our own consciences.

**10.** St Paul begins the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, with the great privilege of every Christian believer, (whether Jew or Gentile before,) “There is now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus,” engrafted into him by faith, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For” now every one of them may truly say, “The law,” or power, “of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” given unto me for his sake, “hath made me free from the law,” or power, “of sin and death. For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,” did, when he “condemned,” crucified, put to death, destroyed, “sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh, mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” (Verses ~~6-8~~ 1-5.)

Is it not evident, that the Apostle is here describing a true Christian, a holy believer? — in opposition, not particularly to a Jew, much less to the Jewish law, but to every unholy man, to all, whether Jews or Gentiles, “who walk after the flesh?” He goes on: —

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Verses 6-8.)

The opposition between a holy and unholy man is still glaring and undeniable. But can any man discern the least glimmering of opposition between the Christian and the Jewish law?

The Apostle goes on: “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Verses ~~8-14~~ 9-14.)

Is there one word here, is there any the least intimation, of miraculous gifts, or of the Jewish law?

It follows, “For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear;” such as all sinners have, when they are at first stirred up to seek God, and begin to serve him from a slavish fear of punishment; “but ye have received the Spirit of adoption,” of free love, “whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself,” which God “hath sent forth into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father, beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (Verses 15,16.)

I am now willing to leave it, without farther comment, to the judgment of every impartial reader, whether it does not appear from the whole scope and tenor of the text and context taken together, that this passage does not refer to the Jewish law, nor to the public testimony of miracles; neither of which can be dragged in without putting the utmost force on the natural meaning of the words. And if so, 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.

**11.** “But I go on,” says your Lordship, “to the consideration of the other passages in the same chapter, relating to our praying by the Spirit, namely, at verses 26 and 27, which run thus: ‘Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the

Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” (p. 21.)

Here is a circumstance highly needful to be observed, before we enter upon this question. Your Lordship undertakes to fix the meaning of an expression used by St. Paul, in the fourteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians. And in order thereto, you laboriously explain part of the eighth chapter of the Romans. My Lord, how is this? Will it be said, “Why, this is often alleged to prove the wrong sense of that scripture?” I conceive, this will not salve the matter at all. Your Lordship had before laid down a particular method, as the only sure one whereby to distinguish what scriptures belong to all Christians, and what do not. This method is, the considering the occasion and scope of those passages, by comparing the text and context together. You then propose, by the use of this method, to show, that several texts have been misapplied by enthusiasts. One of these is the <sup>4945</sup> fifteenth verse of the fourteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. And to show, that enthusiasts have misapplied this, you comment on the eighth chapter to the Romans!

However, let us weigh the comment itself. The material part of it begins thus: “Now he adds another proof of the truth of Christianity: ‘Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities,’ or our distresses, for ασθενειαις signifies both.” (p. 22.) I doubt that: I require authority for it. “And then he mentions, in what instances he does so, viz., in prayers to God about afflictions.” — In nothing else, my Lord? Did he “Help their infirmities” in no other instance than this? “‘We know not,’ says he, ‘what we should pray for as we ought.’ That is, whether it be best for us to bear afflictions, or to be delivered from them. But the Spirit, or the gift of the Spirit, instructs us how to pray in a manner agreeable to the will of God.” “The Spirit, or the gift of the Spirit!” What marvellous reasoning is this? If these “are often put for each other,” what then? How is that evinced to be the case here?

**12.** “The Apostle goes on, ‘The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.’ That is, the spiritual or inspired person prayed in that capacity for the whole assembly.” (p. 23.) “That is!” Nay, that is again the very point to be proved, else we get not one step farther.

“The Apostle goes on thus, (verse 27,) ‘And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,’ that is, of the spiritual or inspired person, ‘because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.’ That is, God knows the intention of the spiritual person, who has the gift of prayer, which he uses for the benefit of the whole assembly; he, I say, leaves it entirely to God, whether it be best that they should suffer afflictions, or be delivered from them.” (pp. 24, 25.)

My Lord, this is more astonishing than all the rest! I was expecting all along, in reading the preceding pages, (and so, I suppose, was every thinking reader,) when your Lordship would mention, that the person miraculously inspired for that intent, and praying, *κατα Θεον*,<sup>f12</sup> either for the support or deliverance of the people, should have the very petition which he asked of him. Whereas you intended no such thing! but shut up the whole with that lame and impotent conclusion, “He leaves it to God whether it be best they should suffer afflictions, or be delivered from them.”

Had he then that miraculous gift of God, that he might do what any common Christian might have done without it? Why, any person in the congregation might have prayed thus; nay, could not pray otherwise, if he had the ordinary grace of God: “Leaving it to God, whether he should suffer afflictions still, or be delivered from them.” Was it only in the apostolical age, that “the Spirit instructed Christians thus to pray?” Cannot a man pray thus, either for himself or others, unless he has the miraculous gift of prayer! — So, according to your Lordship’s judgment, “to pray in such a manner, as in the event to leave the continuance of our sufferings, or our deliverance from them, with a due submission, to the good pleasure of God,” is one of those extraordinary operations of the Spirit, which none now pretend to but modern enthusiasts!

I beseech your Lordship to consider. Can you coolly maintain, that the praying with a due submission to the will of God, even in heavy affliction, is a miraculous gift, an extraordinary operation of the Holy Ghost? Is this peculiar to the primitive times? Is it what none but enthusiasts now pretend to? If not, then your Lordship’s own account of praying by the Spirit indisputably proves, that this is one of the ordinary privileges of all Christians to the end of the world.

**13.** “I go on,” your Lordship adds, “to another passage of Scripture, that has been entirely misapplied by modern enthusiasts: ‘And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.’ (✠1 Corinthians 2:4, 5.)

“It is only necessary to evince, that by ‘the demonstration of the Spirit and of power’ is meant the demonstration of the truth of Christianity, that arises from the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the miracles of Christ and his Apostles.” (pp. 27, 29.) Yes, it is necessary farther to evince, that these words have no other meaning. But, First, how will you evince that they hear this? In order thereto, your Lordship argues thus: —

“The former seems to be the demonstration of the Spirit, with regard to the prophetic testimonies of Him. — And the demonstration of power must signify the power of God, exerted in miracles.” (p. 30.) “Must!” Why so? That *δυναμις* often signifies *miraculous power*, is allowed, — but what follows? that it must mean so in this place? That still remains to be proved.

Indeed your Lordship says, this “appears from the following verse, in which is assigned the reason for using this method of proving Christianity to be true, namely, ‘That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.’ By the power of God, therefore, must necessarily be understood the miracles performed by Christ and his Apostles.” By the native particle, “therefore,” this proposition should be an inference from some other: But what other I cannot yet discern. So that, for the present, I can only look upon it as a fresh instance of begging the question.

“He goes on in the seventh, tenth, and following verses, to explain this ‘demonstration of the Spirit and of power.’” But he does not say one syllable therein, either of the ancient prophecies, or of miracles. Nor will it be easily proved, that he speaks either of one or the other, from the beginning of the chapter to the end.

After transcribing the thirteenth verse, “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual,” your Lordship adds,

“From which last passage it appears, that the words which the Holy Ghost is said to teach, must be the prophetical revelations of the Old Testament, which were discovered to the Apostles by the same Spirit.” I cannot apprehend how this appears. I cannot as yet see any connection at all between the premises and the conclusion.

Upon the whole, I desire any calm and serious man to read over this whole chapter; and then he will easily judge what is the natural meaning of the words in question; and whether (although it be allowed, that they were peculiarly fulfilled in the Apostles, yet) they do not manifestly belong, in a lower sense, to every true Minister of Christ. For what can be more undeniable than this, that our preaching also is vain, unless it be attended with the power of that Spirit who alone pierceth the heart? and that your hearing is vain, unless the same power be present to heal your soul, and to give you a faith which “standeth not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God?”

**14.** “Another passage that,” your Lordship thinks, “has been misapplied by enthusiasts, but was really peculiar to the times of the Apostles, is <sup>am</sup>1 John 2:20, 27: ‘Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. — But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you: And ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie. And even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.’ Here the Apostle arms the true Christians against seducers, by an argument drawn from ‘the unction from the Holy One,’ that was in, or rather, among them; that is, from the immediate inspiration of some of their Teachers.” (pp. 35, 37.)

Here it rests upon your Lordship to prove, as well as affirm,

(1.) That **ev** should be translated *among*:

(2.) That this “unction from the Holy One” means the inspiration of some of their Teachers.

The latter your Lordship attempts to prove thus: —

“The inspired Teachers of old were set apart for that office, by an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost: Therefore,

“‘The unction from the Holy One’ here means such an effusion.”  
(p. 38.) I deny the consequence; so the question is still to be proved.

Your Lordship’s second argument is drawn from the ~~fourth~~ twenty-sixth verse of the fourteenth chapter of St. John’s Gospel.

Proposed in form, it will stand thus: —

“If those words, ‘He shall teach you all things,’ relate only to a miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost, then these words, ‘The same anointing teacheth you of all things,’ relate to the same miraculous gift:

“But those words relate only to a miraculous gift:

“Therefore these relate to the same.”

I conceive, it will not be very easy to make good the consequence in the first proposition. But I deny the minor also: The contradictory whereto, I trust, has appeared to be true.

I grant indeed, that these words were more eminently fulfilled in the age of the Apostles: But this is altogether consistent with their belonging, in a lower sense, to all Christians in all ages; seeing they have all need of “an unction from the Holy One,” a supernatural assistance from the Holy Ghost, that they may know, in the due use of all proper means, all things needful for their souls’ health. Therefore it is no enthusiasm, to teach that “the unction from the Holy One” belongs to all Christians in all ages.

**15.** There is one topic of your Lordship’s yet untouched; that is, authority; one you have very frequently made use of, and wherein, probably, the generality of readers suppose your Lordship’s great strength lies. And indeed when your Lordship first mentioned (p. 11) “the general sense of the primitive Church,” I presumed you would have produced so numerous authorities, that I should not easily be able to consult them all. But I soon found my mistake; your Lordship naming only Chrysostom, Jerome, Origen, and Athanasius.

However, though these four can no more be termed the primitive Church, than the Church universal, yet I consent to abide by their suffrage. Nay, I

will go a step farther still: If any two of these affirm, that those seven texts belong only to the apostolic age, and not to the Christians of succeeding times, I will give up the whole cause.

But let it be observed, if they should affirm that these primarily belong to the Christians of the apostolic age, that does not prove the point, because they may, in a secondary sense, belong to others notwithstanding: Nor does any of them speak home to the question, unless he maintain, in express terms, that these texts refer only to the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and not at all to the state of ordinary Christians.

**16.** Concerning those three texts, <sup><B146></sup>John 14:16, 26, and <sup><B143></sup>John 16:13, “I could easily add,” says your Lordship, “the authorities of Chrysostom and the other ancient commentators.” (p. 15.) St. Chrysostom’s authority I will consider now, and that of the others when they are produced.

It is granted, that he interprets not only <sup><B143></sup>John 16:13, but also both the passages in the fourteenth chapter, as primarily belonging to the Apostles. Yet part of his comment on the twenty-sixth verse is as follows: —

“Such is that grace,” of the Comforter, “that if it finds sadness, it takes it away; if evil desire, it consumes it. It casts out fear, and suffers him that receives it to be a man no longer, but translates him, as it were, into heaven. Hence ‘none of them counted anything his own, but continued in prayer, with gladness and singleness of heart.’ For this chiefly is their need of the Holy Ghost; for the fruit of the Spirit is joy, peace, faith, meekness. Indeed spiritual men often grieve; but that grief is sweeter than joy: For whatever is of the Spirit is the greatest gain, as whatever is of the world is the greatest loss. Let us therefore in keeping the commandments,” according to our Lord’s exhortation, verse 15, “secure the unconquerable assistance of the Spirit, and we shall be nothing inferior to angels.”

St. Chrysostom here, after he had shown that the promise of the Comforter primarily belonged to the Apostles, (and who ever questioned it?) undeniably teaches, that, in a secondary sense, it belongs to all Christians; to all spiritual men, all who keep the commandments. I appeal, therefore, to all mankind, whether his authority, touching the promise of our Lord in these texts, does not overthrow the proposition it was cited to prove?

Although your Lordship names no other author here, yet you say, “The assigned sense of these passages was confirmed by the authority of Origen.” (p. 42.) It is needful, therefore, to add what occurs in his Works with regard to the present question.

He occasionally mentions this promise of our Lord, in four several places. But it is in one only that he speaks pertinently to the point in hand, (vol. 2, p. 403, Edit. Bened.,) where his words are these: —

“‘When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, and he will teach you all things.’ The sum of all good things consists in this, that a man be found worthy to receive the grace of the Holy Ghost. Otherwise, nothing will be accounted perfect in him who hath not the Holy Spirit.”

Do these words confirm that “sense of those passages which your Lordship had assigned?” Rather do they not utterly overturn it, and prove (as above) that although this promise of our Lord primarily belongs to the Apostles, yet, in the secondary sense, it belongs (according to Origen’s judgment) to all Christians in all ages?

**17.** The fourth text mentioned as belonging to the first Christians only, is ~~RNS~~ Romans 8:15, 16; and it is said, page 26, “This interpretation is confirmed by the authority of the most eminent fathers.” The reader is particularly referred to Origen and Jerome *in locum*. But here seems to be a mistake of the name. Jerome *in locum* should mean, Jerome upon the place, upon ~~RNS~~ Romans 8:15, 16. But I cannot perceive that there is one word upon that place, in all St. Jerome’s Works.

Nor indeed has Origen commented upon it any more than Jerome. But he occasionally mentions it in these words: —

“He is a babe who is fed with milk; but if he seeks the things that are above, without doubt he will be of the number of those who ‘receive not the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but the Spirit of adoption,’ through whom they cry, ‘Abba, Father.’” (Vol. 1, p. 79.)

Again: “The fulness of time is come; when they who are willing receive the adoption, as Paul teaches in these words, ‘Ye have not received the spirit

of bondage again unto fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father!’ And it is written in the Gospel according to St. John, ‘To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.’” (Vol. 1, pp. 231, 232.)

Yet again: “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.’” (*Ibid.*)

According to Origen, therefore, this testimony of the Spirit is not any public testimony by miracles, peculiar to the first times, but an inward testimony, belonging in common to all that are born of God; and consequently the authority of Origen does not “confirm that interpretation” neither, but absolutely destroys it.

**18.** The last authority your Lordship appeals to on this text is, “that of the great John Chrysostom, who reckons the testimony of the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, ‘Abba, Father,’ among the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.” “I rather choose” (your Lordship adds, p. 26) “to refer you to the words of St. Chrysostom, than to transcribe them here, as having almost translated them in the present account of the testimony of the Spirit.”

However, I believe it will not be labor lost to transcribe a few of those words.

It is in his comment on the fourteenth verse, that he first mentions St. Paul’s comparison between a Jew and a Christian. How fairly your Lordship has represented this, let every reader judge: —

“‘As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the souls of God.’ — Whereas the same title had been given of old to the Jews also, he shows in the sequel, how great a difference there is between that honor and this. For though, says he, the titles are the same, yet the things are not. And he plainly proves it, by comparing both what they had received, and what they looked for. And first he shows what they had received, viz., a ‘spirit of bondage.’ Therefore he adds, ‘Ye have not received the spirit of

bondage again unto fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption.’ What means the spirit of fear? — Observe their whole life, and you will know clearly. For punishments were at their heels, and much fear was on every side, and before their face. But with us it is not so. For our mind and conscience are cleansed, so that we do all things well not for fear of present punishment, but through our love of God, and an habit of virtue. They therefore, though they were called sons, yet were as slaves; but we, being made free, have received the adoption, and look not for a land of milk and honey, but for heaven.

“He brings also another proof, that we have the Spirit of adoption, by which, says he, we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ This is the first word we utter *μετα τας θαυμαστας ωδινας εκεινας, και τον ξενον και παραδοξον λοχευματων νομον*; after those amazing throes, (or birth-pangs,) and that strange and wonderful manner of bringing forth.

“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 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?”

Now let any reasonable man judge how far your Lordship has “translated the words of St. Chrysostom; and whether he reckons the testimony of the Spirit among the *miraculous* gifts of the Holy Ghost,” or among those *ordinary* gifts of the Spirit of Christ which if a man have not he is none of his.

**19.** The fifth text your Lordship quotes, as describing a miraculous gift of the Spirit, is ~~4345~~ 1 Corinthians 14:15: To prove which, you comment on the eighth chapter to the Romans, particularly the twenty-sixth verse; and here again it is said, that “the interpretation assigned is confirmed by several of the most eminent fathers, more especially the great, John Chrysostom, as well as by Origen and Jerome upon the place.”

I cannot find St. Jerome to have writ one line upon the place. And it is obvious, that St. Chrysostom supposes the whole context from the seventeenth to the twenty-fifth verse, to relate to all Christians in all ages. How this can be said to “confirm the interpretation assigned,” I cannot conjecture. Nay, it is remarkable, that he expounds the former part of the twenty-sixth verse as describing the ordinary privilege of all Christians. Thus far, therefore, he does not confirm but overthrow, the “interpretation before assigned.” But in the middle of the verse he breaks off, and expounds the latter part, as describing one of the miraculous gifts.

Yet I must do the justice to this venerable man to observe, he does not suppose that a miraculous gift was given, only that the inspired might do what any ordinary Christian might have done without it; (this interpretation, even of the latter part of the verse, he does in nowise confirm;) but that he might ask, in every particular circumstance, the determinate thing which it was the will of God to give.

**20.** The third father by whom it is said this interpretation is confirmed, is Origen. The first passage of his, which relates to ~~4346~~ Romans 8:26, runs thus: —

“Paul, perceiving how far he was, after all these things, from knowing to pray for what he ought, as he ought, says, ‘We know not what we should pray for as we ought.’ But he adds, whence, what is wanting may be had by one who indeed does not know, but labors to be found worthy of having the defect supplied. For he says, ‘Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. For we knew not what we should pray for as we ought. But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.’ The Spirit which crieth, ‘Abba,

Father,' in the hearts of the saints, knowing well our groanings in this tabernacle, 'maketh intercession for us to God, with groanings which cannot be uttered.' To the same effect is that Scripture: 'I will pray with the Spirit, I will pray with the understanding also.' (~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 14:15.) For our understanding (or mind, ο νοῦς) cannot pray, if the Spirit do not pray before it, and the understanding, as it were, listen to it." (Vol. 1, p. 199.)

Again: "I would know how the saints cry to God without a voice. The Apostle shows, 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!' and he adds, 'The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.' And again, 'He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.' Thus, therefore, the Spirit making intercession for us with God, the cry of the saints is heard without a voice." (Vol. 2, p. 146.)

Once more in his Homily on Joshua: —

"Jesus our Lord doth not forsake us; but although when we would pray, 'we know not what to pray for as we ought,' yet 'the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now the Lord is that Spirit:' The Spirit assists our prayers, and offers them to God with groanings which we cannot express in words." (Vol. 2, p. 419.)

I believe all rational men will observe from hence, that Origen is so far from confirming, that he quite overturns, your Lordship's interpretation of the sixteenth as well as the twenty-sixth verse of this chapter; seeing, in his judgment, both that testimony of the Spirit and this prayer belong to all Christians in all ages.

**21.** The sixth scripture which your Lordship has undertaken to show "relates only to the apostolical times," is ~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5. And "this interpretation also," it is said, "is confirmed by the authority of Chrysostom, Origen, and other ancient writers." (p. 33.) With those other "ancient writers." I have no concern yet. St. Chrysostom so far confirms this interpretation, as to explain that whole phrase "the demonstration of the Spirit and of power," of "the power of the Spirit shown by miracles."

But he says not one word of any “proof of the Christian religion arising from the types and prophecies of the Old Testament.”

Origen has these words: —

“Our word has a certain peculiar demonstration, more divine than the Grecian logical demonstration. This the Apostle terms, ‘the demonstration of the Spirit and of power;’ *of the Spirit*, because of the prophecies, sufficient to convince any one, especially of the things that relate to Christ; *of power*, because of the miraculous powers, some footsteps of which still remain.” (Vol. 1, p. 321.)

Hence we may doubtless infer, that Origen judged this text to relate, in its primary sense, to the Apostles; but can we thence infer, that he did not judge it to belong, in a lower sense, to all true Ministers of Christ?

Let us hear him speaking for himself in the same treatise: —

“‘And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.’ Those who hear the word preached with power are themselves filled with power,” (N.B. not the power of working miracles,) “which they demonstrate both in their disposition, and in their life, and in their striving for the truth unto death. But some, although they profess to believe, have not this power of God in them, but are empty thereof.” (p. 377.)

(Did Origen, then, believe that the power mentioned in this text belonged only to the apostolical age?)

“See the force of the word, conquering believers by a persuasiveness attended with the power of God! I speak this to show the meaning of him that said, ‘And my speech and my preaching were not with the enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.’ This divine saying means, that what is spoken is not sufficient of itself (although it be true, and most worthy to be believed) to pierce a man’s soul, if there be not also a certain power from God given to

the speaker, and grace bloom upon what is spoken; and this grace cannot be but from God.”

After observing that this is the very passage which your Lordship mentions at the close of the other, but does not cite, I desire every unprejudiced person to judge, whether Origen does not clearly determine that the power spoken of in this text, is in some measure given to all true Ministers in all ages.

**22.** The last scripture which your Lordship affirms “to be peculiar to the times of the Apostles,” is that in the First Epistle of St. John, concerning the “unction of the Holy One.”

To confirm this interpretation, we are referred to the authority of “Origen and Chrysostom, on the parallel passages in St. John’s Gospel.” (p. 42.)

But it has appeared, that both these fathers suppose those passages to belong to all Christians; and, consequently, their authority (if these are parallel passages) stands full against this interpretation.

Your Lordship subjoins, “I shall here only add that of the great Athanasius, who, in his epistle to Serapion, interprets the ‘unction from the Holy One,’ not merely of divine grace, but of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit.”

Nay, it is enough, if he interprets it at all of ordinary grace, such as is common to all Christians.

And this your Lordship allows he does. But I cannot allow that he interprets it of any thing else. I cannot perceive that he interprets it at all “of the *extraordinary* gifts of the Holy Spirit.”

His words are, “The Holy Spirit is called, and is, the unction and the seal. For John writes, ‘The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man should teach you, but as his anointing,’ his Spirit, ‘teacheth you of all things.’ Again: It is written in the Prophet Isaiah, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me.’ And Paul writes thus: ‘In whom also ye were sealed.’ And again: ‘Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.’ This anointing is the breath of the Son; so that he who hath the Spirit may say, ‘We are the sweet smelling savor of Christ.’ Because

we are partakers of the Holy Spirit, we have the Son; and having the Son, we have ‘the Spirit crying in our hearts, Abba, Father.’”

And so in his Oration against the Arians: —

“‘He sendeth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.’ His Son in us, invoking the Father, makes him to be called our Father. Certainly God cannot be called their Father, who have not the Son in their hearts.”

Is it not easy to be observed here,

**(1.)** That Athanasius makes “that testimony of the Spirit” common to all the children of God:

**(2.)** That he joins “the anointing of the Holy One,” with that seal of the Spirit wherewith all that persevere are “sealed to the day of redemption:” And,

**(3.)** That he does not, throughout this passage, speak of the *extraordinary gifts* at all?

Therefore, upon the whole, the sense of the primitive Church, so far as it can be gathered from the authors above cited, is, that “although some of the scriptures primarily refer to those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit which were given to the Apostles, and a few other persons in the apostolical age; yet they refer also, in a secondary sense, to those ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit which all the children of God do and will experience, even to the end of the world.”

**23.** What I mean by the ordinary operations of the Holy Ghost, I sum up in the words of a modern writer: —

“Sanctification being opposed to our corruption, and answering fully to the latitude thereof, whatsoever of holiness and perfection is wanting in our nature must be supplied by the Spirit of God. Wherefore, being by nature we are totally void of all saving truth, and under an impossibility of knowing the will of God, this ‘Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God,’ and revealeth them unto the sons of men, so that thereby the darkness of their understanding is expelled, and they are enlightened with the

knowledge of God. The same Spirit which revealeth the object of faith generally to the universal Church, doth also illuminate the understanding of such as believe, that they may receive the truth. For ‘faith is the gift of God,’ not only in the object, but also in the act. And this gift is a gift of the Holy Ghost working within us. — And as the increase of perfection, so the original of faith, is from the Spirit of God, by an internal illumination of the soul.”

“The second part of the office of the Holy Ghost, is the renewing of man in all the parts and faculties of his soul. For our natural corruption consisting in an aversation of our wills, and a depravation of our affections, an inclination of them to the will of God is wrought within us by the Spirit of God.

“The third part of this office is, to lead, direct, and govern us in our actions and conversations. ‘If we live in the Spirit,’ quickened by his renovation, we must also ‘walk in the Spirit,’ following his direction, led by his manuduction. We are also animated and acted by the Spirit of God, who giveth ‘both to will and to do:’ And ‘as many as are’ thus ‘led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.’ (¶ Romans 8:14.) Moreover, that this direction may prove more effectual, we are guided in our prayers by the same Spirit; according to the promise, ‘I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication.’ (¶ Zechariah 12:10.) Whereas then ‘this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us;’ and whereas ‘we know not what we should pray for as we ought, the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;’ and ‘he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.’ (¶ Romans 8:27.) From which intercession,” (made for all true Christians,) “he hath the name of the Paraclete given him by Christ, who said, ‘I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete.’ (¶ John 14:16, 26.) ‘For if any man sin, we have a Paraclete with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,’ saith St. John; ‘who maketh intercession for us,’ saith St. Paul. (¶ Romans 8:34.) And we have ‘another Paraclete,’ saith our

Savior; (<sup><B1416</sup>John 14:16;) ‘which also maketh intercession for us,’ saith St. Paul. (<sup><B1827</sup>Romans 8:27.) A Paraclete, then, in the notion of the Scriptures, is an intercessor.

“It is also the office of the Holy Ghost, to ‘assure us of the adoption of sons,’ to create in us a sense of the paternal love of God towards us, to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance.’ The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.’ ‘For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.’ ‘And because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.’ ‘For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; the Spirit itself hearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.’ (Verses 15, 16.)

“As, therefore, we are born again by the Spirit, and receive from him our regeneration, so we are also by the same Spirit ‘assured of our adoption.’ Because, being ‘sons, we are also heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ,’ by the same Spirit we have the *pledge*, or rather the ‘earnest, of our inheritance.’ For ‘he which establisheth us in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and hath given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts:’ So that ‘we are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.’ The Spirit of God, as given unto us in this life, is to be looked upon as an earnest, being part of that reward which is promised, and, upon performance of the covenant which God hath made with us, certainly to be received.”

Your Lordship observed, that “the interpretation of those passages which relate to the ‘unction from the Holy One,’ depends on the sense of those other passages of Holy Scripture, particularly those in St. John’s Gospel.” Now, if so, then these words fix the sense of six out of the seven texts in question; and every one of them, in the judgment of this writer, describes the *ordinary gifts* bestowed on all Christians.

It now rests with your Lordship to take your choice; either to condemn or to acquit both. Either your Lordship must condemn Bishop Pearson for an enthusiast; (a man no ways inferior to Bishop Chrysostom;) or you must

acquit me: for I have his express authority on my side, concerning every text which I affirm to belong to all Christians.

**24.** But I have greater authority than his, and such as I reverence only less than that of the oracles of God; I mean, that of our own Church. I shall close this head by setting down what occurs in her authentic records, concerning either our “receiving the Holy Ghost,” or his ordinary operations in all true Christians.

In her Daily Service she teaches us all to beseech God “to grant us his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life may be pure and holy;” to pray for our Sovereign Lord the King, that God would “replenish him with the grace of his Holy Spirit;” for all the Royal Family, that they may be “endued with his Holy Spirit, and enriched with his heavenly grace;” for all the Clergy and people, that he would “send down upon them the healthful Spirit of his grace;” for “the Catholic Church, that it may be guided and governed by his good Spirit;” and for all therein who at any time “make their common supplication unto him,” that “the fellowship” or communication “of the Holy Ghost may be with them all evermore.”

Her Collects are full of petitions to the same effect: “Grant that we may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit.” (*Collect for Christmas-Day.*) “Grant that in all our sufferings here, for the testimony of thy truth, we may by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed, and, ‘being filled with the Holy Ghost,’ may love and bless our persecutors.” (*St. Stephen’s Day.*) “Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity.” (*Quinquagesima Sunday.*) “O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant to us, thy humble servants, that by thy *holy inspiration* we may think those things that are good, and by thy merciful guidance may perform the same.” (*Fifth Sunday after Easter.*) “We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless, but send us the Holy Ghost to comfort us.” (*Sunday after Ascension Day.*) “Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort.” (*Whit-Sunday.*) (N.B. The Church here teaches all Christians to claim *the Comforter*, in virtue of the promise made, John 14.) “Grant us, Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit, to think and do always such things as be rightful.” (*Ninth Sunday after Trinity.*) “O God, forasmuch as without thee we are

not able to please thee; mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts.” (*Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.*)

“Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by *the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit*, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name.” (*Communion Office.*)

“Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, (or this person,) that he may be born again. — Give thy Holy Spirit to these persons,” (N.B. already baptized,) “that they may continue thy servants.

“Almighty God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these persons by water and the Holy Ghost; strengthen them with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them the manifold gifts of thy grace.” (*Office of Confirmation.*)

From these passages it may sufficiently appear, for what purposes every Christian, according to the doctrine of the Church of England, does now “receive the Holy Ghost.” But this will be still more clear from those that follow; wherein the reader may likewise observe a plain, rational sense of God’s *revealing* himself to us, of the *inspiration* of the Holy Ghost, and of a believer’s *feeling* in himself “the mighty working” of the Spirit of Christ: —

**25.** “God gave them of old grace to be his children, as he doth us now. But now, by the coming of our Savior Christ, we have received more abundantly the Spirit of God in our hearts.” (*Homily on Faith, Part II.*)

“He died to destroy the rule of the devil in us; and he rose again to send down his Holy Spirit, to ‘rule in our hearts.’” (*Homily on the Resurrection.*)

“We have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, as a seal and pledge of our everlasting inheritance.” (*Ibid.*)

“The Holy Ghost sat upon each of them, like as it had been cloven tongues of fire; to teach, that it is he which giveth eloquence and utterance in preaching the gospel; which engendereth a burning zeal towards God’s word, and giveth all men a tongue yea, a fiery tongue.” (N.B. Whatever occurs in any of the Journals, of God’s “giving me utterance,” or “enabling me to speak *with power*,”

cannot therefore be quoted as *enthusiam*, without wounding the Church through my side.) “So that if any man be a dumb Christian, not professing his faith openly, he giveth men occasion to doubt lest he have not the grace of the Holy Ghost within him.” (*Homily on Whit-Sunday*, Part I.)

“It is the office of the Holy Ghost to sanctify; which the more it is hid from our understanding,” (that is, the more particular manner of his working,) “the more it ought to move all men to wonder at the secret and mighty workings of God’s Holy Spirit which is within us. For it is the Holy Ghost that doth *quicken* the minds of men, *stirring up* godly motions in their hearts. Neither doth he think it sufficient inwardly to work the new birth of man, unless he do also dwell and abide in him. ‘Know ye not,’ saith St. Paul, ‘that ye are the temple of God, and that his Spirit dwelleth in you? Know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?’ Again he saith, ‘Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.’ For why? ‘The Spirit of God dwelleth in you.’ To this agreeth St. John: ‘The anointing which ye have received’ (he meaneth the Holy Ghost) ‘abideth in you.’ (<sup>6127</sup>1 John 2:27.) And St. Peter saith the same: ‘The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.’ O what comfort is this to the heart of a true Christian, to think that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in him! ‘If God be with us,’ as the Apostle saith, ‘who can be against us?’ He giveth patience and joyfulness of heart, in temptation and affliction, and is therefore worthily called ‘the Comforter.’ (<sup>6146</sup>John 14:16.) He doth instruct the hearts of the simple in the knowledge of God and his word; therefore he is justly termed ‘the Spirit of truth.’ (<sup>6163</sup>16:13.) And where the Holy Ghost doth instruct and teach, there is no delay at all in learning.” (*Ibid.*)

From this passage I learn, First, that every true Christian now “receives the Holy Ghost,” as the Paraclete or Comforter promised by our Lord, <sup>6146</sup>John 14:16: Secondly, that every Christian receives him as “the Spirit of truth,” (promised John 16,) to “teach him all things:” And, Thirdly, that “the anointing,” mentioned in the first Epistle of St. John, “abides in every Christian.”

**26.** “In reading of God’s word, he profiteth most that is most *inspired* with the Holy Ghost.” (*Homily on reading the Scripture*, Part I.)

“Human and worldly wisdom is not needful to the understanding of Scripture, but the *revelation* of the Holy Ghost, who *inspireth* the true meaning unto them that with humility and diligence search for it.” (*Ibid.* Part II.)

“Make him know and *feel* that there is no other name under heaven given unto men, whereby we can be saved.

“If we *feel* our conscience at peace with God, through remission of our sin, — all is of God.” *Homily on Rogation Week*, Part III.)

“If you *feel* such a faith in you, rejoice in it, and let it be daily increasing by well-working.” (*Homily of Faith*, Part III.)

“The faithful may *feel* wrought tranquillity of conscience, the increase of faith and hope, with many other graces of God.” (*Homily on the Sacrament*, Part I.)

“Godly men feel inwardly God’s Holy Spirit, inflaming their hearts with love.” (*Homily on certain places of Scripture*, Part I.)

“God give us grace to know these things, and to feel them in our hearts! This knowledge and feeling is not of ourselves. Let us therefore meekly call upon the bountiful Spirit, the Holy Ghost, to inspire us with his presence, that we may be able to hear the goodness of God to our salvation. For without his lively inspiration, can we not so much as speak the name of the Mediator. ‘No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;’ much less should we be able to believe and know these great mysteries that be opened to us by Christ. ‘But we have received,’ saith St. Paul, ‘not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God;’ for this purpose, ‘that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God.’ In the power of the Holy Ghost resteth all ability to know God, and to please him. It is he that *purifieth* the mind by his secret working. He *enlighteneth* the heart, to conceive worthy thoughts of Almighty God. He sitteth in the *tongue* of man, to stir him to speak his honor. He only

ministereth spiritual strength to the powers of the *soul* and *body*. And if we have any gift whereby we may profit our neighbor, all is wrought by this one and the self-same Spirit.” (*Homily for Rogation Week, Part III.*)

**27.** Every proposition which I have anywhere advanced concerning those *operations* of the Holy Ghost, which, I believe, are common to all Christians in all ages, is here clearly maintained by our own Church.

Under a full sense of this, I could not well understand, for many years, how it was, that on the mentioning any of these great truths, even among men of education, the cry immediately arose, “An enthusiast! An enthusiast!” But I now plainly perceive this is only an old fallacy in a new shape. To object *enthusiasm* to any person or doctrine is but a decent method of begging the question. It generally spares the objector the trouble of reasoning, and is a shorter and easier way of carrying his cause.

For instance, I assert that “till a man ‘receives the Holy Ghost,’ he is without God in the world; that he cannot know the things of God, unless God reveal them unto him by the Spirit; no, nor have even one holy or heavenly temper, without the inspiration of the Holy One.” Now, should one who is conscious to himself that he has experienced none of these things, attempt to confute these propositions, either from Scripture or antiquity, it might prove a difficult task. What then shall he do? Why, cry out, “Enthusiasm! Enthusiasm!” and the work is done.

But what does he mean by *enthusiasm*? Perhaps nothing at all: Few have any distinct idea of its meaning. Perhaps “something very bad,” or, “something I never experienced and do not understand.” Shall I tell you then what that “terrible something” is? I believe, thinking men mean by *enthusiasm*, a sort of religious madness; a *false imagination* of being inspired by God: And by *an enthusiast*, one that *fancies* himself under the influence of the Holy Ghost, when, in fact, he is not.

Let him prove me guilty of this who can. I will tell you once more the whole of my belief on these heads: And if any man will show me (by arguments, not hard names) what is wrong, I will thank God and him.

**28.** Every good gift is from God, and is given to man by the Holy Ghost. By nature there is in us no good thing; and there can be none, but so far as

it is wrought in us by that good Spirit. Have we any true knowledge of what is good? This is not the result of our natural understanding. “The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God:” So that we never can discern them, until God “reveals them unto us by his Spirit.” *Reveals*, that is, unveils, uncovers; gives us to know what we did not know before. Have we love? It “is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” He *inspires*, breathes, infuses into our soul, what of ourselves we could not have. Does our spirit rejoice in God our Savior? It is “joy in,” or by, “the Holy Ghost.” Have we true inward peace? It is “the peace of God,” wrought in us by the same Spirit. Faith, peace, joy, love, are all his fruits. And as we are figuratively said to *see* the light of faith; so, by a like figure of speech, we are said to *feel* this peace and joy and love; that is, we have an inward experience of them, which we cannot find any fitter word to express.

The reasons why, in speaking of these things, I use those terms, (*inspiration* particularly,) are,

(1.) Because they are scriptural:

(2.) Because they are used by our Church:

(3.) Because I know none better. The word, “*influence* of the Holy Ghost,” which I suppose you use, is both a far stronger and a less natural term than *inspiration*. It is far stronger; even as far as “flowing into the soul” is a stronger expression than “breathing upon it;” — and less natural, as *breathing* bears a near relation to spirit; to which *flowing in* has only a distant relation.

But you thought I had meant “*immediate inspiration*.” So I do, or I mean nothing at all. Not indeed such inspiration as is *sine mediis*. But all inspiration, though by means, is *immediate*. Suppose, for instance, you are employed in private prayer, and God pours his love into your heart. God then acts *immediately* on your soul; and the love of him which you then experience, is as *immediately* breathed into you by the Holy Ghost, as if you had lived seventeen hundred years ago. Change the term: Say, God then *assists* you to love him. Well, and is not this *immediate assistance*? Say, His Spirit *concurs* with yours. You gain no ground. It is *immediate*

*concurrence*, or none at all. God, a Spirit, acts upon your spirit. Make it out any otherwise if you can.

I cannot conceive how that harmless word *immediate* came to be such a bugbear in the world: “Why, I thought you meant such inspiration as the Apostles had; and such a receiving the Holy Ghost as that was at the day of Pentecost.” I do, in part: Indeed I do not mean, that Christians now receive the Holy Ghost in order to work miracles; but they do doubtless now “receive,” yea, are “filled with, the Holy Ghost,” in order to be filled with the fruits of that blessed Spirit. And he inspires into all true believers now, a degree of the same peace and joy and love which the Apostles felt in themselves on that day, when they were first “filled with the Holy Ghost.”

**29.** I have now considered the most material objections I know, which have been lately made against the great doctrines I teach. I have produced, so far as in me lay, the strength of those objections, and then answered them, I hope, in the spirit of meekness. And now I trust it appears, that these doctrines are no other than the doctrines of Jesus Christ; that they are all evidently contained in the word of God, by which alone I desire to stand or fall; and that they are fundamentally the same with the doctrines of the Church of England, of which I do, and ever did, profess myself a member.

But there remains one objection, which, though relating to the head of doctrine, yet is independent on all that went before. And that is, “You cannot agree in your doctrines among yourselves. One holds one thing, and one another. Mr. Whitefield anathematizes Mr. Wesley; and Mr. Wesley anathematizes Mr. Whitefield. And yet each pretends to be led by the Holy Ghost, by the infallible Spirit of God! Every reasonable man must conclude from hence, that neither one nor the other is led by the Spirit.”

I need not say, how continually this has been urged, both in common conversation and from the press: (I am grieved to add, and from the pulpit too; for, if the argument were good, it would overturn the Bible:) Nor, how great stress has been continually laid upon it. Whoever proposes it, proposes it as demonstration, and generally claps his wings, as being quite assured, it will admit of no answer.

And indeed I am in doubt, whether it does admit (I am sure it does not require) any other answer, than that coarse one of the countryman to the Romish champion, “Bellarmine, thou liest.” For every proposition contained herein is grossly, shamelessly false.

- (1.) “You cannot agree in your doctrines among yourselves.” — Who told you so? All our fundamental doctrines I have recited above. And in every one of these we do and have agreed for several years. In these we hold one and the same thing. In smaller points, each of us thinks, and lets think.
- (2.) “Mr. Whitefield anathematizes Mr. Wesley.” Another shameless untruth. Let any one read what Mr. Whitefield wrote, even in the heat of controversy, and he will be convinced of the contrary.
- (3.) “And Mr. Wesley anathematizes Mr. Whitefield.” This is equally false and scandalous. I reverence Mr. Whitefield, both as a child of God, and a true Minister of Jesus Christ.
- (4.) “And yet each pretends to be led by the Holy Ghost, by the infallible Spirit of God.”

Not in our private opinions; nor does either of us pretend to be any farther led by the Spirit of God, than every Christian must pretend to be, unless he will deny the Bible. For only “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.” Therefore, if you do not pretend to be led by him too, yea, if it be not so in fact, “you are none of his.”

And now, what is become of your demonstration? Leave it to the carmen and porters, its just proprietors; to the zealous apple-women, that cry after me in the street, “This is he that rails at the *Whole Dutiful of Man*.” But let every one that pretends to learning or reason be ashamed to mention it any more.

**30.** The first inference easily deduced from what has been said, is, that we are not false prophets. In one sense of the word, we are no prophets at all; for we do not foretel things to come. But in another, (wherein every Minister is a prophet,) we are; for we do speak in the name of God. Now, a false prophet (in this sense of the word) is one who declares as the will of God what is not so. But we declare (as has been shown at large) nothing

else as the will of God, but what is evidently contained in his written word, as explained by our own Church. Therefore, unless you can prove the Bible to be a false book, you cannot possibly prove us to be false prophets.

The text which is generally cited on this occasion is <sup><4075</sup>Matthew 7:15. But how unhappily chosen! In the preceding chapters, our Lord had been describing that “righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees,” and without which we cannot “enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Even the life of God in the soul; holiness of heart, producing all holiness of conversation. In this, he closes that rule which sums up the whole, with those solemn words, “Enter ye in at the strait gate;” (such indeed is that of universal holiness;) “for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction.” The gate of hell is wide as the whole earth; the way of unholiness is broad as the great deep. “And many there be which go in thereat;” yea, and excuse themselves in so doing, “because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” It follows, “Beware of false prophets;” of those who speak as from God what God hath not spoken; those who show you any other way to life, than that which I have now shown. So that the false prophets here spoken of are those who point out any other way to heaven than this; who teach men to find a wider gate, a broader way, than that described in the foregoing chapters. But it has been abundantly shown that we do not. Therefore (whatever we are beside) we are not false prophets.

Neither are we (as has been frequently and vehemently affirmed) “deceivers of the people.” If we teach “the truth as it is in Jesus,” if “we speak as the oracles of God,” it follows that we do not deceive those that hear, though they should believe whatever we speak. “Let God be true, and every man a liar;” every man that contradicts his truth. But he will “be justified in his saying, and clear when he is judged.”

**31.** One thing more I infer, that we are not enthusiasts. This accusation has been considered at large; and the main arguments hitherto brought to support it have been weighed in the balance and found wanting: Particularly this, “that none but enthusiasts suppose either that promise of the Comforter, (<sup><3446</sup>John 14:16, 26; 16:13,) or the witness of the Spirit,

(~~“Romans 8:15, 16,~~) or that unutterable prayer, (~~“Romans 8:26, 27,~~) or the ‘unction from the Holy One,’ (~~“1 John 2:20, 27,~~) to belong in common to all Christians.” O my Lord, how deeply have you condemned the generation of God’s children! Whom have you represented as rank, dreaming enthusiasts, as either deluded or designing men? Not only Bishop Pearson, a man hitherto accounted both sound in heart, and of good understanding; but likewise Archbishop Cranmer, Bishop Ridley, Bishop Latimer, Bishop Hooper; and all the venerable compilers of our Liturgy and Homilies; all the members of both the Houses of Convocation, by whom they were revised and approved; yea, King Edward, and all his Lords and Commons together, by whose authority they were established; and, with these *modern enthusiasts*, Origen, Chrysostom, and Athanasius are comprehended in the same censure!

I grant, a Deist might rank both us and them in the number of religious madmen; nay, ought so to do, on his supposition that the Gospel is but a “cunningly-devised fable.” And on this ground some of them have done so in fact. One of them was asking me, some years since, “What! are you one of the knight-errants? How, I pray, got this Quixotism into your head? You want nothing; you have a good provision for life; and are in a fair way of preferment. And must you leave all, to fight windmills; to convert savages in America?” I could only reply, “Sir, if the Bible is a lie, I am as very a madman as you can conceive. But if it be true, I am in my senses; I am neither a madman nor enthusiast. ‘For there is no man who hath left father, or mother, or wife, or house, or land, for the gospel’s sake; but he shall receive an hundred fold, in this world, with persecutions, and in the world to come, eternal life.’”

Nominal, outside Christians too, men of form, may pass the same judgment. For we give up all our pretensions to what they account happiness, for what they (with the Deists) believe to be a mere dream. We expect, therefore, to pass for enthusiasts with these also: “But wisdom is justified of” all “her children.”

**32.** I cannot conclude this head without one obvious remark: Suppose we really were enthusiasts; suppose our doctrines were false, and unsupported either by reason, Scripture, or authority; then why hath not some one, “who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you,”

attempted at least to show us our fault “in love and meekness of wisdom?” Brethren, “if ye have bitter zeal in your hearts, your wisdom descendeth not from above. The wisdom that is from above, is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy” or pity. Does this spirit appear in one single tract of all those which have been published against us? Is there one writer that has reprovèd us in love? Bring it to a single point. “Love hopeth all things.” If you had loved us in any degree, you would have hoped that God would some time give us the knowledge of his truth. But where shall we find even this slender instance of love? Has not every one who has wrote at all (I do not remember so much as one exception) treated us as incorrigible? Brethren, how is this? Why do ye labor to teach us an evil lesson against yourselves? O may God never suffer others to deal with you as ye have dealt with us!

## VI.

**1.** Before I enter upon the consideration of those objections which have been made to the manner of our preaching, I believe it may be satisfactory to some readers, if I relate how I began to preach in this manner: —

I was ordained Deacon in 1725, and Priest in the year following. But it was many years after this before I was convinced of the great truths above recited. During all that time I was utterly ignorant of the nature and condition of justification. Sometimes I confounded it with sanctification; (particularly when I was in Georgia;) at other times I had some confused notion about the forgiveness of sins; but then I took it for granted the time of this must be either the hour of death, or the day of judgment.

I was equally ignorant of the nature of saving faith; apprehending it to mean no more than a “firm assent to all the propositions contained in the Old and New Testaments.”

**2.** As soon as, by the great blessing of God, I had a clearer view of these things, I began to declare them to others also. “I believed, and therefore I spake.” Wherever I was now desired to preach, salvation by faith was my only theme. My constant subjects were, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins.” These I explained and

enforced with all my might, both in every church where I was asked to preach, and occasionally in the religious societies of London and Westminster; to some or other of which I was continually pressed to go by the stewards or other members of them.

Things were in this posture, when I was told I must preach no more in this, and this, and another church; the reason was usually added without reserve, “Because you preach such doctrines.” So much the more those who could not hear me there flocked together when I was at any of the societies; where I spoke, more or less, though with much inconvenience, to as many as the room I was in would contain.

**3.** But after a time, finding those rooms could not contain a tenth part of the people that were earnest to hear, I determined to do the same thing in England, which I had often done in a warmer climate; namely, when the house would not contain the congregation, to preach in the open air. This I accordingly did, first at Bristol, where the society rooms were exceeding small, and at Kingswood, where we had no room at all; afterwards, in or near London.

And I cannot say I have ever seen a more awful sight, than, when on Rose-Green, or the top of Hannam-Mount, some thousands of people were calmly joined together in solemn waiting upon God, while

*They stood, and under open air adored,  
The God who made both air, earth, heaven, and sky.*

And, whether they were listening to his word with attention still as night, or were lifting up their voice in praise as the sound of many waters, many a time have I been constrained to say in my heart, “How dreadful is this place! This” also “is no other than the house of God! This is the gate of heaven!”

Be pleased to observe:

**(1.)** That I was forbidden, as by a general consent, to preach in any church, (though not by any judicial sentence,) “for preaching such doctrine.” This was the open, avowed cause; there was at that time no other, either real or pretended, except that the people crowded so.

(2.) That I had no desire or design to preach in the open air, till after this prohibition.

(3.) That when I did, as it was no matter of choice, so neither of premeditation. There was no scheme at all previously formed, which was to be supported thereby; nor had I any other end in view than this, — to save as many souls as I could.

(4.) Field-preaching was therefore a sudden expedient, a thing submitted to, rather than chosen; and therefore submitted to, because I thought preaching even thus, better than not preaching at all: First, in regard to my own soul, because, “a dispensation of the gospel being committed to me,” I did not dare “not to preach the gospel:” Secondly, in regard to the souls of others, whom I everywhere saw “seeking death in the error of their life.”

4. But the author of the “Observations,” and of “The Case of the Methodists briefly stated, more particularly in the point of Field-Preaching,” thinks field-preaching worse than not preaching at all, “because it is illegal.”

Your argument, in form, runs thus: —

“That preaching, which is contrary to the laws of the land is worse than not preaching at all:

“But field-preaching is contrary to the laws of the land:

“Therefore, it is worse than not preaching at all.”

The first proposition is not self-evident, nor, indeed, universally true: For the preaching of all the primitive Christians was contrary to the whole tenor of the Roman law; the worship of the devil-gods being established by the strongest laws then in being. Nor is it ever true, but on supposition that the preaching in question is an indifferent thing.

But waving this, I deny the second proposition; I deny that field-preaching is contrary to the laws of our land.

To prove which, you begin thus: “It does not appear that any of the Preachers among the Methodists have qualified themselves, and the places of their assembling, according to the Act of Toleration.”

I answer,

**(1.)** That Act grants toleration to those who dissent from the Established Church: But we do not dissent from it: Therefore, we cannot make use of that Act.

**(2.)** That Act exempts Dissenters from penalties consequent on their breach of preceding laws: But we are not conscious of breaking any law at all: Therefore, we need not make use of it.

In the next section you say, “They have broken through all these provisions, in open defiance of government; and have met, not only in houses, but in the fields, notwithstanding the statute (22 Car. II., c. 1) which forbids this by name.”

I answer,

**(1.)** We do nothing in defiance of government: We reverence Magistrates, as the Ministers of God.

**(2.)** Although we have met in the fields, yet we do not conceive that statute at all affects us; not only because that Act points wholly at Dissenters; whereas we are members of the Established Church; but also because (they are your own words) “it was evidently intended to suppress and prevent sedition;” whereas, no sedition, nor any the least approach thereto, can with any color be laid to our charge.

In your third section you affirm that the Act of Toleration itself cannot secure us in field-preaching from the penalties of former laws. We have no desire it should; as not apprehending ourselves to be condemned by any former law whatever. Nor does what you add, “that the Act of Toleration forbids any assembly of persons dissenting from the Church of England, to meet with the doors locked,” affect us at all; because we do not dissent from it.

**5.** In “The Case of the Methodists briefly stated,” your first observation is, “The Act of Toleration leaves them liable to the penalties of several statutes made against unlawful assemblies.”

I suppose then these several statutes specify what those unlawful assemblies are; and whether unlawful, as being condemned by previous laws, or made unlawful by those statutes.

And it still remains to be proved, that our assemblies are unlawful, in one or other of these senses.

You next observe, that “the Dissenters of all denominations qualify themselves according to the Act of Toleration; otherwise, they are liable to the penalties of all the laws recited in this Act.”

I answer, as before, all this strikes wide. It relates wholly to “persons dissenting from the Church.” But we are not the men: We do not dissent from the Church: Whoever affirms it, we put him to the proof.

You go on: “One of those laws so recited (viz., 22 Car. II., c. 1) is that which forbids field-preaching by name; and was evidently intended, not only to suppress, but also to prevent, sedition: As the title of the Act declares, and as the preamble expresses it, ‘to provide farther and more speedy remedies against it.’”

Was this then, in your own judgment, the evident intention of that Act, viz., to provide remedies against sedition? Does the very title of the Act declare this, and the preamble also express it? With what justice then, with what ingenuity or candor, with what shadow of truth or reason, can any man cite this Act against us; whom you yourself no more suspect of a design to raise sedition, (I appeal to your own conscience in the sight of God,) than of a design to blow up the city of London?

**6.** Hitherto, therefore, it hath not been made to appear that field-preaching is contrary to any law in being. However, “it is dangerous.” This you strongly insist on. “It may be attended with mischievous consequences. It may give advantages to the enemies of the established government. It is big with mischief.” (*Observations*, Sect. 1 & 2.)

With what mischief? Why, “evil-minded men, by meeting together in the fields, under pretense of religion, may raise riots and tumults; or, by meeting secretly, may carry on private cabals against the state.” (*Case of the Methodists*, p. 2.)

“And if the Methodists themselves are a harmless and loyal people, it is nothing to the point in hand. For disloyal and seditious persons may use such an opportunity of getting together, in order to execute any private design. Mr. Whitefield says, thirty, fifty, or eighty thousand have attended his preaching at once. Now,

(1.) He cannot know one tenth part of such a congregation:

(2.) All people may come and carry on what designs they will: Therefore,

(3.) This is a great opportunity put into the hands of seditious persons to raise disturbances.

“With what safety to the public these field-preachings may be continued, let the world judge.” (*Ibid.* pp. 2-4.)

May I speak without offense? I cannot think you are in earnest. You do not mean what you say. Do you believe Mr. Whitefield had eighty thousand hearers at once? No more than you believe he had eighty millions. Is not all this talk of danger mere finesse, thrown in purely *ad movendam invidiam*?<sup>f13</sup> You know governments generally are suspicious; especially in the time of war; and therefore apply, as you suppose, to their weak side; in hopes, if possible, to deliver over these heretics to the secular arm. However, I will answer as if you spoke from your heart: For I am in earnest, if you are not.

(1.) “The Preacher cannot know a tenth part of his congregation.” Let us come to the *present* state of things. The largest congregations that *now* attend the preaching of any Methodist, are those (God be merciful to me!) that attend mine. And cannot I know a tenth part of one of these congregations, either at Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, or London? As strange as it may seem, I generally know two-thirds of the congregation in every place, even on Sunday evening, and nine in ten of those who attend at most other times.

(2.) “All people may come and carry on what designs they will.” Not so. All field-preaching is now in the open day. And were only ten persons to come to such an assembly with arms, it would soon be inquired, with what design they came. This is therefore,

(3.) No “great opportunity put into the hands of seditious persons to raise disturbances.” And if ever any disturbance has been raised, it was quite of another kind.

The public, then, is entirely safe, if it be in no other danger than arises from field-preaching.

7. There is one other sentence belonging to this head, in the eighth section of the “Observations.” “The religious societies,” you say, “in London and Westminster, for many years past, have received no discouragements, but, on the contrary, have been countenanced and encouraged both by the Bishops and Clergy.” How is this? Have *they* then “qualified themselves and places of their assembling, according to the Act of Toleration?” Have *they* “embraced the protection which that Act might give them, in case they complied with the conditions of it?” If not, are they not all “liable to the penalties of the several statutes made before that time against unlawful assemblies?”

How can they escape? Have they “qualified themselves for holding these separate assemblies, according to the tenor of that Act?” Have, then, “the several members thereof taken the oaths to the government?” And are the “doors of the places wherein they meet always open at the time of such meetings?” I presume you know they are not; and that neither “the persons nor places are so qualified as that Act directs.”

How then come “the Bishops and Clergy to countenance and encourage” unlawful assemblies? If it be said, “They meet in a private, inoffensive way;” that is nothing to the point in hand. If those meetings are unlawful in themselves, all their inoffensiveness will not make them lawful. “O, but they behave with modesty and decency.” Very well; but the law! What is that to the law? There can be no solid defence but this: They are not Dissenters from the Church; therefore they cannot use, and they do not need, the Act of Toleration. And their meetings are not seditious; therefore the statute against seditious meetings does not affect them.

The application is obvious. If our meetings are illegal, so are theirs also. But if this plea be good (as doubtless it is) in the one case, it is good in the other also.

**8.** You propose another objection to our manner of preaching, in the second part of the “Observations.” The substance of it I will repeat, and answer as briefly as I can: —

“They run up and down from place to place, and from county to county;” that is, they preach in several places. This is undoubtedly true. “They draw after them confused multitudes of people;” that is, many come to hear them. This is true also. “But they would do well to remember, God is not the author of confusion or of tumult, but of peace.” I trust we do: Nor is there any confusion or tumult at all in our largest congregations; unless at some rare times, when the sons of Belial mix therewith, on purpose to disturb the peaceable worshippers of God.

“But our Church has provided against this preaching up and down, in the ordination of a Priest, by expressly limiting the exercise of the powers then conferred upon him, to the congregation where he shall be lawfully appointed thereunto.”

I answer,

**(1.)** Your argument proves too much. If it be allowed just as you proposed it, it proves that no Priest has authority, either to preach or minister the sacraments, in any other than his own congregation.

**(2.)** Had the powers conferred been so limited when I was ordained Priest, my ordination would have signified just nothing. For I was not appointed to any congregation at all; but was ordained as a member of that “College of Divines,” (so our statutes express it,) “founded to overturn all heresies, and defend the Catholic faith.”

**(3.)** For many years after I was ordained Priest, this limitation was never heard of. I heard not one syllable of it, by way of objection, to my preaching up and down in Oxford or London, or the parts adjacent; in Gloucestershire, or Worcestershire; in Lancashire, Yorkshire, or Lincolnshire. Nor did the strictest disciplinarian scruple suffering me to exercise those powers wherever I came.

**(4.)** And in fact, is it not universally allowed, that every Priest, as such, has a power, in virtue of his ordination, either to preach or to

administer the sacraments, in any congregation, wherever the Rector or Curate desires his assistance? Does not every one then see through this thin pretense?

9. “The Bishops and Universities indeed have power to grant licenses to Itinerants. But the Church has provided in that case; they are not to preach in any church (Canon 50) till they show their license.”

The Church has well provided in that case. But what has that case to do with the case of common Clergymen? Only so much as to show how grossly this Canon has been abused, at Islington in particular; where the Churchwardens were instructed to hinder, by main force, the Priest whom the Vicar himself had appointed, from preaching, and to quote this Canon; which, as you plainly show, belongs to quite another thing.

In the note you add, “Mr. Wesley being asked, by what authority he preached, replied, ‘By the authority of Jesus Christ conveyed to me by the (now) Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon me and said, Take thou authority to preach the gospel.’ In this reply he thought fit, for a plain reason, to leave out this latter part of the commission; for that would have shown his reader the restraint and limitation under which the exercise of the power is granted.” Nay, I did not print the latter part of the words, for a plainer reason, because I did not speak them. And I did not speak them then, because they did not come into my mind. Though probably, if they had, I should not have spoken them; it being my only concern, to answer the question proposed, in as few words as I could.

But before those words, which you suppose to imply such a restraint as would condemn all the Bishops and Clergy in the nation, were those, spoken without any restraint or limitation at all, which I apprehend to convey an indelible character: “Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee, by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy sacraments, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

You proceed: “In the same Journal he declares, that he looks upon all the world as his parish, and explains his meaning as follows: ‘In whatever part

of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounded duty, to declare, unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation. This is the work which I know God hath called me to;” namely “by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,” which directs me how to obey that general command, “While we have time, let us do good unto all men.”

**10.** You object farther, “that the Methodists do not observe the Rubric before the Communion Service; which directs, so many as desire to partake of the holy communion, to signify their names to the Curate the day before.” What Curate desires they should? Whenever any Minister will give but one week’s notice of this, I undertake, all that have any relation to me shall signify their names within the time appointed.

You object also, that they break through the twenty-eighth Canon, which requires, “That if strangers come often to any church from other parishes, they should be remitted to their own churches, there to receive the communion with their neighbors.”

But what, if there be no communion there? Then this Canon does not touch the case; nor does any one break it, by coming to another church purely because there is no communion at his own.

As to your next advice, “To have a greater regard to the rules and orders of the Church,” I cannot; for I now regard them next to the word of God. And as to your last, “To renounce communion with the Church,” I dare not. Nay, but let them thrust us out. We will not leave the ship; if you cast us out of it, then our Lord will take us up.

**11.** To the same head may be referred the objection some time urged, by a friendly and candid man, viz., “That it was unlawful to use extemporary prayer, because there was a Canon against it.”

It was not quite clear to me, that the Canon he cited was against extemporary prayer. But supposing it were, my plain answer would be, “That Canon I dare not obey; because the law of man binds only so far as it is consistent with the word of God.”

The same person objected my not obeying the Bishops and Governors of the Church. I answer, I both do and will obey them, in whatsoever I can with a clear conscience. So that there is no just ground for that charge, —

that I despise either the rules or the Governors of the Church. I obey them in all things where I do not apprehend there is some particular law of God to the contrary. Even in that case, I show all the deference I can: I endeavor to act as inoffensively as possible; and am ready to submit to any penalty which can by law be inflicted upon me. Would to God every Minister and member of the Church were herein altogether as I am!

## VII.

**1.** I have considered the chief objections that have lately been urged against the doctrines I teach. The main arguments brought against this manner of teaching have been considered also. It remains, to examine the most current objections, concerning the effects of this teaching.

Many affirm, “that it does abundance of hurt; that it has had very bad effects; insomuch that if any good at all has been done, yet it bears no proportion to the evil.”

But, to come to particulars: “First, then, you are disturbers of the public peace.”

What, do we either teach or raise sedition? Do we speak evil of the ruler of our people? Or do we stir them up against any of those that are put in authority under him? Do we directly or indirectly promote faction, mutiny, or rebellion? I have not found any man in his senses yet, that would affirm this.

“But it is plain, peace is broke, and disturbances do arise, in consequence of your preaching.” I grant it. But what would you infer? Have you never read the Bible? Have you not read, that the Prince of Peace himself was, in this sense, a disturber of the public peace? “When he came into Jerusalem all the city was moved,” (<sup>(4B1)</sup>Matthew 21:10,) εσεισθη, shaken as with an earthquake. And the disturbance rose higher and higher, till “the whole multitude” cried out together, “Away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him!” and Pilate gave sentence it should be done. Such another disturber of the public peace was that Stephen, even from the time he began “disputing with the Libertines and Cyrenians,” till the people “stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out

of the city, and stoned him.” Such disturbers of the peace were all those ringleaders of the sect of the Nazarenes, (commonly called Apostles,) who, wherever they came, “turned the world upside down:” And above all the rest, that Paul of Tarsus, who occasioned so much disturbance at Damascus, (~~40E~~ Acts 9,) at Antioch of Pisidia, (~~40E~~ 13,) at Iconium, (~~40E~~ 14,) at Lystra, (~~40E~~ 14:19,) at Philippi, (~~40E~~ 16,) at Thessalonica, (~~40E~~ 17,) and particularly at Ephesus. The consequence of his preaching there was, that “the whole city was filled with confusion.” And “they all ran together with one accord, some crying one thing, some another;” inasmuch “as the greater part of them knew not wherefore they were come together.”

**2.** And can we expect it to be any otherwise now? Although what we preach is the gospel of peace, yet if you will violently and illegally hinder our preaching, must not this create disturbance? But observe, the disturbance begins on *your* part. All is peace, till you raise that disturbance. And then you very modestly impute it to *us* and lay your *own* riot at *our* door!

But of all this, our Lord hath told us before: “Think not that I am come to send peace upon earth;” that this will be the immediate effect, wherever my gospel is preached with power. “I am not come to send peace, but a sword;” this (so far as the wisdom of God permits, by whom “the hairs of your head are all numbered”) will be the first consequence of my coming, whenever my word turns sinners “from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.”

I would wish all you who see this scripture fulfilled, by disturbance following the preaching the gospel, to remember the behavior of that wise magistrate at Ephesus on the like occasion. He did not lay the disturbance to the Preacher’s charge, but “beckoned to the multitude, and said, Ye men of Ephesus, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought these men, who are neither robbers of temples, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess;” not convicted of any such notorious crime, as can at all excuse this lawless violence. “But if Demetrius hath a matter against any, the law is open, and there are deputies,” (or proconsuls, capable of hearing and deciding the cause,) “let them implead one another. But if ye inquire anything concerning other things, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.”

**3.** “But you create divisions in private families.” Accidentally, we do. For instance: Suppose an entire family to have the form but not the power of godliness; or to have neither the form nor the power; in either case, they may in some sort agree together. But suppose, when these hear the plain word of God, one or two of them are convinced, “This is the truth; and I have been all this time in the broad way that leadeth to destruction.” These then will begin to mourn after God, while the rest remain as they were. Will they not therefore of consequence divide, and form themselves into separate parties? Must it not be so, in the very nature of things? And how exactly does this agree with the words of our Lord? “Suppose ye that I am come to send peace upon earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five divided in one house, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law.” (☞ Luke 12:51-53.) “And the foes of a man shall be they of his own household.” (☞ Matthew 10:36.)

Thus it was from the very beginning. For is it to be supposed that a heathen parent would long endure a Christian child, or that a heathen husband would agree with a Christian wife? unless either the believing wife could gain her husband; or the unbelieving husband prevailed on the wife to renounce her way of worshipping God; at least, unless she would obey him in going no more to those societies, or conventicles, (εταίριαι,) as they termed the Christian assemblies?

**4.** Do you think, now, I have an eye to *your* case? Doubtless I have; for I do not fight as one that beateth the air. “Why have not I a right to hinder my own wife or child from going to a conventicle? And is it not the duty of wives to obey their husbands, and of children to obey their parents?” Only set the case seventeen hundred years back, and your own conscience gives you the answer. What would St. Paul have said to one whose husband forbade her to follow this way any more? What directions would our Savior have given to him whose father enjoined him not to hear the gospel? His words are extant still: “He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.” (☞ Matthew 10:37.) Nay more, “If any man cometh to me, and hateth not,” in comparison of me, “his father, and

mother, and wife, and children, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” (~~and~~ Luke 14:26.)

“O, but this is not a parallel case! For they were Heathens; but I am a Christian.” A *Christian!* Are you so? Do you understand the word? Do you know what a Christian is? If you are a Christian, you have the mind that was in Christ; and you so walk as he also walked. You are holy as he is holy, both in heart and in all manner of conversation. Have you then that mind that was in Christ? And do you walk as Christ walked? Are you inwardly and outwardly holy? I fear, not even outwardly. No; you live in known sin. Alas! How then are you a Christian? What, a railer a Christian? a common swearer a Christian? a Sabbath-breaker a Christian? a drunkard or whoremonger a Christian? Thou art a Heathen barefaced; the wrath of God is on thy head, and the curse of God upon thy back. Thy damnation slumbereth not. By reason of such Christians it is that the holy name of Christ is blasphemed. Such as thou they are that cause the very savages in the Indian woods to cry out, “Christian much drunk; Christian beat men; Christian tell lies; devil Christian! Me no Christian.”

And so *thou* wilt direct thy wife and children in the way of salvation! Woe unto thee, thou devil Christian! Woe unto thee, thou blind leader of the blind! What wilt thou make them? two-fold more the children of hell than thyself? Be ashamed. Blush, if thou canst blush. Hide thy face. Lay thee in the dust. Out of the deep cry unto God, if haply he may hear thy voice. Instantly smite upon thy breast. Who knoweth but God may take thee out of the belly of hell?

**5.** But you are not one of these. You fear God, and labor to have a conscience void of offense. And it is from a principle of conscience that you restrain your wife and children from hearing false doctrine. — But how do you know it is false doctrine? Have you heard for yourself? Or, if you have not heard, have you carefully read what we have occasionally answered for ourselves? A man of conscience cannot condemn anyone unheard. This is not common humanity. Nor will he refrain from hearing what may be the truth, for no better reason than fear of his reputation. Pray observe, I do not say, every man, or any man, is obliged in

conscience to hear us: But I do say, every man in England who condemns us is obliged to hear us first. This is only common justice, such as is not denied to a thief or a murderer. Take your choice therefore: Either hear us, or condemn us not; either speak nothing at all, or hear before you speak.

But suppose you have both read and heard more than you like: Did you read and hear fairly? Was not you loaden with prejudice? Did you not read or hear, expecting no good; perhaps, desiring to find fault? If so, what wonder you judge as you do! What a poor mock-trial is this! You had decided the cause in your own breast before you heard one word of the evidence. And still do *you* talk of acting out of conscience? yea, a conscience void of offense?

We will put the case farther yet. Suppose your censure was just, and this was actually false doctrine. Still every one must give an account of himself to God; and you cannot force the conscience of any one. You cannot compel another to see as you see; you ought not to attempt it. Reason and persuasion are the only weapons you ought to use, even toward your own wife and children. Nay, and it is impossible to starve them into conviction, or to beat even truth into their head. You may destroy them in this way, but cannot convert them. Remember what our own poet has said: —

*By force beasts act, and are by force restrain'd;  
The human mind by gentle means is gain'd  
Thou canst not take what I refuse to yield;  
Nor reap the harvest, though thou spoil'st the field.*

6. Every reasonable man is convinced of this. And perhaps you do not concern yourself so much about the doctrine, but the mischief that is done: “How many poor families are starved, ruined, brought to beggary!” By what? Not by contributing a penny a week, (the usual contribution in our societies,) and letting that alone when they please, when there is any shadow of reason to suppose they cannot afford it. You will not say any are brought to beggary by this. Not by gifts to me; for I receive none; save (sometimes) the food I eat. And public collections are nothing to me. That it may evidently appear they are not, when any such collection is made, to clothe the poor, or for any other determinate purpose, the money is both received and expended before many witnesses, without ever going through my hands at all. And then, likewise, all possible regard is had to the circumstances of those who contribute anything. And they are told over

and over, “If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath.”

But where are all these families that have been brought to beggary? How is it that none of them is forthcoming? Are they all out of town? Then, indeed, I am in no danger of clearing myself from *their* indictment. It is the easiest thing of a thousand, for one at Newcastle to say that I have beggared him and all his kindred. If one of the long-bearded men on Tyne-Bridge were to say so just now, I could not readily confute him. But why will you not bring a few of these to tell me so to my face? I have not found one that would do this yet. They pray you would have them excused.

I remember a man coming to me with a doleful countenance, putting himself into many lamentable postures, gaping as wide as he could, and pointing to his mouth, as though he would say he could not speak. I inquired of his companion, what was the matter; and was informed, he had fallen into the hands of the Turks, who had used him in a barbarous manner, and cut out his tongue by the roots. I believed him. But when the man had had a cheerful cup, he could find his tongue as well as another. I reflected, How is it that I could so readily believe that tale? The answer was easy: “Because it was told of a Turk.” My friend, take knowledge of your own case. If you had not first took me for a Turk, or something equally bad, you could not so readily have believed that tale.

7. “But can it be, that there is no ground at all for a report which is in every one’s mouth?” I will simply tell you all the ground which I can conceive. I believe many of those who attend on my ministry have less of this world’s goods than they had before, or, at least, might have had if they did not attend it. This fact I allow; and it may be easily accounted for in one or other of the following ways: —

First. I frequently preach on such texts as these: “Having food and raiment, let us be content therewith.” “They who desire to be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where the rust and moth doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,

where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.”

Now, should any of those who are laboring by all possible means “to lay up treasure upon earth,” feel these words, they would not “enlarge their desires as hell,” but be “content with such things as they had.” They then probably might not heap up so much for their heirs as otherwise they would have done. These would therefore have less than if they had not heard me; because they would grasp at less.

Secondly. Wherever the gospel takes effect, “the foes of a man will be those of his own household.” By this means then some who hear and receive it with joy will be poorer than they were before. Their domestic foes will, in many cases, hinder, embroil, and disturb the course of their affairs. And their relations, who assisted them before, or promised at least so to do, will probably withdraw or deny that assistance, unless they will be advised by them: Perhaps their nearest relations; it being no new thing for parents to disown their children, if “after the way which they call heresy, these worship the God of their fathers.” Hence, therefore, some have less of this world’s goods than they had in times past, either because they earn less, or because they receive less from them on whom they depend.

Thirdly. It is written, that “those who received not the mark of the beast, either on their foreheads, or in their right hands,” either openly or secretly, were not permitted “to buy or sell any more.” Now, whatever the mystery contained herein may be, I apprehend the plain mark of the beast is wickedness; inward and outward unholiness; whatever is secretly or openly contrary to justice, mercy, or truth. And certain it is, the time is well-nigh come when those who have not this mark can neither buy nor sell, can scarce follow any profession so as to gain a subsistence thereby. Therefore, many of those who attend on my ministry are, by this means, poorer than before. They will not receive the mark of the beast, either on their forehead or in their hand; or if they had received it before, they rid themselves of it as soon as possible. Some cannot follow their former way of life at all; (as pawnbrokers, smugglers, buyers or sellers of uncustomed goods;) — others cannot follow it as they did before; for they cannot oppress, cheat, or defraud their neighbor; they cannot lie, or say what they

do not mean; they must now speak the truth from their heart. On all these accounts, they have less of this world's goods; because they gain less than they did before.

Fourthly. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" if in no other way, yet at least in this, that "men will by revilings persecute them, and say all manner of evil against them falsely, for his sake." One unavoidable effect of this will be, that men whose subsistence depends on their daily labor will be often in want, for few will care to employ those of so bad a character; and even those who did employ them before, perhaps for many years, will employ them no more; so that hereby some may indeed be brought to beggary.

**8.** What, does this touch *you*? Are *you* one of those "who will have nothing to do with those scandalous wretches?" Perhaps you will say, "And who can blame me for it? May I not employ whom I please?" We will weigh this: — You employed A. B. for several years. By your own account, he was an honest, diligent man. You had no objection to him but his following "this way." For this reason you turn him off. In a short time, having spent his little all, and having no supply, he wants bread. So does his family too, as well as himself. Before he can get into other business to procure it, through want of convenient food to eat, and raiment to put on, he sickens and dies. This is not an imaginary scene. I have known the case, though too late to remedy it.

"And what then?" *What then!* you are a murderer! "O earth, cover not thou his blood!" No; it doth not. "The cry thereof hath entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth." And God requireth it at your hands; and will require it in an hour when you think not. For you have as effectually murdered that man, as if you had stabbed him to the heart.

It is not I then who ruin and starve that family: It is you; you who call yourself a Protestant! you who cry out against the persecuting spirit of the Papists! Ye fools, and blind! What are ye better than they? Why, Edmund Bonner would have starved the heretics in prison; whereas you starve them in their own houses!

And all this time you talk of liberty of conscience! Yes, liberty for such a conscience as your own! a conscience past feeling; (for sure it had some

once;) a conscience “seared with a hot iron!” Liberty to serve the devil, according to your poor, hardened conscience, you allow; but not liberty to serve God!

Nay, and what marvel? Whosoever thou art that readest this, and feelest in thy heart a real desire to serve God, I warn thee, expect no liberty for thy conscience from him that hath no conscience at all. All ungodly, unthankful, unholy men; all villains, of whatever denomination, will have liberty indeed all the world over, as long as their master is “God of this world:” But expect not liberty to worship God in spirit and in truth, to practice pure and undefiled religion, (unless the Lord should work a new thing in the earth,) from any but those who themselves love and serve God.

**9.** “However, it is plain you make men idle: And this tends to beggar their families.” This objection having been continually urged for some years, I will trace it from the foundation.

Two or three years after my return from America, one Captain Robert Williams, of Bristol, made affidavit before the then Mayor of the city, that “it was a common report in Georgia, Mr. Wesley took people off from their work and made them idle by preaching so much.”

The fact stood thus: At my first coming to Savannah, the generality of the people rose at seven or eight in the morning. And that part of them, who were accustomed to work, usually worked till six in the evening. A few of them sometimes worked till seven; which is the time of sunset there at Midsummer.

I immediately began reading Prayers, and expounding the Second Lesson, both in the morning and evening. The Morning Service began at five, and ended at or before six: The Evening Service began at seven.

Now, supposing all the grown persons in the town had been present every morning and evening, would this have made them idle? Would they hereby have had less, or considerably more, time for working?

**10.** The same rule I follow now, both at London, Bristol, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne; concluding the service at every place, winter and

summer, before six in the morning; and not ordinarily beginning to preach till near seven in the evening.

Now, do you who make this objection work longer, throughout the year, than from six to six? Do you desire that the generality of people should? or can you count them idle that work so long?

Some few are indeed accustomed to work longer. These I advise not to come on week-days; and it is apparent, that they take this advice, unless on some rare and extraordinary occasion.

But I hope none of you who turn them out of their employment have the confidence to talk of my making them idle! Do you (as the homely phrase is) cry who — first? I admire your cunning, but not your modesty.

So far am I from either causing or encouraging idleness, that an idle person, known to be such, is not suffered to remain in any of our societies; we drive him out, as we would a thief or a murderer. “To show all possible diligence,” (as well as frugality,) is one of our standing rules; and one, concerning the observance of which we continually make the strictest inquiry.

**11.** “But you drive them out of their senses. You make them mad.” Nay, then they are idle with a vengeance. This objection, therefore, being of the utmost importance, deserves our deepest consideration.

And, First, I grant, it is my earnest desire to drive all the world into what you probably call madness; (I mean, inward religion;) to make them just as mad as Paul when he was so accounted by Festus.

The counting all things on earth but dung and dross, so we may win Christ; the trampling under foot all the pleasures of the world; the seeking no treasure but in heaven; the having no desire of the praise of men, a good character, a fair reputation; the being exceeding glad when men revile us, and persecute us, and say all manner of evil against us falsely; the giving God thanks, when our father and mother forsake us, when we have neither food to eat, nor raiment to put on, nor a friend but what shoots out bitter words, nor a place where to lay our head: This is utter distraction in your account; but in God’s it is sober, rational religion; the genuine fruit, not of

a distempered brain, not of a sickly imagination, but of the power of God in the heart, of victorious love, “and of a sound mind.”

**12.** I grant, Secondly, it is my endeavor to drive all I can, into what you may term another species of madness, which is usually preparatory to this, and which I term *repentance* or *conviction*.

I cannot describe this better than a writer of our own has done: I will therefore transcribe his words: —

“When men feel in themselves the heavy burden of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, and behold with the eye of their mind the horror of hell; they tremble, they quake, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, and cannot but accuse themselves, and open their grief unto Almighty God, and call unto him for mercy. This being done seriously, their mind is so occupied, partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from this danger of hell and damnation, that all desire of meat and drink is laid apart, and loathsomeness (or loathing) of all worldly things and pleasure cometh in place. So that nothing then liketh them, more than to weep, to lament, to mourn, and both with words and behavior of body to show themselves weary of life.”

Now, what, if your wife, or daughter, or acquaintance, after hearing one of these field-preachers, should come and tell you, that they saw damnation before them, and beholden with the eye of their mind the horror of hell? What, if they should “tremble and quake,” and be so taken up “partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from this danger of hell and damnation, as to weep, to lament, to mourn, and both with words and behavior to show themselves weary of life;” would you scruple to say, that; they were stark mad; that these fellows had driven them out of their senses; and that whatever writer it was that talked at this rate, he was fitter for Bedlam than any other place?

You have overshot yourself now to some purpose. These are the very words of our own Church. You may read them, if you are so inclined, in the first part of the “Homily on Fasting.” And consequently, what you have peremptorily determined to be mere lunacy and distraction, is that

“repentance unto life,” which, in the judgment both of the Church and of St. Paul, is “never to be repented of.”

**13.** I grant, Thirdly, that extraordinary circumstances have attended this conviction in some instances. A particular account of these I have frequently given. While the word of God was preached, some persons have dropped down as dead; some have been, as it were, in strong convulsions; some roared aloud, though not with an articulate voice; and others spoke the anguish of their souls.

This, I suppose, you believe to be perfect madness. But it is easily accounted for, either on principles of reason or Scripture.

First. On principles of reason. For, how easy is it to suppose, that a strong, lively, and sudden apprehension of the heinousness of sin, the wrath of God, and the bitter pains of eternal death, should affect the body as well as the soul, during the present laws of vital union, should interrupt or disturb the ordinary circulations, and put nature out of its course! Yea, we may question, whether, while this union subsists, it be possible for the mind to be affected, in so violent a degree, without some or other of those bodily symptoms following.

It is likewise easy to account for these things, on principles of Scripture. For when we take a view of them in this light, we are to add, to the consideration of natural causes, the agency of those spirits who still excel in strength, and, as far as they have leave from God, will not fail to torment whom they cannot destroy; to tear those that are coming to Christ. It is also remarkable, that there is plain Scripture precedent of every symptom which has lately appeared. So that we cannot allow even the conviction attended with these to be madness, without giving up both reason and Scripture.

**14.** I grant, Fourthly, that touches of extravagance, bordering on madness, may sometimes attend severe conviction. And this also is easy to be accounted for, by the present laws of the animal economy. For we know, fear or grief, from a temporal cause, may occasion a fever, and thereby a delirium.

It is not strange, then, that some, while under strong impressions of grief or fear, from a sense of the wrath of God, should for a season forget

almost all things else, and scarce be able to answer a common question; that some should fancy they see the flames of hell, or the devil and his angels, around them; or that others, for a space, should be “afraid,” like Cain, “whosoever meeteth me will slay me.” All these, and whatever less common effects may sometimes accompany this conviction, are easily known from the natural distemper of madness, were it only by this one circumstance, — that whenever the person convinced tastes the pardoning love of God, they all vanish away in a moment.

Lastly. I have seen one instance (I pray God I may see no more such!) of real, lasting madness.

Two or three years since, I took one with me to Bristol, who was under deep convictions; but of as sound an understanding in all respects, as ever he had been in his life. I went a short journey, and, when I came to Bristol again, found him really distracted. I inquired particularly, at what time and place, and in what manner, this disorder began. And I believe there are at least threescore witnesses alive and ready to testify what follows: When I went from Bristol, he contracted an acquaintance with some persons, who were not of the same judgment with me. He was soon prejudiced against me: Quickly after, when our society were met together in Kingswood house, he began a vehement invective both against my person and doctrines. In the midst of this, he was struck raving mad. And so he continued till his friends put him into Bedlam; and probably laid his madness too to my charge.

**15.** I fear there may also be some instances of real madness, proceeding from a different cause.

Suppose, for instance, a person hearing me, is strongly convinced that a liar cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. He comes home, and relates this to his parents or friends, and appears to be very uneasy. These good Christians are disturbed at this, and afraid he is running mad too. They are resolved, he shall never hear any of those fellows more; and keep to it, in spite of all his intreaties. They will not suffer him, when at home, to be alone, for fear he should read or pray. And perhaps in a while they will constrain him, at least by repeated importunities, to do again the very thing for which he was convinced the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.

What is the event of this? Sometimes the Spirit of God is quenched, and departs from him. Now you have carried the point. The man is easy as ever, and sins on without any remorse. But in other instances, where those convictions sink deep, and the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in the soul, you will drive the person into real, settled madness, before you can quench the Spirit of God. I am afraid there have been several instances of this. You have forced the man's conscience, till he is stark mad. But then, pray do not impute that madness to me. Had you left him to my direction, or rather to the direction of the Spirit of God, he would have been filled with love and a sound mind. But you have taken the matter out of God's hand; and now you have brought it to a fair conclusion!

**16.** How frequent this case may be, I know not. But doubtless most of those who make this objection, of our driving men mad, have never met with such an instance in their lives. The common cry is occasioned, either by those who are convinced of sin, or those who are inwardly converted to God; mere madness both, (as was observed before,) to those who are without God in the world. Yet I do not deny, but you may have seen one in Bedlam, who said he had followed me. But observe, a madman's saying this, is no proof of the fact; nay, and if he really had, it should be farther considered, that his being in Bedlam is no sure proof of his being mad. Witness the well-known case of Mr. Periam; and I doubt more such are to be found. Yea, it is well if some have not been sent thither, for no other reason, but because they followed me; their kind relations either concluding that they must be distracted, before they could do this; or, perhaps, hoping that Bedlam would make them mad, if it did not find them so.

**17.** And it must be owned, a confinement of such a sort is as fit to cause as to cure distraction: For what scene of distress is to be compared to it? — To be separated at once from all who are near and dear to you; to be cut off from all reasonable conversation; to be secluded from all business, from all reading, from every innocent entertainment of the mind, which is left to prey wholly upon itself, and day and night to pore over your misfortunes; to be shut up day by day in a gloomy cell, with only the walls to employ your heavy eyes, in the midst either of melancholy silence, or horrid cries, groans and laughter intermixed; to be forced by the main strength of those

*Who laugh at human nature and compassion,*

to take drenches of nauseous, perhaps torturing, medicines, which you know you have no need of now, but know not how soon you may, possibly by the operation of these very drugs on a weak and tender constitution: Here is distress! It is an astonishing thing, a signal proof of the power of God, if any creature who has his senses when the confinement begins, does not lose them before it is at an end!

How must it heighten the distress, if such a poor wretch, being deeply convinced of sin, and growing worse and worse, (as he probably will, seeing there is no medicine here for his sickness, no such Physician as his case requires,) be soon placed among the incurables! Can imagination itself paint such a hell upon earth? where even “hope never comes, that comes to all!” — For, what remedy? If a man of sense and humanity should happen to visit that house of woe, would he give the hearing to a madman’s tale? Or if he did, would he credit it? “Do we not know,” might he say, “how well any of these will talk in their lucid intervals?” So that a thousand to one he would concern himself no more about it, but leave the weary to wait for rest in the grave!

**18.** I have now answered most of the current objections, particularly such as have appeared of weight to religious or reasonable men. I have endeavored to show,

**(1.)** That the doctrines I teach are no other than the great truths of the gospel:

**(2.)** That though I teach them, not as I would, but as I can, yet it is in a manner not contrary to law: And,

**(3.)** That the effects of thus preaching the gospel have not been such as was weakly or wickedly reported; those reports being mere artifices of the devil to hinder the work of God. Whosoever therefore ye are, who look for God to “revive his work in the midst of the years,” cry aloud, that he may finish it nevertheless, may “cut it short in righteousness.”

Cry to Messiah the Prince, that he may soon end the transgression, that he may lift up his standard upon earth, sending by whom he will send, and working his own work, when he pleaseth, and as he pleaseth, till “all the

kindreds of the people worship before him,” and the earth “be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord!”

*December 22, 1744.*

### AN ACT OF DEVOTION.

*BEHOLD the servant of the Lord!  
I wait thy guiding eye to feel,  
To hear and keep thine every word,  
To prove and do thy perfect will:*

*Joyful from all my works to cease,  
Glad to fulfil all righteousness.  
Me if thy grace vouchsafe to use,  
Meanest of all thy creatures me,*

*The deed, the time, the manner choose;  
Let all my fruit be found of thee;  
Let all my works in thee be wrought,  
By thee to full perfection brought.*

*My every weak, though good design,  
O’errule, or change, as seems thee meet;  
Jesus, let all the work be thine:  
Thy work, O Lord, is all complete,*

*And pleasing in thy Father’s sight;  
Thou only hast done all things right.  
Here then to thee thine own I leave,  
Mould as thou wilt the passive clay;*

*But let me all thy stamp receive,  
But let me all thy words obey;  
Serve with a single heart and eye,  
And to thy glory live and die.*

# A FARTHER APPEAL

## TO

### MEN OF REASON AND RELIGION.

#### PART 2

#### I.

**1.** It is not my present design to touch on any particular opinions, whether they are right or wrong; nor on any of those smaller points of practice, which are variously holden by men of different persuasions; but, First, to point out some things which, on common principles, are condemned by men of every denomination, and yet found in all; and, Secondly, some wherein those of each denomination are more particularly inconsistent with their own principles.

And, First, it is my design, abstracting from opinions of every kind, as well as from disputable points of practice, to mention such of those things as occur to my mind, which are on common principles condemned, and notwithstanding found, more or less, among men of every denomination.

**2.** But before I enter on this unpleasing task, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, by whatever love you bear to God, to your country, to your own souls, do not consider *who* speaks, but *what* is spoken. If it be possible, for one hour lay prejudice aside; give what is advanced a fair hearing. Consider simply on each head, Is this true, or is it false? is it reasonable, or is it not? If you ask, “But in whose judgment?” I answer, In your own; I appeal to the light of your own mind. Is there not a faithful witness in your own breast? By this you must stand or fall. You cannot be judged by another man’s conscience. Judge for yourself by the best light you have; and the merciful God teach me and thee whatsoever we know not!

Now, as I speak chiefly to those who believe the Scriptures, the method I propose is this: First, to observe what account is given therein of the Jews, the ancient Church of God, inasmuch as all these things were written for our instruction, who say, We are now the visible Church of the God of Israel: Secondly, to appeal to all who profess to be members thereof, to every one who is called a Christian, how far, in each instance, the parallel holds; and how much we are better than they.

**3.** First. I am to observe what account the Scriptures give of the Jews, the ancient Church of God. I mean, with regard to their moral character; their tempers and outward behavior.

No sooner were they brought out of Egypt, than we find them “murmuring against God;” (<sup><2412></sup>Exodus 14:12;) again, when he had just brought them through the Red Sea “with a mighty hand and stretched out arm;” (<sup><2454></sup>15:24;) and yet again, quickly after, in the wilderness of Zin: “Your murmurings,” saith Moses, “are not against us, but against the Lord.” (<sup><2468></sup>16:8.) Nay, even while he was “giving them bread from heaven,” they were still “murmuring and tempting God;” (<sup><2472></sup>17:2, 3;) and their amazing language at that very season was, “Is the Lord among us or not?” (17:7.)

The same spirit they showed, during the whole forty years that he “bore their manners in the wilderness:” A solemn testimony whereof, “Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel,” when God was about to take him away from their head. “They have corrupted themselves,” saith he; “their spot was not of his children; they are a perverse and crooked generation. The Lord led Jacob about; he instructed him; he kept him as the apple of his eye.” (<sup><2515></sup>Deuteronomy 32:5, 10.) “He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.” (Verses 13, 15.)

In like manner God complains long after this: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy

One of Israel.” (<sup>-2400</sup>Isaiah 1:2-4.) “Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.” (<sup>-2419</sup>Jeremiah 2:32.)

**4.** And “as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge,” so they had small regard to the ordinances of God: “Even from the days of your fathers,” saith God by his Prophets, “ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them.” (<sup>-3000</sup>Malachi 3:7.) “Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?” (Verse 14.) “Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel: Thou hast not brought me thy burnt-offerings, neither hast thou honored me with thy sacrifices.” (<sup>-2362</sup>Isaiah 43:22, 23.) And so the Prophet himself confesses: “Thou meetest those that remember thee in thy ways; — but there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.” (<sup>-2361</sup>Isaiah 64:5, 7.)

**5.** But they called upon his name by vain oaths, by perjury and blasphemy. So Jeremiah: “Because of swearing the land mourneth.” (<sup>-2331</sup>33:10.) “And though they say, The Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely.” (5:2.) So Hosea: “They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant.” So Ezekiel: “They say, The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth.” So Isaiah: “Their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.” (<sup>-2348</sup>3:8.) “They say, Let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One draw nigh and come, that we may know it.” (<sup>-2359</sup>5:19.) And so Malachi: “Ye have wearied the Lord with your words; ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?” (<sup>-3172</sup>2:17.)

**6.** And as they “despised his holy things,” so they “profaned his Sabbaths.” (<sup>-2218</sup>Ezekiel 22:8.) Yea, when God sent unto them, saying, “Take heed unto yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath-day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers: — Yet they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.” (<sup>-2471</sup>Jeremiah 17:21-23.)

Neither did they honor their parents, or those whom God, from time to time, appointed to be rulers over them: “In thee” (in Jerusalem, saith the

Prophet) “they have set light by father and mother.” (<sup>2570</sup>Ezekiel 22:7.) And from the very day when God brought them up out of the land of Egypt, their murmurings, chiding, rebellion, and disobedience, against those whom he had chosen to go before them, make the most considerable part of their history. So that had not Moses “stood in the gap,” he had even then destroyed them from the face of the earth.

**7.** How much more did they afterwards provoke God, by drunkenness, sloth, and luxury! “They have erred through wine,” saith the Prophet Isaiah, “and through strong drink they are out of the way:” (<sup>2380</sup>28:7.) Which occasioned those vehement and repeated warnings against that reigning sin: “Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim, them that are overcome with wine” (Verse 1.) “The drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot.” (Verse 3.) “Woe unto them that rise up early that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! — But they regard not the work of the Lord neither consider the operation of his hands.” (<sup>2381</sup>5:11, 12.) “Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink!” (Verse 22.) “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: But they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.” (<sup>2382</sup>Amos 6:1,4-6.) “Behold,” saith Ezekiel to Jerusalem, “this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, fulness of bread and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters.” (<sup>2369</sup>16:49.)

**8.** From sloth and fulness of bread, lewdness naturally followed. It was even while Moses was with them, that “the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.” Yea, of the daughters of Zion Isaiah complains: “They walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes.” (<sup>2383</sup>3:16.) And of his people in general God complains by Jeremiah: “When I had fed them to the full, they assembled themselves by troops in the harlots’ houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: Every one neighed after his neighbor’s wife.” (<sup>2485</sup>5:7, 8.) “They be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.” (<sup>2486</sup>9:2.) “The land is full of adulterers.” (<sup>2487</sup>23:10.)

Yea, and some of them were given up to unnatural lusts: Thus we read: “The men of Gibeah beset the house,” wherein the stranger was, “and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him.” (<sup>(4782)</sup>Judges 19:22.) “And there were also,” long after, “Sodomites in the land,” in the days of Rehoboam, and of the following kings: “The very show of whose countenance witnessed against them, and they declared their sin as Sodom, they hid it not.” (<sup>(2819)</sup>Isaiah 3:9.)

**9.** This was accompanied with injustice in all its forms. Thus all the Prophets testify against them: “The Lord looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.” (<sup>(2819)</sup>Isaiah 5:7.) “Thou hast taken usury and increase; thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbor by extortion. — Behold, I have smitten my hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made.” (<sup>(2927)</sup>Ezekiel 22:12, 13.) “The balances of deceit are in Jacob’s hand; he loveth to oppress.” (<sup>(2819)</sup>Hosea 12:7.) “Are there not yet the scant measure that is abominable, the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?” (<sup>(3160)</sup>Micah 6:10, 11.) “He that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him, that there was no judgment.” (<sup>(2819)</sup>Isaiah 59:15.) “The wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he. They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag.” (<sup>(3113)</sup>Habakkuk 1:13, 15.) “They covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away.” (<sup>(3160)</sup>Micah 2:2.) They “pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely.” (Verse 8.) “They have dealt by oppression with the stranger; they have vexed the fatherless and the widow.” (<sup>(2927)</sup>Ezekiel 22:7.) “The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: Yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.” (Verse 29.) “Their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands “ (<sup>(2819)</sup>Isaiah 59:6.) “Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.” (Verse 14.)

**10.** Truth indeed was fallen, as well as justice: “Every mouth,” saith Isaiah, “speaketh folly.” (<sup>(2917)</sup>9:17.) “This is a rebellious people, lying children.” (<sup>(2819)</sup>30:9.) Their “lips have spoken lies and muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: They trust in vanity, and speak lies.” (<sup>(2819)</sup>59:3, 4.) This occasioned that caution

of Jeremiah: “Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.” (<sup>2006</sup>9:4, 5.)

**11.** And even those who abstained from these gross outward sins were still inwardly corrupt and abominable: “The whole head was sick, and the whole heart was faint; yea, from the sole of the foot even unto the head there was no soundness, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.” (<sup>2006</sup>Isaiah 1:5, 6.) “All these nations,” saith God, “are uncircumcised; and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.” (<sup>2006</sup>Jeremiah 9:26.) “Their heart is divided.” (<sup>2006</sup>Hosea 10:2.) “They have set up their idols in their heart; they are all estranged from me through their idols.” (<sup>2006</sup>Ezekiel 14:3, 5.)

Their soul still “clave unto the dust.” They “laid up treasures upon earth.” “From the least of them,” saith Jeremiah, “even unto the greatest, every one is given to covetousness.” (<sup>2006</sup>6:13.) “They panted after the dust of the earth.” (<sup>2006</sup>Amos 2:7.) “They laded themselves with thick clay.” (<sup>2006</sup>Habakkuk 2:6.) “They joined house to house, and laid field to field, until there was no place.” (<sup>2006</sup>Isaiah 5:8.) Yea, they “enlarged their desires as hell:” They were “as death, and could not be satisfied.” (<sup>2006</sup>Habakkuk 2:5.)

**12.** And not only for their covetousness, but for their pride of heart, were they an abomination to the Lord: “The pride of Israel,” saith Hosea, “doth testify to his face.” (<sup>2006</sup>7:10.) “Hear ye, give ear,” saith Jeremiah, “be not proud. — Give glory to the Lord your God.” (<sup>2006</sup>13:15, 16.) But they would not be reproved; they were still “wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight;” (<sup>2006</sup>Isaiah 5:21;) and continually saying to their neighbor, “Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou!” (<sup>2006</sup>Isaiah 65:5.)

They added hypocrisy to their pride: “This people,” saith God himself, “draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me.” (<sup>2006</sup>Isaiah 29:13.) “They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds.” (<sup>2006</sup>Hosea 7:14) “They return, but not to the Most High; they are like a deceitful

bow.” (Verse 16.) “They did but flatter him with their mouth, and dissemble with him in their tongue.” (<sup>1988</sup>Psalm 78:36.) So that herein they only “profaned the holiness of the Lord.” “And this have ye done again,” saith Malachi, “covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more.” (<sup>3911</sup>2:11, 13.)

**13.** This God continually declared to those formal worshippers, that their outside religion was but vain: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. Bring no more vain oblations: Incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. — When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear.” (<sup>2911</sup>Isaiah 1:11, 13, 15.) “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck.” (<sup>2969</sup>66:3.) “When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer an oblation, I will not accept.” (<sup>2940</sup>Jeremiah 14:12.) “Go ye serve your idols, if ye will not hearken unto me; but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts.” (<sup>2919</sup>Ezekiel 20:39.)

**14.** Yet all this time were they utterly careless and secure; nay, confident of being in the favor of God: They were at ease; they “put far away the evil day.” (<sup>3065</sup>Amos 6:1, 3.) Even when God had “poured his anger upon Israel, it set him on fire round about, yet he knew it not; it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.” (<sup>2925</sup>Isaiah 42:25.) “A deceived heart had turned him aside, that he could not say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?” (<sup>2940</sup>44:20.) So far from it, that at this very time they said, “We are innocent, we have not sinned.” (<sup>2925</sup>Jeremiah 2:35, 37.) “We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us.” (<sup>2988</sup>8:8.) “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we.” (<sup>2907</sup>7:4.)

**15.** Thus it was that they hardened themselves in their wickedness: “They are impudent children,” saith God, “and stiff-hearted.” (<sup>2901</sup>Ezekiel 2:4) “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.” (<sup>2985</sup>Jeremiah 6:15.) “I have spread out my hand all the day to a rebellious people, that provoketh

me to anger continually to my face.” (<sup>(288D)</sup>Isaiah 65:2, 3.) “They will not hearken unto me, saith the Lord; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.” (<sup>(288E)</sup>Ezekiel 3:7.) “Since the day that their fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto them all my servants the Prophets, rising up early and sending them: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck; they did worse than their fathers.” (<sup>(288F)</sup>Jeremiah 7:25, 26.)

They were equally hardened against mercies and judgments: When He “gave them rain, both the former and the latter in his season;” when “He reserved unto them the appointed weeks of the harvest,” filling their hearts with food and gladness, still none of this “revolting and rebellious people said, Let us now fear the Lord our God;” (<sup>(288G)</sup>Jeremiah 5:23, 24;) nor yet did “they turn unto him when he smote them.” (<sup>(288H)</sup>Isaiah 9:13.) “In that day did the Lord call to weeping and to mourning: And behold joy and gladness, eating flesh and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die.” (<sup>(288I)</sup>Isaiah 22:12, 13.) Although “he consumed them, yet they refused to receive instruction; they made their faces harder than a rock. — None repented him, but every one turned to his course, as a horse rusheth into the battle.” (<sup>(288J)</sup>Jeremiah 5:3; 8:6.) “I have given you want of bread in all your places, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have also withholden the rain from you when there were yet three months unto the harvest. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: Your gardens and your vineyards, the palmer worm devoured. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt; your young men have I slain with the sword. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.” (<sup>(288K)</sup>Amos 4:6-11.)

**16.** In consequence of their resolution not to return, they would not endure sound doctrine, or those that spake it: They “said to the Seers, See not; and to the Prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.” (<sup>(288L)</sup>Isaiah 30:10, 11.) “But they hated him that rebuked in the gate, and they abhorred him that spake uprightly.” (<sup>(288M)</sup>Amos 5:10.) Accordingly, “Thy people,” saith God to Ezekiel, “still are talking against thee by the walls, and in the doors of the houses.” (<sup>(288N)</sup>Ezekiel 33:30.) “And Amaziah the Priest sent to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired

against thee in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. Also Amaziah said unto Amos, Go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and prophesy there. But prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court." (<sup>(3170)</sup>Amos 7:10, 12, 13.) From the same spirit it was that they said of Jeremiah, "Come, and let us devise devices against him. — Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words." (<sup>(2488)</sup>Jeremiah 18:18.) Hence it was that he was constrained to cry out, "O Lord, I am in derision daily; every one mocketh me. Since I spake, the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily: For I heard the defaming of many: Fear on every side: report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting; saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him." (<sup>(2407)</sup>20:7, 8, 10.) And elsewhere, "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast born me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me." (<sup>(2450)</sup>15:10.)

**17.** But "if a man walking in the spirit of falsehood do lie," saith the Prophet Micah, "saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and strong drink, he shall even be the Prophet of this people." (2:11.) And God gave them Pastors after their own hearts; such were those sons of Eli, "sons of Belial, who knew not the Lord;" (<sup>(912)</sup>1 Samuel 2:12;) rapacious, covetous, violent men; (verses 14-16;) by reason of whom "men abhorred the offering of the Lord;" (verse 17;) who not only "made themselves vile," (<sup>(913)</sup>3:13,) but also "made the Lord's people to transgress," (<sup>(912)</sup>2:24,) while they "made themselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel." (Verse 29.) Such were those of whom Isaiah says, "The Priest and the Prophet have erred through strong drink; they are swallowed up of wine." (<sup>(2381)</sup>28:7.) "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." (<sup>(2362)</sup>56:12.) Therefore, saith he, "The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: The Prophets and the Seers hath he covered; and the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed." (<sup>(2390)</sup>29:10, 11.) Such also were those of whom he saith, "His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down,

loving to slumber. Greedy dogs, which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand. They all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.” (<sup>2860</sup>56:10, 11.)

Little better were those of whom the Prophets that followed have left us so dreadful an account: “Both Prophet and Priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. And from the Prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.”

(<sup>3231</sup>Jeremiah 23:11, 15.) “Her Priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things: They have put no difference between the holy and the profane, and I am profaned among them.” (<sup>3222</sup>Ezekiel 22:26.) “If I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O Priests, that despise my name!”

(<sup>3006</sup>Malachi 1:6.)

Yea, some of them were fallen into the grossest sins: “The company of Priests,” saith Hosea, “commit lewdness: There is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled.” (<sup>3069</sup>6:9, 10.) “I have seen also in the Prophets of Jerusalem,” saith God by Jeremiah, “an horrible thing: They commit adultery, and walk in lies.” (<sup>3234</sup>23:14.)

**18.** And those who were clear of this, were deeply covetous; “Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on my altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts.” (<sup>3001</sup>Malachi 1:10.) “The Priests of Zion teach for hire, and the Prophets thereof divine for money. Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us?” (<sup>3081</sup>Micah 3:11.) “Thus saith the Lord, The Prophets bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.” (<sup>3085</sup>3:5.) Therefore, “the word of the Lord came unto Ezekiel, saying, Prophecy against the shepherds of Israel, and say, Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound by that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and they became meat to all the

beasts of the field. Yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.” (<sup>3901</sup>Ezekiel 34:1-6.)

**19.** To the same effect do the other Prophets declare: “Ye are departed out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble: Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people.” (<sup>3908</sup>Malachi 2:8, 9.) “From the Prophet even unto the Priest, every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.” (<sup>3963</sup>Jeremiah 6:13, 14.) “They prophesy lies in my name.” (<sup>3944</sup>14:14.) “They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord had said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every man that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.” (<sup>3937</sup>23:17.) “The Prophets of Jerusalem strengthen the hands of the evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness.” (Verse 14.) “They have seduced my people; and one built up a wall and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar.” (<sup>3931</sup>Ezekiel 13:10.) “With lies they have made the hearts of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he shall not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.” (Verse 22.) “Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard; they have trodden my portion under foot; they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.” (<sup>3920</sup>Jeremiah 12:10.) “There is a conspiracy of her Prophets in the midst of her, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls.” (<sup>3925</sup>Ezekiel 22:25.) “Thus saith the Lord, Feed the flock of the slaughter; whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: And they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord; for I am rich: And their own shepherds pity them not.” (<sup>3904</sup>Zechariah 11:4, 5.)

## II.

**1.** Such is the general account which the Scriptures give of the Jews, the ancient Church of God. And since all these things were “written for our instruction,” who are now the visible Church of the God of Israel, I shall, in the next place, appeal to all who profess this, to every one who calls himself a Christian, how far in each instance the parallel holds, and how much we are better than they.

And, first, Were they discontented? Did they repine at the providence of God? Did they say, “Is the Lord among us or not?” when they were in imminent danger, or pressing want, and saw no way to escape. And which of us can say, “I am clear from this sin: I have washed my hands and my heart in innocency?” Have not we who “judge others, done the same things;” murmured and repined times without number; yea, and that when we were not in pressing want, nor distressed with imminent danger? Are we not in general, (our own writers being the judges,) have we not ever been from the earliest ages, a “repining, murmuring, discontented people;” never long satisfied either with God or man? Surely in this we have great need to humble ourselves before God; for we are in nowise better than they.

But “Jeshurun forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.” And did not England too? Ask ye of the generations of old, inquire from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, whether there was ever a people called by his name, which had less of “God in all their thoughts;” who, in the whole tenor of their behavior, showed so light an “esteem for the Rock of their salvation.”

Could there ever be stronger cause for God to cry out, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!” For hath he not “nourished and brought us up” as his children? And yet, how have we “rebelled against” him! If Israel of old “did not know God,” if his ancient people “did not consider,” was this peculiar to them? Are not we also under the very same condemnation? Do we, as a people, know God? Do we consider him as God? Do we tremble at the presence of his power? Do we revere his excellent majesty? Do we remember, at all times, “God is here! He is now reading my heart; He spieth out all my ways; there is not a word in my tongue, but He knoweth it altogether?” Is this the character of us English Christians; the mark whereby we are known from the Heathen? Do we thus know God; thus consider his power, his love, his all-seeing eye? Rather, are we not likewise a “sinful nation, who have forgotten him days without number; a people laden with iniquity, continually forsaking the Lord, and provoking the Holy One of Israel?”

**2.** There is indeed a wide difference in this respect between the Jews and us: They happened (if I may so speak) to forget God, because other things

came in their way; but we design to forget him; we do it of set purpose, because we do not like to remember him. From the accounts given by Jeremiah, we have reason to believe that when that people were most deeply corrupted, yet the greatest men in the nation, the Ministers of State, the Nobles and Princes of Judah, talked of God sometimes; perhaps, as frequently as upon any other subject. But is it so among us? Rather, is it not a point of good-breeding to put God far away, out of our sight? Is he talked of at all among the great, — the Nobles or Ministers of State in England? among any persons of rank or figure in the world? Do they allow God any place in their conversation? From day to day, from year to year, do you discourse one hour of the wonders He doeth for the children of men? If one at a Gentleman or a Nobleman's table was to begin a discourse of the wisdom, greatness, or power of God, would it not occasion, at least, as much astonishment, as if he had begun to talk blasphemy? And if the unbred man persisted therein, would it not put all the company in confusion? And what do you sincerely believe the more favorable part would say of him when he was gone, but that, "He is a little touched in his head!" or, "Poor man! he has not seen the world?"

You know this is the naked truth. But how terrible is the thought to every serious mind! Into what a state is this Christian nation fallen! nay, the men of eminence, of fortune, of education! Would not a thinking foreigner, who should be present at such an interview, be apt to conclude, that the men of quality in England were Atheists? that they did not believe there was any God at all; or, at best, but an Epicurean God, who sat at ease upon the circle of the heavens, and did not concern himself about us worms of the earth? Nay, but He understands every thought now rising in your heart. And how long can you put him out of your sight? Only till this veil of flesh is rent in sunder; for your pomp will not then follow you. Will not your body be mingled with common dust, and your soul stand naked before God? O that you would now "acquaint yourself with God," that you may then be clothed with glory and immortality!

**3.** Did God complain of the Jews, "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them?" And how justly may He make the same complaint of us; for how exceeding small a proportion do we find of those in any place who call themselves Christians, that make a conscience of attending them! Does one-third of

the inhabitants in any one parish throughout this great city constantly attend public prayer, and the ministry of his word, as of conscience towards God? Does one-tenth of those who acknowledge it is an institution of Christ duly attend the Lord's supper? Does a fiftieth part of the nominal members of the Church of England observe the fasts of the Church, or so much as the forty days of Lent, and all Fridays in the year? Who of these, then, can cast the first stone at the Jews for neglecting the ordinances of God?

Nay, how many thousands are found among us who have never partook of the supper of the Lord! How many thousands are there that live and die in this unrepented disobedience! What multitudes, even in this Christian city, do not attend any public worship at all; no, nor spend a single hour from one year to another, in privately pouring out their hearts before God! Whether God "meeteth him that remembereth him in his ways," or not, is no concern of theirs: So the man eats and drinks, and "dies as a beast dieth:"

Drops into the dark, and disappears.

It was not, therefore, of the children of Israel alone that the messenger of God might say, "There is none" (comparatively) "that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth himself up to take hold of thee."

**4.** Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, "Because of swearing, the land mourneth." But if this might be said of the land of Canaan, how much more of this land! In what city or town, in what market or exchange, in what street or place of public resort, is not the holy "name whereby we are called" taken in vain, day by day? From the noble to the peasant, who fails to call upon God, in this, if in no other, way? Whither can you turn, where can you go, without hearing some praying to God for damnation, either on his neighbor or himself? cursing those, without either fear or remorse, whom Christ hath bought to inherit a blessing!

Are you one of these stupid, senseless, shameless wretches, that call so earnestly for damnation on your own soul? What, if God should take you at your word? Are you "able to dwell with everlasting burnings?" If you are, yet why should you be in haste to be in the "lake of fire burning with

brimstone?” God help you! or you will be there soon enough, and long enough; for that “fire is not quenched!” But the “smoke thereof ascendeth up, day and night, for ever and ever.”

And what is that important affair, concerning which you was but now appealing to God? Was you “calling God to record upon your soul,” touching your everlasting salvation? No; but touching the beauty of your horse, the swiftness of your dog, or the goodness of your drink. How is this? What notion have you of God? What do you take him to be? —

*Idcirco stolidam praebet tibi vellere barbam Jupiter?*<sup>f14</sup>

What stupidity, what infatuation is this! thus without either pleasure, or profit, or praise, to set at nought Him that hath “all power both in heaven and earth!” wantonly to “provoke the eyes of his glory!”

Are you a man of letters who are sunk so low? I will not then send you to the inspired writers, (so called; — perhaps you disdain to receive instruction by them,) but the old, blind Heathen. Could you only fix in your mind the idea he had of God, (though it is not strictly just, unless we refer it to God made man,) you would never thus affront him more: —

Η, και κυανησιν επ οφρυσιν νευσε Κρονιων  
Αμβροσιαι δ αρα χαιται επερρωσαντο ανακτος  
Κπατος απ αθανατοιο μεγαν δ ελελιξεν Ολυμπον<sup>f15</sup>

Shall not the very Heathen then “rise up in judgment against this generation, and condemn it?” Yea, and not only the learned Heathens of Greece and Rome, but the savages of America; for I never remember to have heard a wild Indian name the name of *Sootaleicatee*, (Him that sitteth in heaven,) without either laying his hand upon his breast, or casting his eyes down to the ground. And you are a Christian! O how do you cause the very name of Christianity to be blasphemed among the Heathen!

**5.** But is it light swearing only, (inexcusable as that is,) because of which our “land mourneth?” May it not also be said of us, “Though they say, The Lord lives, surely they swear falsely?” yea, to such a degree, that there is hardly the like in any nation under heaven; that almost every corner of the land is filled with wilful, deliberate perjury.

I speak not now of the perjuries which every common swearer cannot but run into day by day: (And indeed common “swearing notoriously contributes to the growth of perjury; for oaths are little minded when common use has sullied them, and every minute’s repetition has made them cheap and vulgar:”) Nor of those which are continually committed and often detected in our open Courts of Justice. Only with regard to the latter I must remark, that they are a natural consequence of that monstrous, shocking manner wherein oaths are usually administered therein; without any decency or seriousness at all; much less with that awful solemnity which a rational Heathen would expect in an immediate appeal to the great God of heaven.

I had once designed to consider all the oaths which are customarily taken by any set of men among us. But I soon found this was a work too weighty for me; so almost *in infinitum* are oaths multiplied in England: I suppose, to a degree which is not known in any other nation in Europe.

What I now propose is, to instance only in a few, (but those not of small importance,) and to show how amazingly little regard is had to what he solemnly promised or affirmed before God.

**6.** This is done in part to my hands by a late author. So far as he goes, I shall little more than transcribe his words: —

“When a Justice of Peace is sworn into the commission, he makes oath, — ‘that he shall do equal right to the poor and to the rich, after his cunning, wit, and power, and after the laws and customs of the realm and statutes thereof made, in all articles in the King’s commission to him directed.’ What those articles are, you will find in the first Assignavimus of the commission: ‘We have assigned you and every one of you, jointly and severally, to keep, and cause to be kept, all ordinances and statutes made for the quiet rule and government of our people, in all and every the articles thereof, according to the force, form, and effect of the same, and to chastise and punish all persons offending against any of them, according to the form of those statutes and ordinances.’ So that he is solemnly sworn to the execution of all such statutes as the legislative power of the nation has thought fit to throw upon his care. Such are all those (among others) made against drunkenness, tippling, profane

swearing, blasphemy, lewd and disorderly practices, and profanation of the Lord's day. And it is hard to imagine how a Justice of Peace can think himself more concerned to suppress riots or private quarrels, that he is to levy twelve-pence on a profane swearer, five shillings on a drunkard, ten shillings on the public house that suffers tippling, or any other penalty which the law exacts on vice and immorality. The same oath binds him both to one and the other, laying an equal obligation on his conscience. How a Magistrate who neglects to punish excess, profaneness, and impiety, can excuse himself from the guilt of perjury, I do not pretend to know. If he reasons fairly, he will find himself as much forsworn, as an evidence who being upon his oath to declare the whole truth, nevertheless conceals the most considerable part of it. And his perjury is so much the more infamous, as the ill example and effects of it will be mischievous." (*Mr. Disney's First Essay*, Page 30.)

7. The same author (in the preface to his Second Essay) goes on: —

"You, gentlemen of the Grand Juries, take a solemn oath, that 'you will diligently inquire, and true presentment make, of all such articles, matters, and things as shall be given you in charge: As also, that you will (not only present no person for envy, hatred, or malice, but) not leave any unpresented, for fear, favor, or affection.' Now, are not the laws against immorality and profaneness given you in charge, as well as those against riots, felony, and treason? Are not presentment and indictment one method expressly appointed by the statutes, for the punishment of drunkenness and tippling? Are not houses of bawdry and gaming punishable in the same courts, and, consequently, presentable by you? Is not the proclamation for the punishing of vice, profaneness, and immorality always read before you as soon as you are sworn? And does not the Judge of Assize, or Chairman of the Bench, in the charge given immediately after the reading it, either recite to you the particular laws against such offenses, or refer you for them to that proclamation? It is plain from all this, that you are bound upon your oaths by present all vice and immorality, as well as other crimes, that fall within your

knowledge, because they are expressly given you in charge. And this you are to do, not only when evidence is offered before you by the information of others, but with regard to all such offenses as you or any of you are able, of your own personal knowledge, to present; all which you have sworn to do impartially, without fear, favor, or affection.”

I leave it now with all reasonable men to consider, how few Grand Jurors perform this; and, consequently, what multitudes of them, throughout the nation, fall under the guilt of wilful perjury!

**8.** The author proceeds: “I shall next address myself to you that are Constables. And to you I must needs say, that if you know your duty, it is no thanks to us that are Justices. For the oath we usually give you is so short, and in such general terms, that it leaves with you no manner of instruction in the particulars of the office to which you are sworn. But that which ought to be given you, recites part of your duty in the following words: —

“You shall do your best endeavor, that rogues, vagabonds, and night-walkers be apprehended; and that the statutes made for their punishment be duly put in execution. You shall have a watchful eye to such as shall keep any house or place where any unlawful game is used; as also to such as shall frequent such places, or shall use any unlawful game there or elsewhere. You shall present all and every the offenses contrary to the statutes made to restrain the tippling in inns, alehouses, and other victualling houses, and for repressing of drunkenness. You shall once in the year, during your office, present all Popish recusants. You shall well and duly execute all precepts and warrants to you directed. And you shall well and duly, according to your knowledge, power, and ability, do and execute all other things belonging to the office of a Constable, so long as you shall continue therein.’ (Page 8.)

“Upon this, I would observe, first, that actors of plays are expressed by name within the statute, to be taken up for vagabonds, and punished accordingly; and that though a statute of Queen Elizabeth’s excepts such companies as have a license under the hand and seal of a Nobleman, yet a later statute in the reign of

King James the First has taken away that protection from them, by declaring, that ‘from thenceforth no authority to be given by any Peer of the realm shall be available to free or discharge them from the pains and punishments of that former statute.’ Every Constable, therefore, in those parishes where any of these strolling players come, is bound by his oath, to seize upon, correct, and send them packing without delay.

“The next part of your oath obliges you to keep a watchful eye on such houses as keep, and such persons as use, unlawful gaming. The statute directs you weekly, or at least monthly, to search within your liberties all houses or places suspected of this offense, and, upon discovering, to bring them to punishment. Upon this article, I would observe,

- (1.) That the law makes some allowance for artificers, husbandmen, apprentices, laborers, and servants, to play in Christmas, but at no other time of the year; and,
- (2.) That all sports and pastimes whatsoever are made unlawful upon the Lord’s day, by a statute of King Charles II. You are therefore bound upon oath, to bring to punishment such as are guilty of profaning that day by any sports or pastimes whatsoever.

“The following parts of your oath are,

- (1.) That you shall present all and every the offenses of tippling and drunkenness that come to your knowledge.
- (2.) That you shall once in the year present all Popish recusants; nay, and by the statute on which your oath is grounded, you are obliged once a year to present in Session all those within your parishes who (not being Dissenters) come not once in a month, at least, to church. And,
- (3.) That you shall well and duly execute all precepts and warrants to you directed. I believe no Constable will pretend to be ignorant of this. How is it then, that when we send out warrants, to levy on offenders for swearing, drunkenness, and the like, those warrants are so ill

obeyed? Are you not sworn to execute these as well as any other, and that duly too, according to the tenor of your precept?

Your precept tells you, You shall demand such a sum; and if the offender will not pay, you shall levy it by distress of his goods; and if no distress can be taken, you are then only to set him in the stocks; otherwise you have no authority so to do; nor is the setting him in the stocks, when you might have distrained, any execution of your precept.

“The last part of your oath is in general terms: That you shall well and duly, according to your knowledge, power, and ability, do and execute all other things belonging to the office of a Constable. I shall instance in some things which certainly belong to your office, because you, and none else, can do them.

**(1.)** A Constable may, without a warrant, apprehend any persons, and carry them before a Justice, who are driving carts, horses, or cattle on the Lord’s day.

**(2.)** Such as he shall find at sports and pastimes on that day.

**(3.)** Such as he shall find tippling in public houses.

**(4.)** Shopkeepers selling, or exposing goods to sale, on the Lord’s day. And, Lastly, such as he shall find drunk or blaspheming, or profanely swearing or cursing.

“Thus I have shown you, in part, what belongs to your office: It is well, if, according to the tenor of your oath, you duly, according to your knowledge and ability, do and execute all these things. But remember, that, if you do not, if you neglect any of them, you are forsworn.”

Now let all men judge, how many Constables in England are clear of wilful perjury!

**9.** “I will now,” he goes on, “address myself to Churchwardens. Your oath is, ‘that you shall well and truly execute the office of a Churchwarden, for the ensuing year; and, to the best of your skill and knowledge, present

such persons and things as are presentable by the ecclesiastical laws of this realm.' I shall set down only a few of these.

"The statute of King James I. obliges you to present, once a year, all monthly absenters from church.

"The ninetieth Canon enjoins you, first to admonish, and then, if they reform not, to present, all your parishioners who do not duly resort to church on Sundays, and there continue the whole time of divine service. On this article observe,

**(1.)** That a person's being absent from church, is ground sufficient for you to proceed.

**(2.)** That you are not only to present those who do not come to church, but also those that behave irreverently or indecently there, either walking about or talking; all who do not abide there, orderly and soberly, the whole time of service and sermon, and all that loiter away any part of that time in the churchyard or in the fields.

"The one hundred and twelfth Canon enjoins you, within forty days after Easter, to exhibit to the Bishop, or his Chancellor, the names of all above the age of sixteen, within your parish, that did not receive the communion.

"Other statutes oblige you to present drunkenness, tippling, and public houses suffering persons to tipple in them.

"And the one hundred and ninth Canon binds you to present all manner of vice, profaneness, and debauchery, requiring you faithfully to present all and every the offenders in adultery, whoredom, drunkenness, profane swearing, or any other uncleanness and wickedness of life. It is therefore a part of that office to which you are solemnly sworn, to present, not only all drunkenness and tippling, but profane swearing, lewdness, and whatsoever else is contrary to Christian piety. So that if you know any of your parishioners, be his quality or circumstances what they will, that is guilty of any of these, you are obliged to present him at the next visitation, or you are yourselves guilty of perjury. And the twenty-sixth Canon expresses such an abhorrence of a Churchwarden's neglect in this matter, that it forbids the Minister, in any wise, to admit you to the holy communion, 'who,' as the words of the Canon are, 'having taken your

oaths to present all such offenses in your several parishes, shall, notwithstanding your said oaths, either in neglecting or refusing to present, wittingly and willingly, desperately and irreligiously, incur the horrid guilt of perjury.”

And who is clear? I appeal to every Minister of a parish, from one end of England to the other, how many Churchwardens have you known, in twenty, thirty, forty years, who did not thus “desperately and irreligiously incur the horrid guilt of perjury?”

**10.** I proceed to perjuries of another kind. The oath taken by all Captains of ships, every time they return from a trading voyage, runs in these terms: —

“I do swear, that the entry above written, now tendered and subscribed by me, is a just report of the name of my ship, its burden, bulk, property, number and country of mariners, the present Master and voyage; and that it doth farther contain a true account of my lading, with the particular marks, numbers, quantity, quality, and consignment of all the goods and merchandises in my said ship, to the best of my knowledge; and that I have not broke bulk, or delivered any goods out of my said ship, since her loading in. So help me God.”

These words are so clear, express, and unambiguous, that they require no explanation. But who takes this plain oath, without being *knowingly and deliberately forsworn*? Does one Captain in fifty? Does one in five hundred? May we not go farther yet? Are there five Captains of vessels now in London, who have not, at one time or another, by this very oath, which they knew to be false when they took it, incurred the guilt of wilful perjury?

**11.** The oath which all Officers of His Majesty’s Customs take, at their admission into the office, runs thus: —

“I do swear to be true and faithful in the execution, to the best of my knowledge and power, of the trust committed to my charge and inspection, in the service of His Majesty’s Customs; and that I will not take or receive any reward or gratuity, directly or indirectly, other than my salary, or what is or shall be allowed me

from the Crown, or the regular fees established by law, for any service done or to be done in the execution of my employment in the Customs, on any account whatsoever. So help me God.”

On this it may be observed,

**(1.)** That there are regular fees, “established by law,” for some of these officers:

**(2.)** That the rest do hereby engage not to take or receive “any reward or gratuity, directly or indirectly,” other than their salary or allowance from the Crown, “on any account whatsoever.”

How do the former keep this solemn engagement? they whose fees are “established by law?” Do they take those established fees, and no more? Do they not “receive any farther gratuity,” not “on any account whatsoever?” If they do, they are undeniably guilty of wilful perjury.

And do the latter take no fees at all? Do they receive “no reward or gratuity, for any service done, or to be done, in the execution of their employment?” Do they not take any money, “directly or indirectly, on any account whatsoever?” Every time they do receive either more or less, they also are flatly forsworn.

Yet who scruples either the one or the other? either the taking a larger fee than the law appoints; or the taking any fee, large or small, which is offered, even where the law appoints none at all?

What innumerable perjuries, then, are here committed, over and over, day by day! and without any remorse; without any shame; without any fear either of God or man!

**12.** I will produce but one instance more. The oath of one who votes for a Member of Parliament is this: —

“I do swear, I have not received or had, by myself, or of any person whatsoever in trust for me, or for my use and benefit, directly or indirectly, any sum or sums of money, office, place, or employment, gift, or reward, or any promise or security for any money, office, employment, or gift, in order to give my vote at this

election, and that I have not before been polled at this election. So help me God.”

We may observe here,

(1.) That this oath is taken once in seven years (if required) by all the freeholders, in every county throughout England and Wales, as well as by all the freemen in every city and borough-town: And,

(2.) That hereby every voter swears, in words liable to no evasion, that he has not received, directly or indirectly, any gift or reward, or promise of any.

But, to pass over those godless and shameless wretches who frequently vote twice at one election, how few are there who can take this oath with a conscience void of offense! who have not received, directly or indirectly, any gift, or promise of any! No! have not *you*? If you have received nothing else, have not you received meat or drink? And did you pay for the meat or drink you received? If not, that was a gift; and, consequently, you are as really perjured as the man that has received an hundred pounds.

What a melancholy prospect is then before us! Here are almost all the common people of any substance throughout the land, both in the city and country, calling God to record to a known, wilful falsehood!

**13.** I shall conclude this head in the weighty words of the author before cited: —

“Most of these, I am afraid, look upon their oaths as things of course, and little to be regarded. But can there be anything in the world more sacred than an oath? Is it not a solemn appeal to God for your sincerity? And is not that very appeal an acknowledgment, that he will surely punish falsehood? Nay, farther, is it not a calling down the vengeance of God upon yourselves, if you are false? Do you not, by laying your hand upon the Gospel, declare that you hope for no salvation by Christ, if you perform not what you then promise, or if what you then affirm is not true? And do not the words, ‘So help me God,’ sufficiently prove, that the intention of your oath is so; and that if you swear false, you are to expect no mercy from God, either in

this world or the next? And do you not personally and expressly give your consent to this heavy curse, by kissing the book? How, then, dare any of you to venture to play with so awful an engagement? Is it that you think the oath of a Grand-Juryman or parish-officer” (of a Captain, an Officer of the Customs, or a voter in elections) “is not as sacred and binding as that of an evidence at the bar? What is it can make the difference? Both of them are equally appeals to God, and imprecations of his vengeance upon wilful perjury.”

**14.** If there be, then, a God that is not mocked, what a weight of sin lies on this nation! and sin of no common dye; for perjury has always been accounted one of the deepest stain. And how will any one attempt to excuse this? by adding blasphemy thereto? So indeed some have done; saying, like those of old, “Tush, thou God carest not for it. The Lord seeth” (that is, regardeth) “us not. The Lord hath forsaken the earth.” He has left second causes to take their course, and man “in the hand of his own counsel.”

How many are they who now speak thus! according to whose minute philosophy the particular providence of God is utterly exploded; the hairs of our head are no longer numbered; and not only a sparrow, but a city, an empire, may fall to the ground, without the will or care of our heavenly Father. You allow, then, only a general Providence. I do not understand the term. Be so kind as to let me know what you mean by a “general Providence, contradistinguished from a particular one.” I doubt you are at a loss for an answer; unless you mean some huge, unwieldy thing, (I suppose, resembling the *primum mobile* in the Ptolemaic system,) which continually whirls the whole universe round, without affecting one thing more than another. I doubt this hypothesis will demand more proof than you are at present able to produce; beside that, it is attended with a thousand difficulties, such as you cannot readily solve. It may be, therefore, your wisest way for once to think with the vulgar, to acquiesce in the plain scriptural account. This informs us, that although God dwelleth in heaven, yet he still “ruleth over all;” that his providence extends to every individual in the whole system of beings which he hath made; that all natural causes of every kind depend wholly upon his will; and he increases, lessens, suspends, or destroys their efficacy, according to

his own good pleasure; that he uses preternatural causes at his will, — the ministry of good or of evil angels; and that he hath never yet precluded himself from exerting his own immediate power, from speaking life or death into any of his creatures, from looking a world into being or into nothing.

“Thinkest thou then, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of” this great God? O, no longer “treasure up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath!” Thou canst not recall what is past; but now “keep thyself pure,” even were it at the price of all that thou hast; and acknowledge the goodness of God, in that he did not long since cut thee off, and send thee to thy own place.

**15.** The Jews of old were charged by God with profaning his Sabbath also. And do we Christians come behind them herein? (I speak of those who acknowledge the obligation.) Do we call “the Sabbath a delight, holy of the Lord, honorable; not doing our own ways, not finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words?” Do our “man-servant and maid-servant” rest thereon, and “the stranger that is within our gates?” Is no business, but what is really necessary, done within our house? You know in your own conscience, and God knoweth, that the very reverse of this is true.

But setting aside these things, which are done, as it were, by stealth, whether by mean or honorable men; how many are they, in every city, as well as in this, who profane the Sabbath with a high hand? How many in this, that openly defy both God and the King, that break the laws, both divine and human, by working at their trade, delivering their goods, receiving their pay, or following their ordinary business, in one branch or another, and “wiping their mouths and saying, I do no evil.” How many buy and sell on the day of the Lord, even in the open streets of this city? How many open or (with some modesty) half open their shops? even when they have not the pretense of perishable goods; without any pretense at all; money is their God, and gain their godliness. But what are all these droves in the skirts of the town, that well-nigh cover the face of the earth? till they drop one after another into the numerous receptacles prepared for them in every corner. What are these to gain by profaning the day of the Lord? Nothing at all. They “drink in iniquity like water.” Nay, many of them pay for their sin; perhaps great part of what should sustain

their family the ensuing week. I know not what is “finding our own pleasure, or doing our own ways,” if this is not. What then shall we plead in your excuse? that “many others do it as well as you?” Nay, number is so far from extenuating your fault, that it aggravates it above measure. For this is open war against God. And a whole army of you joins together, and with one consult, in the face of the sun, “runs upon the thick bosses of his buckler.”

**16.** It is once mentioned in the Prophets, “In thee” (Jerusalem) “they have set light by father and mother.” But frequent mention is made of their setting light by their civil parents, of their murmurings and rebellions against their governors. Yet surely our boasting against them is excluded, even in this respect. For do not all our histories witness such a series of mutinies, seditions, factions, and rebellions, as are scarce to be paralleled in any other kingdom since the world began? And has not the wild, turbulent, ungovernable spirit of our countrymen been continually acknowledged and lamented (as abundance of their writings testify to this day) by the cool, rational part of the nation? Terrible effects whereof have been seen and felt, more or less, in every generation.

But did this spirit exist only in times past? Blessed be God, it is now restrained, it does not break out; but the traces thereof are still easy to be found. For, whence springs this continual “speaking evil of dignities?” of all who are at the helm of public affairs? Whence this “speaking evil of the ruler of our people,” so common among all orders of men? I do not include those whose province it is to inspect all the public administrations. But is not almost every private gentleman in the land, every Clergyman, every tradesman, yea, every man or woman that has a tongue, a politician, a settler of the state? Is not every carmen and porter abundantly more knowing than the Kings, Lords, and Commons together? able to tell you all their foibles, to point out their faults and mistakes, and how they ought to proceed, if they will save the nation? Now all this has a natural, undeniable tendency to mutiny and rebellion. O what need have we, above any nation upon earth, of His continual care and protection, who alone is able to “rule the raging of the sea, and still the madness of the people!”

**17.** But to proceed: Where there “drunkards in Ephraim, mighty to drink wine, men of strength to mingle strong drink?” And are there not in

England? Are they not the growth of every county, city, and town therein? These do not indeed, or not often, “rise up early, that they may follow strong drink;” and so “continue till night, till wine inflame them.” They have found a readier way; namely, to begin at night, and continue following their wine or strong drink till the morning. And what numbers are there of these throughout the land! lost to reason and humanity, as well as to religion; so that no wonder “they regard not the works of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.”

Nor indeed have our drunkards need to continue from morning “to night, until wine inflame them;” seeing they have found a far more compendious method of casting aside all sense and reason, and disencumbering themselves of all remains either of conscience or understanding so that whatever work of darkness is speedily to be done, and that without any danger of being interrupted, either by fear, compassion, or remorse, they may be in a few moments, by one draught, as effectually qualified for it, as if they could swallow a legion of devils. Or, (if that be all their concern,) they may, at a moderate expense, destroy their own body as well as soul, and plunge through this liquid fire into that “prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Friend! stop. You have the form of a man still; and perhaps some remains of understanding. O may the merciful God lay hold of that! Unto him all things are possible. Think a little for once. What is it you are doing? Why should you destroy yourself? I could not use the worst enemy I have in the world as you use yourself. Why should you murder yourself inch by inch? Why should you burn yourself alive? O spare your own body at least, if you have no pity for your soul! But have you a soul then? Do you really believe it? What, a soul that, must live for ever! O spare thy soul! Do not destroy thy own soul with an everlasting destruction! It was made for God. Do not give it into the hands of that old murderer of men! Thou canst not stupify it long. When it leaves the body, it will awake and sleep no more. Yet a little while, and it launches out into the great deep, to live, and think, and feel for ever. And what will cheer thy spirit there, if thou hast not a drop of water to cool thy tongue? But the die is not yet cast: Now cry to God, and iniquity shall not be thy ruin.

**18.** Of old time there were also those that “were at ease in Zion, that lay upon beds of ivory, and stretched themselves upon their couches, that ate the lambs out of the flock, and calves out of the stall.” But how inelegant were these ancient epicures!” Lambs out of the flock, and calves out of the stall!” Were these the best dainties they could procure? How have we improved since Jeroboam’s time! Who can number the varieties of our tables? or the arts we have “to enlarge the pleasure of tasting?” And what are their couches, or beds of ivory, to the furniture of our apartments? or their “chains, and bracelets, and mantles, and changeable suits of apparel,” to the ornaments of our persons? What comparison is there between their diversions and ours? Look at Solomon in all his glory, and yet may we not question, whether he was not an utter stranger to the pleasures of the chase? And, notwithstanding his forty thousand horses, did he ever see a race in his life? He “made gardens, and orchards, and pools of water; he planted vineyards, and built houses;” but had he one theater among them all? No. This is the glory of later times. Or had he any conception of a ball, an assembly, a masquerade, or a ridotto? And who imagines that all his instruments of music, put together, were any more to be compared to ours, than his or his father’s rumbling Hebrew verses,

*To the soft sing-song of Italian lays.*

*In all these points, our pre-eminence over the Jews is much every way.*

Yea, and over our own ancestors, as well as theirs. But is this our glory, or our shame? Were Edward III. or Henry V. to come among us now, what would they think of the change in their people? Would they applaud the elegant variety at the old Baron’s table? or the costly delicacy of his furniture and apparel? Would they listen to these instruments of music, or find pleasure in those diversions? Would they rejoice to see the Nobles and Gentry of the land lying “at ease, stretching themselves on beds” of down? too delicate to use their own limbs, even in the streets of the city; to bear the touch of the people, the blowing of the wind, or the shining of the sun! O how would their hearts burn within them! What indignation, sorrow, shame must they feel, to see the ancient hardness lost, the British temperance, patience, and scorn of superfluities, the rough, indefatigable industry, exchanged for softness, “idleness, and fulness of bread!” Well for them, that they were gathered unto their fathers before this exchange was made!

**19.** To prove at large, that the luxury and sensuality, the sloth and indolence, the softness and idleness, the effeminacy and false delicacy of our nation are without a parallel, would be but lost labor. I fear, we may say, the lewdness too; for if the Jews, as the Prophet speaks, “assembled themselves by troops in the harlots’ houses,” so do the English, and much more abundantly. Indeed, where is male chastity to be found? among the Nobility, among the Gentry, among the tradesmen, or among the common people of England? How few lay any claim to it at all! How few desire so much as the reputation of it! Would you yourself account it an honor or a reproach, to be ranked among those of whom it is said, “These are they which are not defiled with women: For they are virgins?” And how numerous are they now, even among such as are accounted men of honor and probity, “who are as fed horses, everyone neighing after his neighbor’s wife!”

But as if this were not enough, is not the sin of Sodom, too, more common among us than ever it was in Jerusalem? Are not our streets beset with those monsters of uncleanness, who “burn in their lust one toward another,” whom God hath “given up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient?” O Lord, thy compassions fail not: Therefore we are not consumed.

**20.** Neither do we yield to them in injustice, any more than uncleanness. How frequent are open robberies among us! Is not “the act of violence” even “in our streets?” And what laws are sufficient to prevent it? Does not theft of various kinds abound in all parts of the land, even though death be the punishment of it? And are there not among us, who “take usury and increase,” who “greedily gain of their neighbor by extortion?” yea, whole trades which subsist by such extortion as was not named either among the Jews or Heathens? “Is there not” yet “the scant measure, the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?” beside the thousand nameless ways of over-reaching and defrauding, the craft and mystery of every trade and profession. It were an endless task to descend to particulars, to point out in every circumstance, how not only sharpers and gamesters, (those public nuisances, those scandals to the English nation,) but high and low, rich and poor, men of character, and men of none, in every station of public or private life, “have corrupted themselves,” and generally applaud themselves, and count it policy and wisdom so to do; so

that if gain be at hand, they care not though “justice stand afar off;” so that “he which departeth from evil,” which cometh not into their secret, still “maketh himself a prey;” and “the wicked” still “devoureth the man that is more righteous than he.”

And what redress? Suppose a great man to oppress the needy; suppose the rich grinds the face of the poor; what remedy against such oppression can he find in this Christian country? If the one is rich and the other poor, doth not justice stand afar off? And is not the poor under the utmost improbability (if not impossibility) of obtaining it? Perhaps the hazard is greater among us, than either among Jews, Turks, or Heathens.

For example: Suppose a great man, with or without form of law, does wrong to his poor neighbor. What will he do? sue his lordship at common law? have the cause tried at the next sessions or Assizes? Alas! your own neighbors those who know the whole case, will tell you, “You are out of your senses.” “But twelve good men and true will do me justice.” Very well; but where will we find them; — men unbiassed, incapable of corruption, superior both to fear and favor, to every view, whether of gain or loss? But this is not all; they must not only be good and true, but wise and understanding men. Else how easy is it for a skilful Pleader to throw a mist before their eyes? even supposing too the Judge to be quite impartial, and proof against all corruption. And should all these circumstances concur, (of which I fear there are not many precedents,) supposing a verdict is given in your favor, still you have gained nothing. The suit is removed into a higher court, and you have all your work to begin again. Here you have to struggle with all the same difficulties as before, and perhaps many new ones too. However, if you have money enough, you may succeed; but if that fails, your cause is gone. Without money, you can have no more law; poverty alone utterly shuts out justice.

But “cannot an honest Attorney procure me justice?” An *honest* Attorney! Where will you find one? Of those who are called exceeding honest Attorneys, who is there that makes any scruple, —

(1.) To promote and encourage needless suits, if not unjust ones too:

(2.) To defend a bad cause, knowing it so to be, —

By making a demur, and then withdrawing it;

By pleading some false plea, to the plaintiff's declaration;

By putting in an evasive answer to his bill;

By protracting the suit, if possible, till the plaintiff is ruined:

(3.) To carry a cause not amounting to ten shillings into Westminster-Hall, by laying it in his declaration as above forty:

(4.) To delay his own client's suit knowingly and wilfully, in order to gain more thereby:

(5.) To draw himself the pleadings or conveyances of his client, instead of giving them to be drawn by able Counsel:

(6.) To charge his client with the fees which should have been given to such Counsel, although they were not given:

(7.) To charge for drawing fair copies, where none were drawn:

(8.) To charge fees for expedition given to clerks, when not one farthing has been given them:

(9.) To send his clerk a journey (longer or shorter) to do business with or for different persons; and to charge the horsehire and expense of that journey to every person severally:

(10.) To send his clerk to Westminster, on the business of ten (it may be) or twenty persons, and to charge each of these twenty for his attendance, as if he had been sent on account of one only:

(11.) To charge his own attendance in like manner: And,

(12.) To fill up his bill with attendances, fees, and termfees, though his client is no whit forwarder in his cause?

This is he that is called an *honest* Attorney! How much honest is a pickpocket!

But there is a Magistrate whose peculiar office it is to redress the injured and oppressed. Go, then, and make trial of this remedy; go, and tell your case to the Lord Chancellor. Hold; you must go on regularly; you must tell him your case in form of law, or not at all. You must therefore file a bill in

Chancery, and retain a Lawyer belonging to that court. “But you have already spent all you have; you have no money.” Then I fear you will have no justice. You stumble at the threshold. If you have either lost or spent all, your cause is nought; it will not even come to a hearing. So, if the oppressor has secured all that you had, he is as safe as if you was under the earth.

**1.** Now, what an amazing thing is this! The very greatness of the villany makes it beyond redress! But suppose he that is oppressed has some substance left, and can go through all the Courts of Justice, what parallel can we find among Jews, Turks, or Heathens, for either the delays or the expense attending it? With regard to the former, how monstrous is it, that in a suit relating to that inheritance which is to furnish you and your family with food and raiment, you must wait month after month, perhaps year after year, before it is determined whether it be yours or not! And what are you to eat or to wear in the mean time? Of that the Court takes no cognizance! Is not this very delay (suppose there were no other grievance attending the English course of law) wrong beyond all expression? contrary to all sense, reason, justice, and equity? A capital cause is tried in one day, and finally decided at once. And “is the life less than meat; or the body of less concern than raiment?” What a shameless mockery of justice, then, is this putting off pecuniary causes from term to term, yea, from year to year!

With regard to the latter: A man has wronged me of a hundred pounds. I appeal to a Judge for the recovery of it. How astonishing is it that this Judge himself cannot give me what is my right, and what evidently appears so to be, unless I first give, perhaps, one half of the sum to men I never saw before in my life!

**22.** I have hitherto supposed that all causes, when they are decided, are decided according to justice and equity. But is it so? Ye learned in the law, is no unjust sentence given in your Courts? Have not the same causes been decided quite opposite ways? one way this term, just the contrary the next? Perhaps one way in the morning, (this I remember an instance of,) and another way in the afternoon. How is this? Is there no justice left on earth; no regard for right or wrong? Or have causes been puzzled so long, that you know not now what is either wrong or right; what is agreeable to

law, or contrary to it? I have heard some of you frankly declare, that it is in many cases next to impossible to know what is law, and what is not. So are your folios of law multiplied upon you, that no human brain is able to contain them; no, nor any consistent scheme or abstract of them all.

But is it really owing to ignorance of the law (this is the most favorable supposition) that so few of you scruple taking fees on either side of almost any cause that can be conceived; and that you generally plead in the manner you do on any side of any cause; rambling to and fro in a way so abhorrent from common sense, and so utterly foreign to the question? I have been amazed at hearing the pleadings of some eminent Counsel; and when it has fallen out that the Pleader on the other side understood only the common rules of logic, he has made those eminent men appear either such egregious knaves, if they could help it, or such egregious blockheads, if they could not, that one would have believed they would show their face there no more. Meantime, if there be a God that judgeth righteously, what horrid insults upon him are these! “Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?”

**23.** There is one instance more of (I know not what to term it) injustice, oppression, sacrilege, which hath long cried aloud in the ears of God. For among men, who doth hear? I mean the management of many of those who are entrusted with our public charities. By the pious munificence of our forefathers we have abundance of these of various kinds: But is it not glaringly true, (to touch only on a few generals,) that the managers of many of them either

**(1.)** do not apply the benefaction to that use for which it was designed by the benefactor; or

**(2.)** do not apply it with such care and frugality as in such a case are indispensably required; or

**(3.)** do not apply the whole of the benefaction to any charitable use at all; but secrete part thereof, from time to time, for the use of themselves and their families; or, lastly by plain barefaced oppression, exclude those from having any part in such benefaction, who dare (though with all possible tenderness and respect) set before them the things that they have done?

*Yet Brutus is an honorable man:  
So are they all: All honorable men!*

And some of them had in esteem for religion; accounted patterns both of honesty and piety! But God “seeth not as man seeth.” He “shall repay them to their face;” perhaps even in the present world. For that scripture is often still fulfilled: “This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief,” (such he is, and no better, in the eyes of God, no whit honester than a highwayman,) “and it shall remain in the midst of the house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof.”

**24.** And is not truth, as well as “justice, fallen in our streets?” For who “speaketh the truth from his heart?” Who is there that makes a conscience of speaking the thing as it is, whenever he speaks at all? Who scruples the telling of officious lies? the varying from truth, in order to do good? How strange does that saying of the ancient fathers sound in modern ears! “I would not tell a lie, no, not to save the souls of the whole world.” Yet is this strictly agreeable to the word of God; to that of St. Paul in particular, If any say, “Let us do evil that good may come, their damnation is just.”

But how many of us do this evil without ever considering whether goodwill come or no; speaking what we do not mean, merely out of custom, because it is fashionable so to do! What an immense quantity of falsehood does this ungodly fashion occasion day by day! for hath it not overrun every part of the nation? How is all our language swoln with compliment; so that a well-bred person is not expected to speak as he thinks; we do not look for it at his hands! Nay, who would thank him for it? how few would suffer it! It was said of old, even by a warrior and a King, “He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.” But are we not of another mind? Do not we rather say, “He that telleth not lies shall not tarry in my sight?” Indeed the trial seldom comes; for both speakers and hearers are agreed that form and ceremony, flattery and compliment, should take place, and truth be banished from all that know the world.

And if the rich and great have so small regard to truth, as to lie even for lying sake, what wonder can it be that men of lower rank will do the same thing for gain? what wonder that it should obtain, as by common consent,

in all kinds of buying and selling? Is it not an adjudged case, that it is no harm to tell lies in the way of trade; to say that is the lowest price which is not the lowest; or that you will not take what you do take immediately? Insomuch that it is a proverb even among the Turks, when asked to abate of their price, “What! do you take me to be a Christian?” So that never was that caution more seasonable than it is at this day: “Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother: For every brother will utterly supplant, and they will deceive every one his neighbor.”

**25.** And as for those few who abstain from outward sins, is their heart right with God? May he not say of us also, as of the Jews, “This people is uncircumcised in heart?” Are not you? Do you then “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your strength?” Is he your God and your all, the desire of your eyes, the joy of your very heart? Rather, do you not “set up your idols in your heart?” Is not your belly your God, or your diversion, or your fair reputation, or your friend, or wife, or child? That is, plainly, do not you delight in some of these earthly goods, more than in the God of heaven? Nay, perhaps you are one of those groveling souls that “pant after the dust of the earth!” Indeed, who does not? Who does not get as much as he can? Who of those that are not accounted covetous, yet does not gather all the money he can fairly, and perhaps much more? For are they those only whom the world rank among misers that use every art to increase their fortune; toiling early and late, spending all their strength in “loading themselves with thick clay?” How long? Until the very hour when God calleth them; when he saith unto each of them, “Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee! And whose shall those things be which thou hast prepared?”

**26.** And yet doth not our pride, even the pride of those whose soul “cleaves to the dust, testify against us?” Are they not “wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own conceit?” Have not writers of our own remarked, that there is not upon earth a more self-conceited nation than the English; more opiated both of their own national and personal wisdom, and courage, and strength? And indeed, if we may judge by the inhabitants of London, this is evident to a demonstration; for are not the very meanest of them able to instruct both the King and all his Counselors? What cobbler in London is not wiser than the principal

Secretary of State? What coffee-house disputer is not an abler Divine than his Grace of Canterbury? And how deep a contempt of others is joined with this high opinion of ourselves! I know not whether the people of all other nations are greater masters of dissimulation; but there does not appear in any nation whatever such a proneness to despise their neighbor; to despise, not foreigners only, (near two thousand years ago they remarked, *Britannos hospitibus feros*,<sup>f16</sup> but their own countrymen; and that very often for such surprising reasons as nothing but undeniable fact could make credible. How often does the gentleman in his coach despise those dirty fellows that go a-foot; and these, on the other hand, despise full as much those lazy fellows that loll in their coaches! No wonder then that those who have “the form of godliness” should despise them that have it not; that the saint of the world so frequently says to the gross sinner, in effect, if not in terms, “Stand by thyself; come not near unto me; for I am holier than thou!”

**27.** Yet what kind of holiness is this? May not God justly declare of us also, “This people draw near me with their mouth, but they have removed their hearts far from me: They do but flatter me with their mouth, and dissemble with me in their tongue?” Is it not so with you? When you speak to God, do your lips and your heart go together? Do you not often utter words by which you mean just nothing? Do not you say and unsay; or say one thing to God, and another to man? For instance, you say to God, “Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep me this day without sin:” But you say to man, “This cannot be done; it is all folly and madness to expect it.” You ask of God that you “may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name:” But you tell man, “There is no perfect love upon earth; it is only a madman’s dream.” You pray God to “cleanse the thoughts of your heart, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit:” But you assure your neighbor there is no such thing as inspiration now, and that none pretend to it but enthusiasts. What gross hypocrisy is this! Surely you think; there is no “knowledge in the Most High. O be not deceived! God is not mocked. But whatsoever ye sow, that also shall ye reap!”

**28.** Such at present is the religion of this Christian nation! So do we honor Him by whose name we are called! And yet was there ever a nation more careless and secure, more unapprehensive of the wrath of God? How can a man more effectually expose himself to the ridicule of those who are

esteemed men of understanding, than by showing any concern, as if the judgments of God were hanging over our heads? Surely then, “a deceived heart hath turned us aside, that we cannot say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?” Surely this our confidence is not of God; it is rather a judicial infatuation, a stupid insensibility, a deep sleep, the forerunner of heavy vengeance.

*Ruin behind it stalks, and empty desolation.*

Surely never was any people more fitted for destruction! “Impudent children are they, and stiff-hearted. Are they ashamed when they have committed abomination;” when they have openly profaned the day of the Lord; when they have committed lewdness; or when they have uttered such curses and blasphemies as are not heard of among the Heathens? Nay, “they are not at all ashamed, neither can they blush.” And though God send unto them all his servants, rising up early and sending them, yet “will they not hear; they harden their neck; they do worse than their fathers.”

What, then, can “God do more for his vineyard which he hath not done?” He hath long tried us with mercies, “giving rain and fruitful seasons, filling us with the flour of wheat.” But still “this revolting and rebellious people say not, Let us now fear the Lord our God.” Nay, they gave him no thanks for all his mercies; they did not even acknowledge them to be his gift. They did not see the hand of God in any of these things; they could account for them another way. O ye unwise, when will ye understand? Know ye not yet, there is a God that ruleth the world? What did ye see with your eyes? Was the “race to the swift, or the battle to the strong?” Have ye forgotten Dettingen already? Does not England know that God was there? Or suppose your continuance in peace, or success in war, be the mere result of your own wisdom and strength; do ye command the sun and the clouds also? Can ye pour out or “stay the bottles of heaven?” But let it all be nature, chance, anything, — so God may have no hand in governing the earth!

**29.** Will his judgments bring us to a better mind? Do we “hear the rod, and Him that has appointed it?” Let us observe: What fruit do we find in those who are “even consumed by means of his heavy hand?” Let any one that desires to be clearly satisfied herein visit the hospitals of this city. Let him

judge for himself how the patients there receive God's fatherly visitation; especially there, because mercy also is mixed with judgment; so that it is evident "the Lord loveth whom he chasteneth." Go then into any ward, either of men or women; look narrowly from one end to the other: Are they humbling themselves under the hand of God? Are they trembling under a sense of his anger? Are they praising him for his love? Are they exhorting one another not to faint when they are rebuked of him? How do nine in ten of them spend the time, that important time, from morning to evening? Why, in such a manner, that you would not easily learn, from thence, whether they were Christians, Pagans, or Mahometans.

Is there any deeper distress than this to be found? Is there a greater affliction than the loss of health? Perhaps there is, — the loss of liberty, especially as it is sometimes circumstanced. You may easily be convinced of this, by going into either Ludgate or Newgate. What a scene appears as soon as you enter! The very place strikes horror into your soul. How dark and dreary! How unhealthy and unclean! How void of all that might minister comfort! But this is little, compared to the circumstances that attend the being confined in this shadow of death. See that poor wretch, who was formerly in want of nothing, and encompassed with friends and acquaintance, now cut off, perhaps, by an unexpected stroke, from all the cheerful waves of men; ruined, forsaken of all, and delivered into the hands of such masters, and such companions! I know not, if, to one of a thinking, sensible turn of mind, there could be any thing like it on this side hell.

What effect then has this heavy visitation of God on those who lie under it for any time? There is perhaps an exception here and there; but, in general, they are abandoned to all wickedness, utterly divested of all fear of God, and all reverence to man; insomuch, that they commonly go out of that school completely fitted for any kind or degree of villany, perfectly brutal and devilish, thoroughly furnished for every evil word and work.

**30.** Are our countrymen more effectually reclaimed when danger and distress are joined? If so, the army, especially in time of war, must be the most religious part of the nation. But is it so indeed? Do the soldiery walk as those who see themselves on the brink of eternity? redeeming every opportunity of glorifying God, and doing good to men, because they know not the hour in which their Lord will require their souls of them? So far

from it, that a soldier's religion is a by-word, even with those who have no religion at all; that vice and profaneness in every shape reign among them without control; and that the whole tenor of their behavior speaks, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

Have those who are exposed to still more danger, the English sea-forces, more religion than those at land? It is said they were once remarkable for this; and it is certain Sir Francis Drake feared God, as did most of his Commanders, and, we have reason to believe, his mariners and sailors too. But what shall we say of the navy that now is, more particularly of the ships of war? Is religion there, — either the power or the form? Is not almost every single man-of-war a mere floating hell? Where is there to be found more consummate wickedness, a more full, daring contempt of God, and all his laws, — except in the bottomless pit? But here description fails; and the goodness of God endureth yet daily! But "shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" O that the prospect of national judgments may suffice! that we may remember ourselves, and turn unto the Lord our God, before his long-suffering mercy is at an end, and he pours out the vials of his wrath upon us!

But how small ground have we as yet to hope for this! for, who will now "suffer the word of exhortation?" How few will "endure sound doctrine," and the honest, close application of it! Do they not "say unto the Seers, See not; and unto the Prophets, Prophecy smooth things?" And if a man will do thus, if he will "sew pillows to all arm-holes," and "cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before them, if he will prophesy of wine and strong drink, he shall even be the Prophet of this people."

**31.** I am sensible how nice a subject this is, and how extremely difficult it is so to speak, as neither to say too little nor too much, neither more nor less than the cause of God requires. I know also, that it is absolutely impossible so to speak as not to give offense. But whosoever is offended, I dare not to be silent; neither may I refrain from plainness of speech; only I will endeavor to use all the tenderness I can consistently with that plainness.

In tender love then I ask, Are there none among us, (I speak to you, my brethren, who are Priests and Prophets of the Lord, set apart to "minister

in holy things, and to declare the word of the Lord,") — Are there none among us who commit lewdness, as did those by whom "Israel was defiled?" Hath not the Lord seen an horrible thing in some of the Prophets of this land also, even, that "they commit adultery, and" (to conceal it) "walk in lies!" God forbid that I should affirm this! I only propose (not maintain) the question. If there be such a wretch, I pray God to strike him to the heart, and to say, "Thou art the man!"

Are there none of you, like them, "mighty to drink wine, men of strength to mingle strong drink?" Yea, are there none that "err through strong drink, that are swallowed up of wine?" Are there not found those who say, "I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant?"

Alas, my brother, is this the voice of a "Minister of Christ, a steward of the mysteries of God?" Suppose you find at any time trouble and heaviness, "is there no help for you in your God?" Is not the God whom you serve able to deliver you from any plague or trouble? Is the being "drunk with wine" a better relief than the being "filled with his Spirit?" Do you not understand this? Do you "not know the Lord?" Take heed you do not destroy both your own soul and them that hear you! O beware! If you know not his love, fear his power! Make haste to flee from the wrath to come, lest he smite you with a curse great as your sin, and sweep you away from the face of the earth.

**32.** Can such as you be said to honor or fear God, any more than those spoken of by Malachi? May not God complain, "These priests have violated my law and profaned my holy things?" yea, whensoever you presume with those unhallowed hands to touch the mysteries of God; whensoever you utter his name or his word with those unhallowed lips! But is it on this account only that God may say, "Both Prophet and Priest are profane?" May he not add, "They have put no difference between the holy and profane; therefore I am profaned among them?" For is it not so? Do you put a difference between the holy and profane; him that feareth God, and him that feareth him not? Do you put an effectual difference between them, even in the most solemn office of our religion? At the table of the Lord, do you take care to "separate the precious from the vile?" to "receive all those who" (as you may reasonably believe) "draw near with

penitent hearts and lively faith,” and utterly to reject those who testify against themselves, that they are without hope and without God in the world?

Nay, who dares repel one of the greatest men in his parish from the Lord’s table; even though he be a drunkard or a common swearer; yea, though he openly deny the Lord that bought him? Mr. Stonehouse *did* this once. But what was the event? The gentleman brought an action against him, for the terror of all such insolent fellows in succeeding times.

**33.** O my brethren, is it not for want of your making this difference, as well as for many other abominations, that, with regard to some among us, (how many God knoweth,) that scripture is now also fulfilled: “His watchmen are blind, they are ignorant, they are shepherds that cannot understand: — The Lord hath poured out upon them the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed their eyes; the Prophets and the Seers hath he covered: and the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed?”

If you ask, what those other abominations are; I will speak in love, and in the spirit of meekness. There are found among us covetous men, men who “mind earthly things,” who “seek themselves,” and not Christ crucified, who “love the world, and the things of the world;” men in whom these words are still fulfilled: “Who is there among you that would shut the door for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on my altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts.” Yea, are there not those, at this day, (O that I might be found to fear where no fear is!) who “make themselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel?” Are there not those who now “enlarge their desire as hell; who are as death, and cannot be satisfied?” who, though they want neither food to eat nor raiment to put on, yet seek more and more preferment? who are continually studying to “join house to house, and to lay field to field;” to grow rich in the service of that Master who himself “had not where to lay his head?” Is it not to these that those dreadful words belong, enough to cause the ears of him that heareth to tingle: “They are greedy dogs, which never can have enough; they all look to their own way,” (not the way of their Lord,) “every one for his gain, from his quarter?”

Is it strange, it among these there should be some who are cruel, oppressive men; inasmuch as covetousness knows no mercy, nor can a lover of money be a lover of his neighbor? Have not some been known even to “grind the face of the poor?” to strip, rather than clothe, the naked? some, who, while they cried out, “as the horse-leech, Give, give,” would take, if it was not given; like those of old, who said, “Thou shalt give it me now, and if not, I will take it by force;” or those spoken of by Micah, “The Prophets bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace, and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.” Very great is the sin of these men before the Lord. If there be ten such now in the land, may God smite them this day with terror and astonishment, that they may have no rest in their bones till their sin is done away!

**34.** Are *you* as watchful and zealous to gain souls, as those are to gain the gold that perisheth? Do you know by experience what that meaneth, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up?” Or are you one of those watchmen who do not watch at all, who neither know nor care when the sword cometh? of whom the Prophet saith, “They are dumb dogs that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber?”

Can it be supposed that such shepherds will “feed the flock?” will “give to every one his portion of meat in due season?” Will these “warn every man, and exhort every man, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus?” Will they take care to “know all their flock by name, not forgetting the men-servants and women-servants?” Will they inquire into the state of every soul committed to their charge; and watch over each with all tenderness and long-suffering, “as they that must give account?” marking how they either fall or rise; how these wax “weary and faint in their mind;” and those “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?” Who can do this, unless his whole heart be in the work; unless he desire nothing but to “spend and be spent for them; and count not his life dear unto himself, so he may present them blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus?”

Can any shepherd do this, (and if he do not, he will never “give an account with joy,”) who imagines he has little more to do than to preach once or twice a week; that this is the main point, the chief part of the office, which he hath taken upon himself before God? What gross ignorance is this!

What a total mistake of the truth! What a miserable blunder touching the whole nature of his office! It is, indeed, a very great thing to speak in the name of God; it might make him that is the stoutest of heart tremble, if he considered that every time he speaks to others, his own soul is at stake. But great, inexpressibly great, as this is, it is perhaps the least part of our work. To “seek and save that which is lost;” to bring souls from Satan to God; to instruct the ignorant; to reclaim the wicked; to convince the gainsayer; to direct their feet into the way of peace, and then keep them therein; to follow them step by step, lest they turn out of the way, and advise them in their doubts and temptations; to lift up them that fall; to refresh them that are faint; and to comfort the weak-hearted; to administer various helps, as the variety of occasions require, according to their several necessities: These are parts of our office; all this we have undertaken at the peril of our own soul. A sense of this made that holy man of old cry out, “I marvel if any ruler in the Church shall be saved;” and a greater than him say, in the fulness of his heart, “Who is sufficient for these things?”

**35.** But who is not sufficient for these things, for the taking care of a parish, though it contain twenty thousand souls, if this implies no more than the taking care to preach there once or twice a week; and to procure one to read Prayers on the other days, and do what is called *the parish duty*? Is any trade in the nation so easy as this? Is not any man sufficient for it, without any more talents, either of nature or grace, than a small degree of common understanding? But O! what manner of shepherds are those who look no farther into the nature of their office, who sink no deeper into the importance of it, than this! Were they not such as these concerning whom “the word of the Lord came unto Ezekiel, saying, Woe be to the shepherds that feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost. — And they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became meat to all the beasts of the field. Yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.”

I conjure you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, who hath bought them and us with his own blood, apply this each to his own soul. Let every man look unto God, and say, “Lord, is it I? Am I one of these idle, careless, indolent shepherds, that feed myself, not the flock? Am I one that cannot bark, slothful, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber? one of those who have not strengthened that which was diseased, neither healed that which was sick? ‘Search me, O Lord, and prove me; try out my reins and my heart. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.’”

**36.** “Have I not, at least, ‘healed the hurt of thy people slightly?’ Have I not said, ‘Peace, peace, when there was no peace?’” — How many are they also that do this? who do not study to speak what is true, especially to the rich and great, so much as what is pleasing? who flatter honorable sinners, instead of telling them plain, “How can ye escape the damnation of hell?” O, what an account have *you* to make, if there be a God that judgeth the earth? Will he not require at *your* hands the blood of all these souls, of whom “ye are the betrayers and murderers?” Well spake the Prophets of your fathers, in whose steps ye now tread: “They have seduced my people; and one built up a wall, and another daubed it with untempered mortar. They strengthen the hands of the evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness. They prophesy lies in my name, saith the Lord. They say unto them that despise me, Ye shall have peace; and unto them that walk after the imagination of their own heart, No evil shall come upon you.”

How great will your damnation be, who destroy souls, instead of saving them! Where will you appear, or how will you stand, “in that great and terrible day of the Lord?” How will ye lift up your head, when the Lord “descends from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on his adversaries;” more especially on those who have so betrayed his cause, and done Satan’s work under the banner of Christ? With what voice wilt thou say, “Behold me, Lord, and the sheep whom thou hadst given me, whom I gave to the devil, and told them they were in the way to heaven, till they dropped into hell!”

Were they not just such shepherds of souls as you are, concerning whom God spake by Jeremiah, — “Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard;

they have trodden my portion under foot; they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness?" by Ezekiel, — "There is a conspiracy of her Prophets; like a roaring lion ravening the prey, they have devoured souls?" and by Zechariah, — "Thus saith the Lord, Feed the flock of the slaughter, whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty; and they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich; and their own shepherds pity them not?"

**37.** Is not this the real ground, the principal reason, of the present contempt of the Clergy? And long since was it assigned as such by Him who cannot lie. The same men of old, who "made the Lord's people to transgress," thereby "made themselves vile." They were despised, both as the natural effect, and the judicial punishment, of their wickedness. And the same cause the Prophet observes to have produced the same effect, many hundred years after this: "Ye are departed out of the way, saith the Lord; ye have caused many to stumble; therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people."

I have now, brethren, "delivered mine own soul;" and in so doing, I have (as I proposed at first) "used great plainness of speech," as not studying "to please men, but the Lord." The event I leave to Him in whose name I have spoken, and who hath the hearts of all men in his hand.

I "have brought you heavy tidings this day," and yet I cannot but be persuaded, that some of you will not "count me your enemy, because I tell you the truth." O that all of us may taste the good word which we declare! may receive that knowledge of salvation which we are commanded to preach unto every creature, through the remission of sins! My heart's desire is, that all of us to whom "is committed the ministry of reconciliation" may ourselves be reconciled to God, through the blood of the everlasting covenant; that he may be henceforth unto us a God, and we may be unto him a people; that we may all know, as well as preach, the Lord, "from the least unto the greatest;" even by that token, "I am merciful to thy unrighteousness; thy sins I remember no more!"

### III.

**1.** I have hitherto spoken more immediately to those who profess themselves members of the Church of England. But inasmuch as I am a debtor also to those who do not, my design is now, to apply to them also; and briefly to show, wherein (I fear) they are severally inconsistent with their own principles.

I begin with those who are at the smallest distance from us, whether they are termed Presbyterians or Independents: Of whom in general I cannot but have a widely different opinion, from that I entertained some years ago; as having since then conversed with many among them, “in whom the root of the matter is” undeniably found; and who labor “to keep a conscience void of offense, both toward God and toward men.” I cannot, therefore, doubt, but every serious man, of either one or the other denomination, does utterly condemn all that inward as well as outward unholiness which has been above described.

But do you, as a people, avoid what you condemn? Are no whoremongers or adulterers found among you; no children disobedient to their parents; no servants that are slothful or careless, that answer again, that do not “honor their masters as is meet in the Lord?” Are there none among you that censure or “speak evil of the ruler of their people?” Are there no drunkards, no gluttons, no luxurious men, no regular epicures, none “whose belly is their God,” who, as their fortune permits, “fare sumptuously everyday?” Have you no dishonest dealers, no unfair traders, no usurers, or extortioners? Have you no liars, either for gain, or for good manners, so called? Are you clear of ceremony and compliment? Alas, you are sensible, in most (if not all) these respects, you have now small pre-eminence over us.

How much more sensible must you be of this, if you do not rest on the surface, but inquire into the bottom of religion, the religion of the heart! For, what inward unholiness, what evil tempers, are among us, which have not a place among you also? You likewise bewail that ignorance of God, that want of faith and of the love of God and man, that inward idolatry of various kinds, that pride, ambition, and vanity, which rule in the hearts even of those who still have “the form of godliness.” You lament before

God the deep covetousness that “eats so many souls as doth a gangrene;” and perhaps are sometimes ready to cry out, “Help, Lord, for there is scarce one godly man left!” Lay to thine hand; “for the faithful are minished from the children of men!”

**2.** And yet you retain “the truth that is after godliness,” at least as to the substance of it. You own what is laid down in Scripture, both touching the nature and condition of justification and salvation. And with regard to the author of faith and salvation, you have always avowed, even in the face of your enemies, that “it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure;” that it is his Spirit alone who “teacheth us all things,” all we know of “the deep things of God;” that every true believer has “an unction from the Holy One to lead him into all” necessary “truth;” that, “because we are sons, God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father;” and that “this Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

How is it then, my brethren; (so I can call you now, although I could not have done it heretofore;) how is it, that the generality of you also are fallen from your steadfastness? In the times of persecution ye stood as a rock, though “all the waves and storms went over you.” But who can bear ease and fulness of bread? How are you changed, since these came upon you! Do not many of you now (practically, I mean) put something else in the room of “faith that worketh by love?” Do not some of you suppose, that gravity and composedness of behavior are the main parts of Christianity? especially, provided you neither swear, nor take the name of God in vain. Do not others imagine, that to abstain from idle songs, and those fashionable diversions commonly used by persons of their fortune, is almost the whole of religion? To which, if they add family prayer, and a strict observation of the Sabbath, then doubtless all is well. Nay, my brethren, this is well so far as it goes; but how little a way does it go toward Christianity! All these things, you cannot but see, are merely external; whereas Christianity is an inward thing, without which the most beautiful outward form is lighter than vanity.

Do not others of you rest in convictions or good desires? Alas, what do these avail? A man may be convinced he is sick, yea, deeply convinced, and yet never recover. He may desire food, yea, with earnest desire; and

nevertheless perish with hunger. And thus I may be convinced I am a sinner; but this will not justify me before God. And I may desire salvation, (perhaps by fits and starts, for many years,) and yet be lost for ever. Come close then to the point, and keep to your principles. Have you received the Holy Ghost; the Spirit which is of God, and is bestowed by him on all believers, “that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God?” The time is short. Do you experience now that “unction from the Holy One,” without which you confess outward religion, whether negative or positives is nothing? Nay, and inward conviction of our wants is nothing, unless those wants are in fact supplied. Good desires also are nothing, unless we actually attain what we are stirred up to desire. You still, “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,” whatever he desires, “he is none of his.” O my brother, beware you stop not short! Beware are you never account yourself a Christian, no, not in the lowest degree, till God “hath sent forth the Spirit of Christ into your heart;” and that “Spirit bear witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God.”

**3.** One step farther from us, are you who are called (though not by your own choice) Anabaptists. The smallness of your number, compared to that of either the Presbyterians, or those of the Church, makes it easier for you to have an exact knowledge of the behavior of all your members, and to put away from among you every one that “walketh not according to the doctrine you have received.”

But is this done? Do all your members adorn the gospel? Are they all “holy as He which hath called us is holy?” I fear not. I have known some instances to the contrary; and doubtless you know many more. There are unholy, outwardly unholy men in your congregations also; men that profane either the name or the day of the Lord; that do not honor their natural or civil parents; that know not how to possess their bodies in sanctification and honor; that are intemperate, either in meat or drink, gluttonous, sensual, luxurious; that variously offend against justice, mercy, or truth, in their intercourse with their neighbor, and do not walk by that royal law, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

But how is this consistent with your leading principle, — “That no man ought to be admitted to baptism, till he has that repentance whereby we forsake sin, and living faith in God through Christ?”

For if no man ought to be admitted into a church or congregation, who has not actual faith and repentance; then neither ought any who has them not, to continue in any congregation: And, consequently, an open sinner cannot remain among you, unless you practically renounce your main principle.

**4.** I refer it to your own serious consideration, whether one reason why unholy men are still suffered to remain among you may not be this, — That many of you have unawares put opinion in the room of faith and repentance? But how fatal a mistake is this! Supposing your opinion to be true, yet a true opinion concerning repentance is wholly different from the thing itself; and you may have a true opinion concerning faith all your life, and yet die an unbeliever.

Supposing therefore the opinion of particular redemption true, yet how little does it avail toward salvation! Nay, were we to suppose that none can be saved who do not hold it, it does not follow that all will be saved who do: So that if the one proved a man to be in ever so bad a state, the other would not prove him to be in a good one; and, consequently, whosoever leans on this opinion, leans on the staff of a broken reed.

Would to God that ye would mind this one thing, to “make your own calling and election sure!” that every one of you (leaving the rest of the world to Him that made it) would himself “repent and believe the gospel!” Not repent alone, (for then you know only the baptism of John,) but believe, and be “baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Are you still a stranger to that inward baptism wherewith all true believers are baptized? May the Lord constrain you to cry out, “How am I straitened till it be accomplished!” even till the love of God inflame your heart, and consume all your vile affections! Be not content with anything less than this! It is this loving faith alone which opens our way into “the general Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven!” which giveth us to “enter within the veil, where Jesus our fore-runner is gone before us!”

**5.** There is a still wider difference in some points between us and the people usually termed Quakers. But not in these points. You, as well as we, condemn “all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;” all those works of the devil which were recited above, and all those tempers from which they spring.

You agree, that we are all to be taught of God, and to be “led by his Spirit;” that the Spirit alone reveals all truth, and inspires all holiness; that by his inspiration men attain perfect love, the love which “purifies them as he is pure;” and that, through this knowledge and love of God, they have power to “do always such things as please him;” to worship God, a Spirit, according to his own will, that is, “in spirit and in truth.”

Hence you infer, that formal worship is not acceptable to God, but that alone that springs from God in the heart. You infer also, that they who are led by him will use great “plainness of speech,” and great plainness of dress, seeking no “outward adorning,” but only “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.”

I will look no farther now, than simply to inquire whether you are consistent with these principles.

To begin with the latter: “He that is led by the Spirit will use great plainness of speech.”

You would have said, “will use the plain language.” But that term leads you into a grand mistake. That term, *the plain language*, naturally leads you to think of one particular way of speaking; as if “plainness of speech” implied no more than the use of that particular form.

Alas, my brethren! know ye not, that your ancestors designed this only as a specimen of plain language? And is it possible that you should mistake the sample for the whole bale of cloth?

Consult the light God has given you, and you must see that “plainness of speech” does not lie in a single point, but implies an open, undisguised sincerity, a child-like simplicity in all we speak.

I do not desire you to refrain from saying *thou* or *thee*. I would not spend ten words about it. But I desire you, whenever you speak at all, to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. I desire your words may always be the picture of your heart. This is truly plain language.

Either do not pretend to plain speech at all, or be uniformly plain. Are you so? I pray, consider. Do you never compliment? I do not suppose you say, “Sir, your very humble servant;” but do you say no civil things? Do you never flatter? Do you not commend any man or woman to their face?

Perhaps farther than you do behind their back. Is this plainness of speech? Do you never dissemble? Do you speak to all persons, high or low, rich or poor, just what you think, neither more nor less, and in the shortest and clearest manner you can? If not, what a mere jest is your plain language! You carry your condemnation in your own breast.

**6.** You hold also, that “he which is led by the Spirit will use great plainness of dress, seeking no ‘outward adorning,’ but only the ‘ornament of a meek and quiet spirit;’” and that, in particular, “he will leave ‘gold and costly apparel’ to those who know not God.”

Now, I appeal to every serious, reasonable man among you, — Do your people act consistently with this principle? Do not many of your women wear gold upon their very feet; and many of your men use “ornaments of gold?” Are you a stranger to these things? Have you not seen with your eyes (such trifles as will scarce bear the naming) their canes and snuff-boxes glitter, even in your solemn assembly, while ye were waiting together upon God? Surely, they are not yet so lost to modesty, as to pretend that they do not use them by way of ornament.

If they do not, if it be only out of necessity, a plain oaken stick will supply the place of the one, and a piece of horn or tin will unexceptionably answer all the reasonable ends of the other.

To speak freely, (and do not count me your enemy for this,) you cannot but observe, upon cool reflection, that you retain just so much of your ancient practice, as leaves your present without excuse; as makes the inconsistency, between the one and the other, glaring and undeniable. For instance: This woman is too strict a Quaker to lay out a shilling in a necklace. Very well; but she is not too strict to lay out fourscore guineas in a repeating watch. Another would not for the world wear any lace; no, not an edging round her cap: But she will wear point, and sees no harm in it at all, though it should be of twelve times the price. In one kind of apron or handkerchief she dares not lay out twenty shillings; but in another sort lays out twenty pounds. And what multitudes of you are very jealous, as to the color and form of your apparel, (the least important of all the circumstances that relate to it,) while in the most important, the expense, they are without any concern at all! They will not put on a scarlet or crimson stuff, but the richest velvet, so it be black or grave. They will not

touch a colored riband; but will cover themselves with a stiff silk from head to foot. They cannot bear purple; but make no scruple at all of being clothed in fine linen; yea, to such a degree that the linen of the Quakers is grown almost into a proverb.

Surely you cannot be ignorant, that the sinfulness of fine apparel lies chiefly in the expensiveness: In that it is robbing God and the poor; it is defrauding the fatherless and widow; it is wasting the food of the hungry, and withholding his raiment from the naked to consume it on our own lusts.

**7.** Let it not be said that this affects only a few among you, and those of the younger and lighter sort. Yes, it does your whole body: For why do you, who are older and graver, suffer such things? Why do ye not vehemently reprove them; and if they repent not, in spite of all worldly considerations, expel them out of your society? In conniving at their sin, you make it your own; you, especially, who are Preachers. Do you say, “They cannot bear it; they will not hear?” Alas! into what state, then, are ye fallen! But whether they will bear it or not, what is that to thee? Thou art to “speak, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.” To say the very truth, I am afraid you rather strengthen their hands in their wickedness. For you not only do not testify against it in the congregation,<sup>f17</sup> but even sit at their table and reprove them not. Why, then, thou also art one of “the dumb dogs that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.”

I fix this charge upon every Preacher, in particular, who saw a young woman, daughter to one of the Quakers in London, going to be married in apparel suitable to her diamond buckle, which cost a hundred guineas. Could you see this, and not call heaven and earth to witness against it? Then I witness against thee, in the name of the Lord, thou art a blind leader of the blind; thou “strainest a gnat, and swallowest a camel!”

Verily, the sin both of teachers and hearers is herein exceeding great. And the little attempts towards plainness of apparel, which are still observable among you, (I mean, in the color and form of your clothes, and the manner of putting them on,) only testify against you, that you were once what you know in your hearts you are not now.

**8.** I come now to your main principle: “We are all to be ‘taught of God,’ to be inspired and ‘led by his Spirit.’ And then we shall ‘worship him,’ not with dead form, but ‘in spirit and in truth.’”

These are deep and weighty words; but many hold fast the words, and are utterly ignorant of their meaning. Is not this an exceeding common case? Are you not conscious abundance of your friends have done so? With whom the being “taught of God” and “led by his Spirit” are mere words of course, that mean just nothing. And their crude and indigested accounts of the things they did not understand have raised that deep prejudice against these great truths which we find in the generality of men.

Do some of you ask, “But dost thou acknowledge the inward principle?” I do, my friends: And I would to God every one of you acknowledged it as much. I say, all religion is either empty show, or perfection by inspiration; in other words, the obedient love of God, by the supernatural knowledge of God; yea, all that which “is not of faith is sin;” all which does not spring from this loving knowledge of God; which knowledge cannot begin or subsist one moment without immediate inspiration; not only all public worship, and all private prayer, but every thought in common life, and word, and work. What think you of this? Do you not stagger? Dare you carry the inward principle so far? Do you acknowledge it to be the very truth? But, alas! what is the acknowledging it? Dost thou experience this principle in thyself? What saith thy heart? Does God dwell therein? And doth it now echo to the voice of God? Hast thou the continual inspiration of his Spirit, filling thy heart with his love, as with a well of water, springing up into everlasting life?

**9.** Art thou acquainted with the “leading of his Spirit,” not by notion only, but by living experience? I fear very many of you talk of this, who do not so much as know what it means. How does the Spirit of God lead his children to this or that particular action? Do you imagine it is by blind impulse only? by moving you to do it, you know not why? Not so. He leads us by our eye, at least, as much as by the hand; and by light as well as by heat. He shows us the way wherein we should go, as well as incites us to walk therein. For example: Here is a man ready to perish with hunger. How am I “led by the Spirit” to relieve him? First, by His convincing me it is the will of God I should; and Secondly, by His filling

my heart with love toward him. Both this light and this heat are the gift of God; are wrought in me by the same Spirit, who leads me, by this conviction as well as love, to go and feed that man. This is the plain, rational account of the ordinary leading of the Spirit; but how far from that which some have given!

Art *thou* thus led by the Spirit to every good word and work, till God hath thereby made thy faith perfect? Dost thou know what faith is? It is a loving, obedient sight of a present and reconciled God. Now, where this is, there is no dead form; neither can be, so long as it continues. But all that is said or done is full of God, full of spirit, and life, and power.

**10.** But perhaps, as much as you talk of them, you do not know the difference between *form* and *spirit*; or between worshipping God in a formal way, and worshipping him in spirit and in truth.”

The Lord is that Spirit. The seeing and feeling and loving him is spiritual life. And whatever is said or done in the sight or love of God, that is full of spirit and life. All beside this is form, mere dead form; whether it be in our public addresses to God, or in our private; or in our worldly business, or in our daily conversation.

But if so, how poor and mean and narrow have your views and conceptions been! You was afraid of formality in public worship: And reason good. But was you afraid of it nowhere else? Did not you consider that formality in common life is also an abomination to the Lord; and that it can have no place in anything we say or do, but so far as we forget God? O watch against it in every place, every moment, that you may every moment see and love God; and, consequently, at all times and in all places, worship him “in spirit and in truth!”

My brethren, permit me to add a few words in tender love to your souls. Do not you lean too much on the spirit and power which you believe rested upon your forefathers? Suppose it did! Will that avail *you*, if you do not drink into the same spirit? And how evident is this, — that, whatever you once were, ye are now “shorn of your strength!” Ye are weak and become like other men. The Lord is well-nigh departed from you. Where is now the spirit, the life, the power? Be not offended with my plain dealing, when I beseech you who are able to weigh things calmly,

to open your eyes, and see multitudes, even in the Church, pursuing, yea, and attaining, the substance of spiritual life, and leaving unto you the shadow. Nay, a still greater evil is before you: For, if ye find not some effectual means to prevent it, your rising generation will utterly cast off the shadow as well as the substance.

**11.** There is an abundantly greater difference still, according to your own account, between us who profess ourselves members of the Church of England, and you who are members of the Church of Rome. But notwithstanding this, do you not agree with us in condemning the vices above recited; profaneness, drunkenness, whoredom, adultery, theft, disobedience to parents, and such like? And how unhappily do you agree with us in practicing the very vices which you condemn!

And yet you acknowledge, (nay, and frequently contend for this with a peculiar earnestness,) that every Christian is called to be “zealous of good works,” as well as to “deny himself and take up his cross daily.” How, then, do you depart from your own principles, when you are gluttons, drunkards, or epicures? when you live at your ease, in all the elegance and voluptuousness of a plentiful fortune? How will you reconcile the being adorned with gold, arrayed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously everyday, with the “denying yourself and taking up your cross daily?” Surely, while you indulge the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life, the excellent rules of self-denial that abound in your own writers leave you of all men most inexcusable.

**12.** Neither can this self-indulgence be reconciled with the being “zealous of good works.” For by this needless and continual expense, you disable yourself from doing good. You bind your own hands. You make it impossible for you to do that good which otherwise you might. So that you injure the poor in the same proportion as you poison your own soul. You might have clothed the naked; but what was due to them was thrown away on your costly apparel. You might have fed the hungry, entertained the stranger, relieved them that were sick or in prison; but the superfluities of your own table swallowed up that whereby they should have been profited. And so this wasting of thy Lord’s goods is an instance of complicated wickedness; since hereby thy poor brother perisheth, for whom Christ died.

I will not recommend to you either the writings or examples of those whom you account heretics: (Although some of these, if you could view them with impartial eyes, might “provoke you to jealousy:”) But O that God would write in your hearts the rules of self-denial and love laid down by Thomas a’ Kempis! or that you would follow, both in this and in good works, that burning and shining light of your own Church, the Marquis de Renty! Then would all who knew and loved the Lord rejoice to acknowledge you as the “Church of the living God;” when ye were zealous to every good word and work, and abstained from all appearance of evil; when it was hereby shown that you were filled with the Holy Ghost, and delivered from all unholy tempers; when ye were all “unblamable and unrebukable, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, showing forth” to all Jews, infidels, and heretics, by your active, patient, spotless love of God and man, “the praises of Him who had called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

**13.** “Men and brethren, children of the seed of Abraham,” suffer me to speak a few words to you also; you who do not allow that Messiah the Prince is already come and cut off. However, you so far hear Moses and the Prophets as to allow,

**(1.)** That “it is the inspiration of the Holy One which giveth man understanding,” and that all the true children of God “are taught of God.”

**(2.)** That the substance both of the Law and the Prophets is contained in that one word, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.” And,

**(3.)** That the sure fruit of love is obedience, “ceasing from evil, and doing good.”

And do you walk by this rule? Have you yourselves that “inspiration of the Holy One?” Are you taught of God? Hath he opened your understanding? Have you the inward knowledge of the Most High? I fear not. Perhaps you know little more, even of the meaning of the words, than a Mahometan.

Let us go a little farther. Do you “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength?” Can you say, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee?” Do you desire God at all? Do you desire to have any thing to do with him, till you can keep the world no longer? Are you not content, so you enjoy the good things of earth, to let God stand afar off? only calling upon him now and then, when you cannot do without him. Why then you do not love God at all, though you will sometimes condescend to use him. You love the world. This possesses your heart. This, therefore, is your God. You renounce the God of your fathers, the God of Israel; you are still uncircumcised in heart. Your own conscience bears witness, you in this no more hear Moses and the Prophets, than you do Jesus of Nazareth.

**14.** From Moses and the Prophets it has been shown, that your forefathers were a “faithless and stubborn generation; a generation which set not their hearts aright, and whose spirit cleaved not steadfastly unto God.” And this you acknowledge yourselves. If you are asked, “How is it that the promise is not fulfilled? Seeing ‘the scepter is’ long since ‘departed from Judah,’ why is not Shiloh come?” your usual answer is, “Because of the sins of our fathers God hath delayed his coming.” Have you then reformed from the sins of your fathers? Are you turned unto the Lord your God? Nay, do ye not tread in the same steps? Bating that single point of outward idolatry, what abomination did they ever commit, which you have not committed also, which the generality of you do not commit still according to your power? If therefore the coming of the Messiah was hindered by the sins of your forefathers, then, by the same rule, your continuance therein will hinder his coming to the end of the world.

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God” is, that he would “gather the outcasts of Israel.” And I doubt not, but, when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, then “all Israel shall be saved.” But, mean time, is there not great cause that ye should say with Daniel, “O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face, as at this day, to the men of Judah, and unto all Israel. O Lord, we have sinned, we have rebelled against thee, neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God. Yet, O our God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations; for we do not present our supplications before

thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do! Defer not, for thine own sake; for thy city and thy people that are called by thy name.”

**15.** I cannot conclude without addressing myself to you also, who do not admit either the Jewish or Christian Revelation. But still you desire to be happy. You own the essential difference between vice and virtue; and acknowledge, (as did all the wiser Greeks and Romans,) that vice cannot consist with happiness. You allow likewise that gratitude and benevolence, self-knowledge and modesty, mildness, temperance, patience, and generosity, are justly numbered among virtues; and that ingratitude and malice, envy and ill-nature, pride, insolence, and vanity, gluttony and luxury, covetousness and discontent, are vices of the highest kind.

Now, let us calmly inquire how far your life is consistent with your principles.

You seek happiness. But you find it not. You come no nearer it with all your labors. You are not happier than you was a year ago. Nay, I doubt you are more unhappy. Why is this, but because you look for happiness there, where you own it cannot be found? Indeed, what is there on earth which can long satisfy a man of understanding? His soul is too large for the world he lives in. He wants more room.

*AEstuat infelix angusto limite mundi,  
Ut brevibus clausus Gyaris, parvaque Seripho.* <sup>f18</sup>

He has already travelled through all which is called pleasure; diversions and entertainments of every kind. But among these he can find no enjoyment of any depth; they are empty, shallow, superficial things: They pleased for a while; but the gloss is gone, and now they are dull and tasteless. And what has he next? Only the same things again; for this world affords nothing more. It can supply him with no change. Go, feed again; but it is upon one dish still. Thus

*Occidit miseros crambe repetita.* <sup>f19</sup>

*Yet what remedy under the sun?*

**16.** The sounder judgment, the stronger understanding you have, the sooner are you sated with the world; and the more deeply convinced, all

that cometh is vanity, foolish, insipid, nauseous. You see the foibles of men in so much clearer a light, and have the keener sense of the emptiness of life. Here you are, a poor, unsatisfied inhabitant of an unquiet world; turning your weary eyes on this side and on that side; seeking rest, but finding none. You seem to be out of your place: Neither the persons nor things that surround you are such as you want. You have a confused idea of something better than all this; but you know not where to find it. You are always gasping for something which you cannot attain, no, not if you range to the uttermost parts of the earth.

But this is not all. You are not only negatively unhappy, as finding nothing whereon to stay the weight of your soul; but positively so, because you are unholy: You are miserable, because you are vicious. Are you not vicious? Are you then full of gratitude to Him who giveth you life, and breath, and all things? Not so; you rather spurn his gifts, and murmur at Him that gave them. How often has your heart said, God did not use you well? How often have you questioned either his wisdom or goodness? Was this well done? What kind of gratitude is this? It is the best you are master of. Then take knowledge of yourself. Black ingratitude is rooted in your inmost frame. You can no more love God, than you can see him; or than you can be happy without that love.

Neither (how much soever you may pique yourself upon it) are you a lover of mankind. Can love and malice consist? benevolence and envy? O do not put out your own eyes! And are not these horrid tempers in you? Do not you envy one man, and bear malice or ill-will to another? I know you call these dispositions by softer names; but names change not the nature of things. You are pained that one should enjoy what you cannot enjoy yourself. Call this what you please, it is rank envy. You are grieved that a second enjoys even what you have yourself; you rejoice in seeing a third unhappy. Do not flatter yourself; this is malice, venomous malice, and nothing else. And how could you ever think of being happy, with malice and envy in your heart? Just as well might you expect to be at ease, while you holden burning coals in your bosom.

**17.** I entreat you to reflect, whether there are not other inhabitants in your breast, which leave no room for happiness there. May you not discover, through a thousand disguises, pride? too high an opinion of yourself?

vanity, thirst of praise, even (who would believe it?) of the applause of knaves and fools? unevenness or sourness of temper? proneness to anger or revenge? peevishness, fretfulness, or pining discontent? Nay, perhaps even covetousness. — And did you ever think happiness could dwell with these? Awake out of that senseless dream. Think not of reconciling things incompatible. All these tempers are essential misery: So long as any of these are harboured in your breast, you must be a stranger to inward peace. What avails it you if there be no other hell? Whenever these fiends are let loose upon you, you will be constrained to own,

*Hell is where'er I am: Myself am hell.*

And can the Supreme Being love those tempers, which you yourself abhor in all but yourself? If not, they imply guilt as well as misery. Doubtless they do. Only inquire of your own heart. How often in the mid-career of your vice have you felt a secret reproof; which you knew not how to bear, and therefore stifled as soon as possible!

**18.** And did not even this point at an hereafter; a future state of existence? The more reasonable among you have no doubt of this; you do not imagine the whole man dies together; although you hardly suppose the soul, once disengaged, will dwell again in a house of clay. But how will your soul subsist without it? How are you qualified for a separate state? Suppose this earthly covering, this vehicle of organized matter, whereby you hold commerce with the material world, were now to drop off! Now, what would you do in the regions of immortality? You cannot eat or drink there. You cannot indulge either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life. You love only worldly things; and they are gone, fled as smoke, driven away for ever. Here is no possibility of sensual enjoyments; and you have a relish for nothing else. O what a separation is this, from all that you hold dear! What breach is made, never to be healed!

But beside this, you are unholy, full of evil tempers; for you did not put off these with the body; you did not leave pride, revenge, malice, envy, discontent, behind you, when you left the world. And now you are no longer cheered by the light of the sun, nor diverted by the flux of various objects; but those dogs of hell are let loose to prey upon your soul, with their whole unrebated strength. Nor is there any hope that your spirit will now ever be restored to its original purity; not even that poor hope of a

purging fire, so elegantly described by the heathen poet, some ages before the notion was revived among the doctrines of the Romish Church.

*Aliae panduntur inanes  
Suspensae ad ventos; aliis sub gurgite vasto  
Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni. —  
Donec longa dies, perfecto temporis orbe,  
Concretam exemit labem, purumque reliquit  
AEthereum sensum, atque aurai simplicis ignem.* f20

**19.** What a great gulf then is fixed between you and happiness, both in this world and that which is to come! Well may you shudder at the thought! more especially when you are about to enter on that untried state of existence. For what a prospect is this, when you stand on the verge of life, ready to launch out into eternity! What can you then think? You see nothing before you. All is dark and dreary. On the very best supposition, how well may you address your parting soul in the words of dying Adrian: —

*Poor, little, pretty, fluttering thing,  
Must we no longer live together?  
And dost thou prune thy trembling wing.  
To take thy flight thou know'st not whither?*

*Thy pleasing vein, thy humorous folly  
Is all neglected, all forgot;  
And pensive, wavering, melancholy,  
Thou hop'st and fear'st thou know'st not what.*

“Thou know'st not what!” Here is the sting, suppose there were no other. To be “thou know'st not what” not for a month, or a year, but through the countless ages of eternity! What a tormenting uncertainty must this be! What racking unwillingness must it occasion, to exchange even this known vale of tears for the unknown valley of the shadow of death!

And is there no cure for this? Indeed there is an effectual cure; even the knowledge and love of God. There is a knowledge of God which unveils eternity, and a love of God which endears it. That knowledge makes the great abyss visible; and all uncertainty vanishes away. That love makes it amiable to the soul, so that fear has no more place! But the moment God says, by the welcome angel of death, “Come thou up hither!” she

*Claps the glad wing, and towers away,  
And mingles with the blaze of day.*

**20.** See ye not what advantage every way a Christian has over you? Probably the reason you saw it not before was, because you knew none but nominal Christians; men who professed to believe more, (in their way of believing,) but had no more of the knowledge or love of God than yourselves: So that with regard to real, inward religion, you stood upon even ground. And perhaps in many branches of outward religion the advantage was on your side.

May the Lord, the God of the Christians, either reform these wretches, or take them away from the earth, that lay this grand stumbling-block in the way of those who desire to know the will of God!

O ye who desire to know his will, regard them not! If it be possible, blot them out of your remembrance.

They neither can nor will do you any good. O, suffer them not to do you harm! Be not prejudiced against Christianity by those who know nothing at all of it: Nay, they condemn it, all real substantial Christianity; they speak evil of the thing they know not; they have a kind of cant word for the whole religion of the heart; they call it enthusiasm.

I will briefly lay before you the ground of the matter, and appeal to you yourselves for the reasonableness of it.

**21.** What a miserable drudgery is the service of God, unless I love the God whom I serve! But I cannot love one whom I know not. How then can I love God till I know him? And how is it possible I should know God, unless he make himself known unto me? By analogy or proportion? Very good. But where is that proportion to be found? What proportion does a creature bear to its Creator? What is the proportion between finite and infinite?

I grant, the existence of the creatures demonstratively shows the existence of their Creator. The whole creation speaks that there is a God. But that is not the point in question. I know there is a God. Thus far is clear. But who will show me what that God is? The more I reflect the more convinced I am, that it is not possible for any or all the creatures to take off the veil which is on my heart, that I might discern this unknown God;

to draw the curtain back which now hangs between, that I may see Him which is invisible.

This veil of flesh now hides him from my sight; and who is able to make it transparent? so that I may perceive, through this glass, God always before me, till I see him “face to face.”

I want to know this great God who filleth heaven and earth; who is above, beneath, and on every side, in all places of his dominion; who just now besets me behind and before, and lays his hand upon me; and yet I am no more acquainted with him, than with one of the inhabitants of Jupiter or Saturn.

O my friend, how will you get one step farther, unless God reveal himself to your soul?

**22.** And why should this seem a thing incredible to you; that God, a Spirit, and the Father of the spirits of all flesh, should discover himself to your spirit, which is itself “the breath of God,” *divinae particula aerae*; any more than that material things should discover themselves to your material eye? Is it any more repugnant to reason, that spirit should influence spirit, than that matter should influence matter? Nay, is not the former the more intelligible of the two? For there is the utmost difficulty in conceiving how matter should influence matter at all; how that which is totally passive should act. Neither can we rationally account either for gravitation, attraction, or any natural motion whatsoever, but by supposing in all the finger of God, who alone conquers that *vis inertiae* which is essential to every particle of matter, and worketh all in all.

Now, if God should ever open the eyes of your understanding, must not the love of God be the immediate consequence? Do you imagine you can see God without loving him? Is it possible in the nature of things? *Si virtus conspiceretur oculis*, (said the old Heathen,) *mirabiles amores excitaret sui*.<sup>f21</sup> How much more if you see Him who is the original fountain, the great archetype of all virtue, will that sight raise in you a love that is wonderful, such as the gay and busy world know not of!

**23.** What benevolence also, what tender love to the whole of human kind, will you drink in, together with the love of God, from the unexhausted source of love! And how easy is it to conceive that more and more of his

image will be then transfused into your soul; that from disinterested love, all other divine tempers will, as it were naturally, spring: Mildness, gentleness, patience, temperance, justice, sincerity, contempt of the world; yea, whatsoever things are venerable and lovely, whatsoever are justly of good report!

And when you thus love God and all mankind, and are transformed into his likeness, then the commandments of God will not be grievous; you will no more complain that they destroy the comforts of life: So far from it, that they will be the very joy of your heart; ways of pleasantness, paths of peace! You will experience here that solid happiness which you had elsewhere sought in vain. Without servile fear or anxious care, so long as you continue on earth, you will gladly do the will of God here as the angels do it in heaven; and when the time is come that you should depart hence, when God says, “Arise, and come away,” you will pass with joy unspeakable out of the body, into all the fulness of God.

Now, does not your own heart condemn you if you call this religion enthusiasm? O leave that to those blind zealots who tack together a set of opinions and an outside worship, and call this poor, dull, lifeless thing by the sacred name of Christianity! Well might you account such Christianity as this a mere piece of empty pageantry, fit indeed to keep the vulgar in awe, but beneath the regard of a man of understanding.

But in how different a light does it now appear! If there be such a religion as I have sketched out, must not every reasonable man see there is nothing on earth to be desired in comparison of it? But if any man desire this, let him ask of God; he giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.

**24.** May you not ask, quite consistently with your principles, in some manner resembling this? —

“O thou Being of beings, thou cause of all, thou seest my heart; thou understandest all my thoughts: But how small a part of thy ways do I understand! I know not what is above, beneath, on every side; I know not my own soul. Only this I know, I am not what I ought to be. I see and approve the virtue which I have not. I do not love thee, neither am I thankful. I commend the love of mankind; but I feel it not. Thou hast seen hatred, malice, envy in

my heart; thou hast seen anger, murmuring, discontent. These uneasy passions harrow up my soul. I cannot rest while I am under this yoke; nor am I able to shake it off; I am unhappy, and that thou knowest.

“Have compassion upon me, thou whose years do not fail! on me who have but a short time to live. I rise up, and am cut down as a flower. I flee as it were a shadow. Yet a little while and I return to dust, and have no more place under the sun.

“Yet I know thou hast made my soul to live for ever; but I know not where, and I am unwilling to try. I tremble, I am afraid to go thither, whence I shall not return. I stand quivering on the edge of the gulf; for clouds and darkness rest upon it. O God! must I go always ‘creeping with terrors, and plunge into eternity with a peradventure!’

“O thou Lover of men, is there no help in thee? I have heard (what indeed my heart cannot conceive) that thou revealest thyself to those that seek thee, and pourest thy love into their hearts; and that they who know and love thee, walk through the shadow of death and fear no evil. O that this were so! that there was such an unspeakable gift given to the children of me! for then might I hope for it. O God, if there be, give it unto me! Speak, that I may see thee! Make thyself known unto me also in the manner that thou knowest! In anywise, let me know thee, and love thee, that I may be formed after thy likeness! That I may be love, as thou art love; that I may now be happy in thee; and, when thou wilt, fall into the abyss of thy love, and enjoy thee through the ages of eternity.”

# A FARTHER APPEAL

TO

## MEN OF REASON AND RELIGION

And when he came near, he beholden the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! <sup><02911></sup> Luke 19:41, 42.

### PART 3.

#### I.

**1.** Now, what can an impartial person think concerning the present state of religion in England? Is there a nation under the sun which is so deeply fallen from the very first principles of all religion? Where is the country in which is found so utter a disregard to even heathen morality; such a thorough contempt of justice and truth, and all that should be dear and honorable to rational creatures?

What species of vice can possibly be named, even of those that nature itself abhors, of which we have not had, for many years, a plentiful and still-increasing harvest? What sin remains either in Rome or Constantinople, which we have not imported long ago, (if it was not of our native growth,) and improved upon ever since? Such a complication of villanies of every kind, considered with all their aggravations; such a scorn of whatever bears the face of virtue; such injustice, fraud, and falsehood; above all, such perjury, and such a method of law, we may defy the whole world to produce.

What multitudes are found throughout our land, who do not even profess any religion at all! And what numbers of those who profess much, confute their profession by their practice! yea, and perhaps by their exorbitant

pride, vanity, covetousness, rapaciousness or oppression, cause the very name of religion to stink in the nostrils of many (otherwise) reasonable men!

2. “However, we have many thousands still of truly virtuous and religious men.” Wherein does their religion consist? in righteousness and true holiness; in love stronger than death; fervent gratitude to God, and tender affection to all his creatures? Is their religion the religion of the heart; a renewal of soul in the image of God? Do they resemble Him they worship? Are they free from pride, from vanity, from malice and envy; from ambition and avarice; from passion and lust; from every uneasy and unlovely temper? Alas, I fear neither they (the greater part at least) nor you know what this religion means; or have any more notion of it, than the peasant that holds the plow of the religion of a Gymnosophist.

It is well if the genuine religion of Christ has any more alliance with what you call religion, than with the Turkish pilgrimages to Mecca, or the Popish worship of our Lady of Loretto. Have not you substituted, in the place of the religion of the heart, something (I do not say equally sinful, but) equally vain, and foreign to the worshipping of God “in spirit and in truth?” What else can be said even of prayer, (public or private,) in the manner wherein you generally perform it? as a thing of course, running round and round in the same dull track, without either the knowledge or love of God, without one heavenly temper, either attained or improved! O what mockery of God is this!

And yet even this religion, which can do you no good, may do you much harm. Nay, it is plain it does; it daily increases your pride, as you measure your goodness by the number and length of your performances. It gives you a deep contempt of those who do not come up to the full tale of your virtues. It inspires men with a zeal which is the very fire of hell, furious, bitter, implacable, unmerciful; often to a degree that extinguishes all compassion, all good nature and humanity, Insomuch that the execrable fierceness of spirit, which is the natural fruit of such a religion, hath many times, in spite of all ties, divine and human, broke out into open violence, into rapine, murder, sedition, rebellion, civil war, to the desolation of whole cities and countries.

*Tantum haec religio potuit suadere malorum!*<sup>f22</sup>

**3.** Now, if there be a God, and one that is not a mere idle spectator of the things that are done upon earth, but a rewarder of men and nations according to their works, what can the event of these things be? It was reasonable to believe that he would have risen long ago and maintained his own cause, either by sending the famine or pestilence among us, or by pouring out his fury in blood. And many wise and holy men have frequently declared that they daily expected this; that they daily looked for the patience of God to give place, and judgment to rejoice over mercy.

**4.** Just at this time, when we wanted little of “filling up the measure of our iniquities,” two or three Clergymen of the Church of England began vehemently to “call sinners to repentance.” In two or three years they had sounded the alarm to the utmost borders of the land. Many thousands gathered together to hear them; and in every place where they came, many began to show such a concern for religion as they never had done before. A stronger impression was made on their minds, of the importance of things eternal, and they had more earnest desires of serving God than they had ever had from their earliest childhood. Thus did God begin to draw them toward himself, with the cords of love, with the bands of a man.

Many of these were in a short time deeply convinced of the number and heinousness of their sins. They were also made thoroughly sensible of those tempers which are justly hateful to God and man, and of their utter ignorance of God, and entire inability, either to know, love, or serve him. At the same time, they saw in the strongest light the insignificance of their outside religion; nay, and often confessed it before God, as the most abominable hypocrisy. Thus did they sink deeper and deeper into that repentance, which must ever precede faith in the Son of God.

And from hence sprung “fruits meet for repentance.” The drunkard commenced sober and temperate; the whoremonger abstained from adultery and fornication; the unjust from oppression and wrong. He that had been accustomed to curse and swear for many years, now swore no more. The sluggard began to work with his hands, that he might eat his own bread. The miser learned to deal his bread to the hungry, and to cover the naked with a garment. Indeed, the whole form of their life was changed: They had “left off doing evil, and learned to do well.”

**5.** But this was not all. Over and above this outward change, they began to experience inward religion. “The love of God was shed abroad in their hearts,” which they continue to enjoy to this day. They “love him, because he first loved us,” and withholden not from us his Son, his only Son. And this love constrains them to love all mankind, all the children of the Father of heaven and earth; and inspires them with every holy and heavenly temper, the whole mind that was in Christ. Hence it is that they are now uniform in their behavior, unblamable in all manner of conversation. And in whatsoever state they are, they have learned wherewith to be content; insomuch that now they can “in every thing give thanks.” They more than patiently acquiesce, they rejoice and are exceeding glad, in all God’s dispensations toward them. For as long as they love God, (and that love no man taketh from them,) they are always happy in God. Thus they calmly travel on through life, being never weary nor faint in their minds, never repining, murmuring, or dissatisfied, casting all their care upon God, till the hour comes that they should drop this covering of earth, and return unto the great Father of spirits. Then, especially, it is that they “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” You who credit it not, come and see. See these living and dying Christians.

*Happy while on earth they breathe;  
 Mightier joys ordain’d to know,  
 Trampling on sin, hell, and death,  
 To the third heaven they go!*

Now, if these things are so, what reasonable man can deny (supposing the Scriptures to be true) that God is now visiting this nation, in a far other manner than we had cause to expect? Instead of pouring out his fierce displeasure upon us, he hath made us yet another tender of mercy: So that even when sin did most abound, grace hath much more abounded.

**6.** Yea, “the grace of God, which bringeth salvation,” present salvation from inward and outward sin, hath abounded of late years in such a degree, as neither we nor our fathers had known. How extensive is the change which has been wrought on the minds and lives of the people! Know ye not that the sound has gone forth into all the land; that there is scarce a city or considerable town to be found, where some have not been roused out of the sleep of death, and constrained to cry out, in the bitterness of their soul, “What must I do to be saved?” that this religious concern has

spread to every age and sex; to most orders and degrees of men? to abundance of those, in particular, who, in time past, were accounted monsters of wickedness, “drinking in iniquity like water,” and committing all “uncleanness with greediness.”

**7.** In what age has such a work been wrought, considering the swiftness as well as the extent of it? When have such numbers of sinners in so short a time been recovered from the error of their ways? When hath religion, I will not say since the Reformation, but since the time of Constantine the Great, made so large a progress in any nation, within so small a space? I believe, hardly can either ancient or modern history supply us with a parallel instance.

**8.** Let understanding men observe also the depth of the work, so extensively and swiftly wrought. It is not a slight or superficial thing; but multitudes of men have been so thoroughly “convinced of sin,” that their “bones were smitten asunder, as it were with a sword dividing the very joints and marrow.” Many of these have been shortly after so filled with “peace and joy in believing,” that, whether they were in the body or out of the body, they could scarcely tell. And in the power of this faith they have trampled under foot whatever the world accounts either terrible or desirable; having evidenced, in the severest trials, so fervent a love to God, so invariable and tender a goodwill to mankind, particularly to their enemies, and such a measure of all the fruits of holiness, as were not unworthy the apostolic age. Now, so deep a repentance, so firm a faith, so fervent love and unblemished holiness, wrought in so many persons, within so short a time, the world has not seen for many ages.

**9.** No less remarkable is the purity of the religion which has extended itself so deeply and swiftly. I speak particularly with regard to the doctrines holden by those among whom it is so extended. Those of the Church of England, at least must acknowledge this. For where is there a body of people in the realm, who, number for number, so closely adhere to what our Church delivers as pure doctrine? Where are those who have approved and do approve themselves more orthodox more sound in their opinions? Is there a Socinian or Arian among them all? Nay, were you to recite the whole catalogue of heresies enumerated by Bishop Pearson, it might be asked, Who can lay any one of these to their charge?

Nor is their religion more pure from heresy than it is from superstition. In former times, wherever an unusual concern for the things of God hath appeared, on the one hand, strange and erroneous opinions continually sprung up with it; on the other, a zeal for things which were no part of religion, as though they had been essential branches of it. And many have laid as great, if not greater, stress on trifles, as on the weightier matters of the law. But it has not been so in the present case. No stress has been laid on anything, as though it were necessary to salvation, but what is undeniably contained in the word of God. And of the things contained therein, the stress laid on each has been in proportion to the nearness of its relation to what is there laid down as the sum of all, the love of God and our neighbor. So pure from superstition, so thoroughly scriptural, is that religion which has lately spread in this nation!

**10.** It is likewise rational as well as scriptural; it is as pure from enthusiasm as from superstition. It is true, the contrary has been continually affirmed: But to affirm is one thing, to prove is another. Who will prove that it is enthusiasm to love God, even though we love him with all our heart? to rejoice in the sense of his love to us? to praise him, even with all our strength? Who is able to make good this charge against the love of all mankind? or, laying rhetorical flourishes aside, to come close to the question, and demonstrate that it is enthusiasm, in every state we are in, therewith to be content? I do but just touch on the general heads. Ye men of reason, give me a man who, setting raillery and ill names apart, will maintain this by dint of argument. It not, own this religion is the thing you seek; sober, manly, rational, divine; however exposed to the censure of those who are accustomed to revile what they understand not.

**11.** It may be farther observed, the religion of those we now speak of is entirely clear from bigotry. (Perhaps this might have been ranked with superstition, of which it seems to be only a particular species.) They are in nowise bigoted to opinions. They do indeed hold right opinions; but they are peculiarly cautious not to rest the weight of Christianity there. They have no such overgrown fondness for any opinions, as to think those alone will make them Christians, or to confine their affection or esteem to those who agree with them therein. There is nothing they are more fearful of than this, lest it should steal upon them unawares. Nor are they bigoted to any particular branch even of practical religion. They

desire indeed to be exact in every jot and tittle, in the very smallest points of Christian practice. But they are not attached to one point more than another: they aim at uniform, universal obedience. They contend for nothing trifling, as if it was important; for nothing indifferent, as if it were necessary; for nothing circumstantial, as if it were essential to Christianity; but for every thing in its own order.

**12.** Above all, let it be observed, that this religion has no mixture of vice or unholiness. It gives no man of any rank or profession the least license to sin. It makes no allowance to any person for ungodliness of any kind. Not that all who follow after have attained this, either are already perfect. But however that be, they plead for no sin, either inward or outward. They condemn every kind and degree thereof, in themselves as well as in other men. Indeed, most in themselves; it being their constant care to bring those words home to their own case, “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”

**13.** Yet there is not found among them that bitter zeal in points either of small or of great importance, that spirit of persecution, which has so often accompanied the spirit of reformation. It is an idle conceit, that the spirit of persecution is among the Papists only: It is wheresoever the devil, that old murderer, works; and he still “worketh in” all “the children of disobedience.” Of consequence, all the children of disobedience will, on a thousand different pretenses, and in a thousand different ways, so far as God permits, persecute the children of God. But what is still more to be lamented is, that the children of God themselves have so often used the same weapons, and persecuted others, when the power was in their own hands.

Can we wholly excuse those venerable men, our great Reformers themselves, from this charge? I fear not, if we impartially read over any history of the Reformation. What wonder is it then, that, when the tables were turned, Bishop Bonner or Gardiner should make reprisals; that they should measure to others (indeed good measure, shaken together) what had before been measured to them? Nor is it strange, when we consider the single case of Joan Bocher, that God should suffer those (otherwise) holy men, Archbishop Cranmer, Bishop Ridley, and Bishop Latimer, to drink of the same cup with her.

**14.** But can you find any tincture of this in the case before us? Do not all who have lately known the love of God, know “what spirit they are of;” and that the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them? Do they approve of the using any kind or degree of violence, on any account or pretense whatsoever, in matters of religion? Do they not hold the right every man has to judge for himself, to be sacred and inviolable? Do they allow any method of bringing even those who are farthest out of the way, who are in the grossest errors, to the knowledge of the truth, except the methods of reason and persuasion; of love, patience, gentleness, long-suffering? Is there any thing in their practice which is inconsistent with this their constant profession? Do they in fact hinder their own relations or dependents from worshipping God according to their own conscience? When they believe them to be in error, do they use force of any kind, in order to bring them out of it? Let the instances, if there are such, be produced. But if no such are to be found, then let all reasonable men, who believe the Bible, own that a work of God is wrought in our land; and such a work (if we survey in one view the extent of it, the swiftness with which it has spread, the depth of that religion which was so swiftly diffused, and its purity from all corrupt mixtures) as, it must be acknowledged, cannot easily be paralleled, in all these concurrent circumstances, by any thing that is found in the English annals, since Christianity was first planted in this island.

## II.

**1.** And yet those who “can discern the face of the sky, cannot discern the signs of the times.” Yet those who are esteemed wise men do not know that God is now reviving his work upon earth. Indeed, concerning some of these, the reason is plain: They know not, because they think not of it. Their thoughts are otherwise employed; their minds are taken up with things of quite a different nature: Or, perhaps, they may think of it a little now and then, when they have nothing else to do; but not seriously or deeply; not with any closeness or attention of thought. They are too much in haste, to weigh the facts whereof we speak, and to draw the just inference therefrom: Nor is the conviction which they may sometimes feel,

suffered to sink into their hearts; but things that have a larger share in their affections soon destroy the very traces of it.

**2.** True it is, that there are some who think more deeply, who are accustomed to consider things from the foundation, and to lay circumstances together, that they may judge of nothing before they have full evidence; and yet even some of these appear to be in doubt concerning the present work. Now, supposing it to be a work of God, how can this be accounted for, — that they who so diligently inquire concerning it, do not know the time of their visitation? Perhaps because of the deeply rooted prejudice which they brought with them to the inquiry; and which, still hanging on their minds, makes it scarce possible for them to form an impartial judgment. Perhaps, even a slight prepossession might occasion their stumbling on some of those rocks of offense, which, by the wise permission of God, always did and always will attend any revival of his work. Nay, it may be, their very caution was carried to excess. They would not judge before they had such evidence as the nature of the thing would not admit, or, at least, God did not see fit to give.

**3.** All this is very easy to conceive. But it may at first appear surprising, to find men of renown, men supposed to be endowed with knowledge, and with abilities of every kind, flatly, openly, peremptorily denying, that there has been any unusual work of God at all! Yea, a late eminent writer goes farther yet; accounts it an instance of downright enthusiasm, to imagine that there is any extraordinary work now wrought upon the earth. (*Observations*, Part III.)

It avails not to say, “No; he does not deny this, but he denies it to be the work of God.” This is palpably trifling; for the work under consideration is of such a nature, (namely, the conversion of men from all manner of sins, to holiness of heart and life,) that if it be at any time wrought at all, it must be the work of God; seeing it is God alone, and not any child of man, who is able to “destroy the works of the devil.”

Yet neither is this difficult to be accounted for, if we consider things more closely; for the same prejudice which keeps some in doubt, may easily be conceived so to influence others as to make them wholly deny the work of God. And this it may do in several ways: It may either bring them to question the facts related, and hinder their endeavoring to be more fully

informed; or prevent their drawing such inferences from those facts, as they would otherwise see to be plain and undeniable. Yea, and it will give tenfold weight to the offenses which must come, so as to over-balance all evidence whatsoever.

**4.** This also may account for the behavior of those who, not content to suspend their judgment, or to deny the work of God, go farther still, even to the length of contradicting and blaspheming. Nay, some of these have expressed a deeper abhorrence, and shown a stronger enmity against this, than they were ever known to do against Popery, infidelity, or any heresy whatsoever. Some have persecuted the instruments whom it pleased God to use herein, only not to the death; and others have treated in the same manner all those whom they termed their followers. A few instances of this it may be proper to mention, out of very many which might be recited.

**5.** On the 20th of June, 1743, a great multitude of people gathered together, chiefly from Walsal, Darlaston, and Bilston, in Wednesbury church-yard, Staffordshire. They went from thence (when by sounding a horn they had gathered their whole company together) to Mr. Eaton's house, in the middle of this town, who was at that time Constable. He went to the door with his Constable's staff, and began reading the Act of Parliament against riots; but the stones flew so thick about his head, that he was forced to leave off reading and retire. They broke all his windows, the door of his house, and a large clock in pieces. They went then to above fourscore houses, in many of which there were not three panes of glass left.

**6.** On June 20, 1743, John Baker, at the head of a large mob, came to the house of Jonas Turner, at West-Bromwich, near Wednesbury, and asked him, whether he would keep from these men that went preaching about, and go to the church. He answered, "I do go to the church; but I never see any of you there." Presently one Dan. Oniens, with a great club, broke great part of the window at one blow. Others laid hold of him, and dragged him about sixty yards before he could get loose from them. Afterwards they broke all his windows, and threw into the house abundance of stones, to break his goods.

About four in the afternoon they came to the house of widow Turner of West-Bromwich. They threw in bricks and stones so fast, that she was forced to open the door and run out among them. One of her daughters cried out, "My mother will be killed!" On which, they fell to throwing stones at her. She ran into a neighbor's house; but before she could shut the door, they broke the bottom off with a brick-end. They followed her other daughter with stones, and one with a great stake. She ran into another house, much frightened, expecting to be murdered. The widow asked, "How can you come and abuse us thus?" On which, one came with a large club, and swore, if she spoke another word, he would knock her on the head, and bury her in the ditch. Then he went and broke all the glass that was left. The same they did to many of the neighboring houses.

**7.** On the 19th of June, James Yeoman, of Walsal, saw Mary Bird in her father's house at Wednesbury, and swore, "By G——, you are there now; but we will kill you tomorrow." Accordingly, he came with a mob the next day; and after they had broken all the windows, he took up a stone, and said, "Now, by God, I will kill you." He threw it, and struck her on the side of the head. The blood gushed out, and she dropped down immediately.

Another of them took Mr. Hands, of Wednesbury, by the throat, swore he would be the death of him, gave him a great swing round, and threw him upon the ground. As soon as he rose, one Equal Baker gave him a blow on the eye, and knocked him down again. In about half an hour, the mob came to his house, and broke all the windows, except about twenty panes. The kitchen windows they cleared, lead, bars, and all, broke the windows-posts, and threw them into the house. The shop was shut up; (he being an apothecary;) but they quickly broke it open, broke all the pots and bottles in pieces, and destroyed all his medicines. They broke also the shelves and drawers in the shop to pieces, and many of his household goods.

**8.** On January 13, 1743-4, the mob rose again at Darlaston, broke all the windows of all who followed "this way," (except two or three who bought themselves off,) broke open several houses, and took what they liked, the people belonging to them being fled for their lives.

About the same time the Rev. Mr. E—— came to Darlestone; and meeting some others at Thomas Forshew's, they drew up a writing; and Nicholas Winspur, the crier of the town, gave public notice, That all the people of the society must come to Mr. Forshew's, and sign it, or else their houses would be pulled down immediately. It was to this effect, That they would never read, or sing, or pray together, or hear these Parsons, any more.

Several signed this through fear. They made every one who did, lay down a penny, — “to make the mob drink.”

**9.** About Candlemas, the wife of Joshua Constable, of Darlston, was going to Wednesbury, when a mob met her in the road, threw her down several times, and abused her in a manner too horrible to write. A warrant was procured for some of these; but one of them only was carried before Mr. G——, who came back and told his companions, the Justice said that they might go home about their business. On this the mob rose again, came to Joshua's house, and destroyed all the necessary goods therein. They likewise broke and spoiled all his shop tools, threw the tiles off the roof of the house, and pulled down one room, the joist of which they carried away with them. All his gun-locks they took away; they tore in pieces all his wife's linen, cut the bed and bedstead, so that it was good for nothing; and tore her Bible and Common Prayer Book all to pieces. She and her husband retired to another house; but one telling the mob they were there, they swore they would tear it down immediately, if the man let them stay any longer: So they went out in the frost and snow, not knowing where to lay their head.

**10.** On Tuesday, January 31, 1743-4, Henry Old came to John Griffith's house, saying, if he did not leave following “this way,” he had a hundred men at his command, who should come and pull his house down. Soon after he brought some with him; but the neighbors gave him money, and sent him away for that time.

Monday, February 6, between seven and eight at night, came part of the same company. Hearing them afar off, John and his wife fastened the door, and left the house. Some of the neighbors going in soon after, found them destroying all they could: Two chairs and several bundles of linen were laid upon the fire. After they had destroyed what they could, they loaded themselves with clothes and meat, and went their way.

The same day public notice was given at Walsal, by a paper fixed up there, That all who designed to assist in breaking the windows, and plundering the houses, of the Methodists at Wednesbury, should be ready at ten o'clock, the next morning, on the Church-hill.

**11.** The next morning, February 7, (being Shrove-Tuesday,) about half an hour after ten, great numbers of men were gathered together on the Church-hill. Thence they marched down, some armed with swords, some with clubs, and some with axes. They first fell upon Benjamin Watson's house, and broke many of the tiles, and all the windows. Next they came to Mr. Addinbrook's, broke a fine clock, with many of his goods, and stole all the things they could carry away. The next house was Jane Smith's, whose windows they broke, with what little goods she had. The next was Mr. Bird's, where they destroyed every thing they found, except what they carried away; cutting the beds in pieces, as they did all the beds which they could anywhere find. Thence they went to Mr. Edge's house: He was ill of a fever; so, for a sum of money, they passed it over. The next house was Mr. Hands's. They broke all his counter, boxes, and drawers and all (except some bedsteads) that axe or hammer could break. They spilt all his drugs and chemical medicines, and stole every thing they could carry, even all his and his wife's wearing apparel beside what they had on.

**12.** Mr. Eaton's house was next. They broke all his windows, and all his inside doors in pieces, cut the lead off his house, destroyed or stole whatever they could lay their hands on. Some gentlemen offered to stop them, if he would sign a paper, implying that he would never hear those Parsons more. But he told them, he had felt already what a wounded conscience was; and, by the grace of God, he would wound his conscience no more.

After they had done at Mr. Eaton's, they plundered several other houses in Wednesbury and West-Bromwich. It is scarce possible to describe the outrages they committed; only they left them they plundered alive.

While they were plundering John Turner's house, he waded through the brook, to try if he could save some of his goods, which one David Garington was carrying away: Upon which Garington told him, it would be the same here as it was in Ireland; for there would be a massacre very quickly; and he wished it was now.

**13.** About eleven o'clock, Sarah, the wife of John Sholdenon, being told the mob was coming to her house, went and met them at the gate. She asked John Baker, their captain, what they were come for. He answered, if she would have nothing more to do with these people, not a pennyworth of her goods should be hurt. She made no reply. Then they broke the door open, and began breaking and plundering the goods. One coming out with a fire-shovel, she begged him not to take it away. He swore, if she spoke another word, he would beat her brains out.

John Sholdenon was this while helping Thomas Parkes to hide his goods, though he knew by the noise they were breaking his own to pieces. Between two and three he came to his house with William Sitch. William asked Sarah how she did, saying, for his part, he took joyfully the spoiling of his goods. She answered, that, seeing so much wickedness, she could not rejoice; but she blessed God she could bear it patiently, and found not the least anger in her. John Sholdenon seeing the spoil they had made, smiled and said, "Here is strange work." His wife told him, if she had complied with their terms, not one pennyworth would have been hurt. He replied, that if she had complied to deny the truth, and he had found his goods whole on that account, he should never have been easy as long as he lived; but he blessed God that she had rather chosen to suffer wrong.

I believe every reasonable man will allow, that nothing can possibly excuse these proceedings; seeing they are open, bare-faced violations both of justice and mercy, and of all laws divine and human.

### III.

**1.** I suppose no Protestant will undertake to defend such proceedings, even toward the vilest miscreants. But abundance of excuses have been made, if not for opposing it thus, yet for denying this work to be of God, and for not acknowledging the time of our visitation.

Some allege that the doctrines of these men are false, erroneous, and enthusiastic; that they are new, and unheard of till of late; that they are Quakerism, fanaticism, Popery.

This whole pretense has been already cut up by the roots; having been shown at large, that every branch of this doctrine is the plain doctrine of Scripture, interpreted by our own Church. Therefore it cannot be either false or erroneous, provided the Scripture be true. Neither can it be enthusiastic, unless the same epithet belongs to our Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy. Nor yet can these doctrines be termed new; no newer, at least, than the reign of Queen Elizabeth; not even with regard to the way of expression, or the manner wherein they are proposed. And as to the substance, they are more ancient still; as ancient, not only as the gospel, as the times of Isaiah, or David, or Moses, but as the first revelation of God to man. If, therefore, they were unheard of till of late, in any that is termed a Christian country, the greater guilt is on those who, as ambassadors of Christ, ought to publish them day by day.

Fanaticism, if it means anything at all, means the same with enthusiasm, or religious madness, from which (as was observed before) these doctrines are distant as far as the east from the west. However, it is a convenient word to be thrown out upon anything we do not like; because scarce one reader in a thousand has any idea of what it means. If any part of this doctrine is holden by the Quakers, there is the more reason to rejoice. I would to God they holden it all, though the doctrine itself would be neither better nor worse for this.

Popery in the mouth of many men means just nothing; or, at most, something very horrid and bad. But Popery, properly speaking, is the distinguishing doctrines of the Church of Rome. They are summed up in the Twelve Articles which the Council of Trent added to the Nicene Creed. Now, who can find the least connection between any of these, and the doctrines whereof we are speaking?

**2.** Others allege, “Their doctrine is too strict; they make the way to heaven too narrow.” And this is in truth the original objection, (as it was almost the only one for some time,) and is secretly at the bottom of a thousand more, which appear in various forms. But do they make the way to heaven any narrower than our Lord and his Apostles made it? Is their doctrine stricter than that of the Bible? Consider only a few plain texts: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.” “For every idle word which

men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment.” “Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” If their doctrine is stricter than this, they are to blame; but you know in your conscience, it is not. And who can be one jot less strict, without corrupting the word of God? Can any steward of the mysteries of God be found faithful, if he change any part of that sacred depositum? No. He can abate nothing, he can soften nothing; he is constrained to declare to all men, “I may not bring down the Scripture to your taste. You must come up to it, or perish for ever.”

**3.** This is the real ground of that other popular cry concerning “the uncharitableness of these men.” Uncharitable, are they? In what respect? Do they not feed the hungry, and clothe the naked? “No; that is not the thing: They are not wanting in this: But they are so uncharitable in judging! They think none can be saved but those of their own way. They damn all the world beside themselves.”

What do you mean? “They think none can be saved but those of their own way.” Most surely they do. For as there is but one heaven, so there is but one way to it, even the way of faith in Christ, (for we speak not of opinions or outward modes of worship,) the way of love to God and man, the highway of holiness. And is it uncharitable to think or say that none can be saved but those who walk in this way? Was He then uncharitable who declared, “He that believeth not shall be damned?” or he that said, “Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord?” and again: “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned,” yet, “if I have not αγαπην, charity,” love, all this “profiteth me nothing.”

“But they damn all,” you say, “beside themselves.” *Damn* all! What kind of word is this? They damn no man. None is able to damn any man, but the Lord and Judge of all. What you probably mean by that strange expression is, they declare that God condemns all beside those who believe in Jesus Christ, and love him and keep his commandments. And so must you also, or you sin against God, and your neighbor, and your own soul. But is there any uncharitableness in this, in warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come? On the contrary, not to warn a poor, blind, stupid

wretch that he is hanging over the mouth of hell, would be so inexcusable a want of charity, as would bring his blood upon our own head.

**4.** But there is no room for dispute, touching these doctrines in general, seeing our Lord gives you so plain a rule, by which you may easily and infallibly know whether they be of God: “the tree is known by its fruit: Either therefore make the tree good, and its fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt.” (<sup>4123</sup>Matthew 12:33.) Now, what fruit does the tree before us bring forth? Look and see; believe your own eyes and ears. Sinners leave their sins: The servants of the devil become the servants of God. Is this good or evil fruit; that vice loses ground, and virtue, practical religion, gains? O dispute no more! Know the tree by its fruit. Bow, and own the finger of God.

**5.** But many who own these doctrines to be of God, yet cannot be reconciled to the instruments he hath made use of. A very common exception taken against these is, and was from the beginning, that “they are so young:” Therefore, (abundance of men have readily inferred,) this work cannot be of God.

Perhaps they are not so young as you conceive. Mr. Whitefield is now upwards of thirty; my brother is thirty-seven years of age; I have lived above forty-two years; and a gentleman in Cornwall, for whom I often preach, has the merit of having lived threescore and seventeen years.

But, supposing the antecedent true, what a consequence is this! What shadow of Scripture have you to support it? Doth not God “send by whom he *will* send?” And who shall say to him, “What doest thou?” “These are too young; send elder men.” What shadow of reason? Is it not possible that a person of thirty or forty may have as true a judgment in the things of God, and as great a blessing attending his preaching, as one of fifty or fourscore?

I wish you would explain yourself a little on this head: —

*Scire velim, verbo, pretium quotus arroget annus?* <sup>f23</sup>

How old do you require a man to be, before God should have leave to speak by his mouth? O my brethren, who could have believed any serious man would once have named such an argument as this; seeing both

Scripture and reason teach, that God herein “giveth account to none of his ways!” But he worketh by whomsoever he *will* work; he showeth mercy by whom he *will* show mercy.

6. “But there are only a few young heads.” I cannot but observe here what great pains have been taken, what diligence shown, to make and to keep them few. What arts have not been used to keep back those, of the Clergy in particular, who have been clearly convinced, from time to time, that they ought to join hearts and hands in the work? On this occasion it has been accounted meritorious to “say all manner of evil of us falsely;” to promise them whatever their hearts desired, if they would refrain from these men; and, on the other hand, to threaten them with heavy things if ever they went among them more. So that how fully soever they were convinced, they could not act according to their conviction, unless they could give up at once all thought of preferment either in Church or State; nay, all hope of even a Fellowship, or poor Scholarship, in either University. Many also have been threatened, that if they went on in this way, what little they had should be taken from them. And many have, on this very account, been disowned by their dearest friends and nearest relations: So that there was no possibility the number of these laborers should ever be increased at all, unless by those who could break through all these ties, who desired nothing in the present world, who counted neither their fortunes, nor friends, nor lives, dear unto themselves, so they might only keep “a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.”

7. But what do you infer from their fewness? that, because they are few, therefore God cannot work by them? Upon what scripture do you ground this? I thought it was the same to Him, to save by many or by few. Upon what reason? Why cannot God save ten thousand souls by one man, as well as by ten thousand? How little, how inconsiderable a circumstance is number before God! Nay, is there not reason to believe that whensoever God is pleased to work a great deliverance, spiritual or temporal, he may first say, as of old, “The people are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands?” May he not purposely choose few as well as inconsiderable instruments, for the greater manifestation of his own glory? Very few, I grant, are the instruments now employed; yet a great work is wrought already. And the fewer they are by whom this large harvest hath

hitherto been gathered in, the more evident must it appear to unprejudiced minds that the work is not of man, but of God.

8. “But they are not only few, but unlearned also.” This is a grievous offense, and is by many esteemed a sufficient excuse for not acknowledging the work to be of God.

The ground of this offense is partly true. Some of those who now preach are unlearned. They neither understand the ancient languages, nor any of the branches of philosophy. And yet this objection might have been spared by many of those who have frequently made it; because they are unlearned too, though accounted otherwise. They have not themselves the very thing they require in others.

Men in general are under a great mistake with regard to what is called *the learned world*. They do not know, they cannot easily imagine, how little learning there is among them. I do not speak of abstruse learning; but of what all Divines, at least, of any note, are supposed to have, namely, the knowledge of the tongues, at least, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and of the common arts and sciences.

How few men of learning, so called, understand Hebrew; even so far as to read a plain chapter in Genesis! Nay, how few understand Greek! Make an easy experiment. Desire that grave man, who is urging this objection, only to tell you the English of the first paragraph that occurs in one of Plato’s Dialogues. I am afraid we may go farther still. How few understand Latin! Give one of them an Epistle of Tully, and see how readily he will explain it without his dictionary. If he can hobble through that, it is odds but a Georgic in Virgil, or a Satire of Persius, sets him fast.

And with regard to the arts and sciences; how few understand so much as the general principles of logic! Can one in ten of the Clergy, (O grief of heart!) or of the Masters of Arts in either University, when an argument is brought, tell you even the mood and figure wherein it is proposed; or complete an enthymeme? Perhaps you do not so much as understand the term; — supply the premiss which is wanting, in order to make it a full categorical syllogism. Can one in ten of them demonstrate a Problem or theorem in Euclid’s Elements, or define the common terms used in Metaphysics, or intelligibly explain the first principles of it? Why then

will they pretend to that learning which they are conscious to themselves they have not? nay, and ensure others who have it not, and do not pretend to it? Where are sincerity and candor fled?

It will easily be observed, that I do not depreciate learning of any kind. The knowledge of the languages is a valuable talent; so is the knowledge of the arts and sciences. Both the one and the other may be employed to the glory of God and the good of men. But yet I ask, Where hath God declared in his word, that he cannot, or will not, make use of men that have it not? Has Moses or any of the Prophets affirmed this? or our Lord, or any of his Apostles? You are sensible all these are against you: You know the Apostles themselves, all except St. Paul, were *ἀνδρες ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται*, “common, unphilosophical, unlettered men.”

**9.** “What! Then you make yourselves like the Apostles.” Because this silly objection has so often been urged, I will for once spend a few words upon it, though it does not deserve that honor. Why, must not every man, whether Clergyman or layman, be in some respects like the Apostles, or go to hell? Can any man be saved if he be not holy, like the Apostles; a follower of them, as they were of Christ? And ought not every Preacher of the gospel to be in a peculiar manner like the Apostles, both in holy tempers, in exemplariness of life, and in his indefatigable labors for the good of souls? Woe unto every ambassador of Christ, who is not like the Apostles in this! in holiness, in making full proof of his ministry, in spending and being spent for Christ! We cannot, and therefore we need not, be like them in working outward miracles; but we may, and ought, in working together with God for the salvation of men. And the same God who was always ready to help their infirmities, is ready to help ours also. He who made them “workmen that needed not to be ashamed,” will teach us also “rightly to divide the word of truth.” In this respect likewise, in respect of his “having help from God,” for the work whereunto he is called, every Preacher of the gospel is like the Apostles: Otherwise, he is of all men most miserable.

**10.** And I am bold to affirm, that these unlettered men have help from God for that great work, — the saving souls from death; seeing he hath enabled, and doth enable them still, to “turn many to righteousness.” Thus hath he “destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nought the

understanding of the prudent.” When they imagined they had effectually shut the door, and locked up every passage whereby any help could come to two or three Preachers, weak in body as well as soul, who they might reasonably believe would, humanly speaking, wear themselves out in a short time; — when they had gained their point by securing, as they supposed, all the men of learning in the nation, “He that sitteth in heaven laughed them to scorn,” and came upon them by a way they thought not of. “Out of the stones he raised up” those who should beget “children to Abraham.” We had no more foresight of this than you: Nay, we had the deepest prejudices against it; until we could not but own that God gave “wisdom from above” to these unlearned and ignorant men, so that the work of the Lord prospered in their hand, and sinners were daily converted to God.

Indeed, in the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination, in substantial, practical, experimental Divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the University, (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love,) are able to do. But, O! what manner of examination do most of those candidates go through! and what proof are the testimonials commonly brought, (as solemn as the form is wherein they run,) either of their piety or knowledge to whom are entrusted those sheep which God hath purchased with his own blood!

**11.** “But they are laymen. You seem to be sensible yourself of the strength of this objection. For as many as you have answered, I observe you have never once so much as touched on this.”

I have not. Yet it was not distrust of my cause, but tenderness to you, which occasioned my silence. I had something to advance on this head also; but I was afraid you could not bear it. I was conscious to myself that, some years since, to touch this point, was to touch the apple of my eye: And this makes me almost unwilling to speak now, lest I should shock the prejudices I cannot remove.

Suffer me, however, just to intimate to you some things which I would leave to your farther consideration: The Scribes of old, who were the ordinary Preachers among the Jews, were not Priests; they were not better

than laymen. Yea, many of them were incapable of the priesthood, being of the tribe of Simeon, not of Levi.

Hence, probably, it was that the Jews themselves never urged it as an objection to our Lord's preaching, (even those who did not acknowledge or believe that he was sent of God in an extraordinary character,) that he was no Priest after the order of Aaron: Nor, indeed, could be; seeing he was of the tribe of Judah.

Nor does it appear that any objected this to the Apostles: So far from it, that at Antioch, in Pisidia, we find the rulers of the synagogue sending unto Paul and Barnabas; strangers just come into the city, "saying, Men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."  
(~~4135~~ Acts 13:15.)

If we consider these things, we shall be the less surprised at what occurs in the eighth chapter of the Acts; "At that time there was a great persecution against the Church; and they were all scattered abroad" (that is, all the Church, all the believers in Jesus) "throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria." (Verse 1.) "Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." (Verse 4.) Now, what shadow of reason have we to say, or think, that all these were ordained before they preached?

**12.** If we come to later times: Was Mr. Calvin ordained? Was he either Priest or Deacon? And were not most of those whom it pleased God to employ in promoting the Reformation abroad, laymen also? Could that great work have been promoted at all in many places, if laymen had not preached? And yet how seldom do the very Papists urge this as an objection against the Reformation! Nay, as rigorous as they are in things of this kind, they themselves appoint, even in some of their strictest Orders, that "if any lay-brother believes himself called of God to preach as a Missionary, the Superior of the Order; being informed thereof, shall immediately send him away."

In all Protestant Churches it is still more evident that ordination is not holden a necessary pre-requisite of preaching; for in Sweden, in Germany, in Holland, and, I believe, in every Reformed Church in Europe, it is not only permitted but required, that before any one is ordained, (before he is

admitted even into Deacon's Orders, wherever the distinction between Priests and Deacons is retained,) he should publicly preach a year or more *ad probandum facultatem*. And for this practice they believe they have the authority of an express command of God: "Let these first be proved; then let them use the office of a Deacon, being found blameless." (~~5480~~ 1 Timothy 3:10.)

**13.** "In England, however, there is nothing of this kind; no layman permitted to speak in public." No! Can you be ignorant, that in an hundred churches they do it continually? In how many (particularly in the west of England) does the parish clerk read one of the Lessons? (In some he reads the whole Service of the Church, perhaps every Lord's day.) And do not other laymen constantly do the same thing, yea, in our very cathedrals? which, being under the more immediate inspection of the Bishops, should be patterns to all other churches.

Perhaps it will be said, "But this is not preaching." Yes, but it is essentially such. For what is it to preach, but *praedicare verbum Dei*; "to publish the word of God?" And this laymen do all over England; particularly under the eye of every Bishop in the nation.

Nay, is it not done in the Universities themselves? Who ordained that singing-man at Christ-Church; who is likewise utterly unqualified for the work, murdering every Lesson he reads? not even endeavoring to read it as the word of God, but rather as an old song! Such a layman as this, meddling at all with the word of God, I grant, is a scandal to the English nation.

To go a step farther: Do not the fundamental constitutions of the University of Oxford, the statutes, even as revised by Archbishop Laud, require every Bachelor of Arts, nine in ten of whom are laymen, to read three public lectures in moral philosophy, on whatever subject he chooses? My subject, I well remember, was, "the *love* of God." Now, what was this but preaching?

Nay, may not a man be a Doctor of Divinity even in Oxford, though he never was ordained at all? The instance of Dr. Atwell, (late) Rector of Exeter College, is fresh in every one's memory.

These are a few of the considerations that may readily occur to any thinking man on this head. But I do not rest the cause on these. I believe it may be defended a shorter way.

**14.** It pleased God, by two or three Ministers of the Church of England, to call many sinners to repentance; who, in several parts, were undeniably turned from a course of sin, to a course of holiness.

The Ministers of the places where this was done ought to have received those Ministers with open arms; and to have taken them who had just begun to serve God into their peculiar care; watching over them in tender love, lest they should fall back into the snare of the devil.

Instead of this, the greater part spoke of those Ministers as if the devil, not God, had sent them. Some repelled them from the Lord's table; others stirred up the people against them, representing them, even in their public discourses, as fellows not fit to live; Papists, heretics, traitors; conspirators against their King and country.

And how did they watch over the sinners lately reformed? Even as a leopard watcheth over his prey. They drove some of them also from the Lord's table; to which till now they had no desire to approach. They preached all manner of evil concerning them, openly cursing them in the name of the Lord. They turned many out of their work; persuaded others to do so too, and harassed them all manner of ways.

The event was, that some were wearied out, and so turned back to their vomit again. And then these good Pastors gloried over them, and endeavored to shake others by their example.

**15.** When the Ministers by whom God had helped them before came again to those places, great part of their work was to begin again; (if it could be begun again;) but the relapsers were often so hardened in sin, that no impression could be made upon them.

What could they do in a case of so extreme necessity, where many souls lay at stake?

No Clergyman would assist at all. The expedient that remained was, to find some one among themselves, who was upright of heart, and of sound judgment in the things of God; and to desire him to meet the rest as often

as he could, in order to confirm them, as he was able, in the ways of God, either by reading to them, or by prayer, or by exhortation.

God immediately gave a blessing hereto. In several places, by means of these plain men, not only those who had already begun to run well were hindered from drawing back to perdition; but other sinners also, from time to time, were converted from the error of their ways.

This plain account of the whole proceeding, I take to be the best defence of it. I know no scripture which forbids making use of such help, in a case of such necessity. And I praise God who has given even this help to those poor sheep, when “their own shepherds pitied them not.”

“But does not the Scripture say, ‘No man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron?’” Nor do these. The honor here mentioned is the Priesthood. But they no more take upon them to be Priests than to the Kings. They take not upon them to administer the sacraments, — an honor peculiar to the Priests of God. Only, according to their power, they exhort their brethren to continue in the grace of God.

“But for these laymen to exhort at all is a violation of all order.”

What is this order of which you speak? Will it serve instead of the knowledge and love of God? Will this order rescue those from the snare of the devil, who are now taken captive at his will? Will it keep them who are escaped a little way, from turning back into Egypt? If not, how should I answer it to God, if, rather than violate I know not what order, I should sacrifice thousands of souls thereto? I dare not do it. It is at the peril of my own soul.

Indeed, if by order were meant true Christian discipline, whereby all the living members of Christ are knit together in one, and all that are putrid and dead immediately cut off from the body; this order I reverence, for it is of God. But where is it to be found? in what diocese, in what town or parish, within England or Wales? Are you Rector of a parish? Then let us go no farther. Does this order obtain there? Nothing less. Your parishioners are a rope of sand. As few (if any) of them are alive to God; so they have no connection with each other, unless such as might be among Turks or Heathens. Neither have you any power to cut off from

that body, were it alive, the dead and putrid members. Perhaps you have no desire; but all are jumbled together without any care or concern of yours.

It is plain, then, that what order is to be found is not among you who so loudly contend for it, but among that very people whom you continually blame for their violation and contempt of it. The little flock you condemn is united together in one body, by one Spirit; so that, “if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one be honored, all rejoice with it.” Nor does any dead member long remain; but as soon as the hope of recovering it is past, it is cut off.

Now, suppose we were willing to relinquish our charge, and to give up this flock into your hands, would you observe the same order as we do now with them and the other souls under your care? You dare not; because you have respect of persons. You fear the faces of men. You cannot; because you have not overcome the world. You are not above the desire of earthly things. And it is impossible you should ever have any true order, or exercise any Christian discipline, till you are wholly crucified to the world, till you desire nothing more but God.

Consider this matter, I entreat you, a little farther. Here are thirty thousand persons <sup>f24</sup> (perhaps somewhat more) of whom I take care, watching over their souls as he that must give account. In order hereto it lies upon me, (so I judge,) at the peril of my own salvation, to know, not only their names, but their outward and inward states, their difficulties and dangers. Otherwise, how can I know either how to guide them aright, or to commend them to God in prayer? Now, if I am willing to make these over to you, will you watch over them in the same manner? Will you take the same care (or as much more as you please) of each soul as I have hitherto done? Not such *curam animarum* <sup>f25</sup> as you have taken these ten years in your own parish. Poor empty name! Has not your parish been, in fact, as much a sinecure to you as your prebend? O what an account have you to give to the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls!

**18.** There is one more excuse for denying this work of God, taken from the instruments employed therein; that is, “that they are wicked men.” And a thousand stories have been handed about to prove it.

But you may observe, their wickedness was not heard of till after they “went about doing good.” Their reputation for honesty was till then unblemished. But it was impossible it should continue so, when they were publicly employed in “testifying of the world, that its deeds were evil.” It could not be but the Scriptures should be fulfilled: “The servant is not above his Master. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household!”

Yet I cannot but remind considerate men, in how remarkable a manner the wisdom of God has for many years guarded against this pretense, with respect to my brother and me in particular. Scarce any two men in Great Britain, of our rank, have been so holden out, as it were, to all the world; especially of those who from their childhood had always loved and studiously sought retirement. And I had procured what I sought; I was quite safe, as I supposed, in a little country town, when I was required to return to Oxford, without delay, to take the charge of some young gentlemen, by Dr. Morley, the only man then in England to whom I could deny nothing. From that time both my brother and I (utterly against our will) came to be more and more observed and known, till we were more spoken of, than perhaps two so inconsiderable persons ever were before in the nation. To make us more public still, as honest madmen at least, by a strange concurrence of providences, overturning all our preceding resolutions, we were hurried away to America. However, at our return from thence, we were resolved to retire out of the world at once; being sated with noise, hurry, and fatigue, and seeking nothing but to be at rest. Indeed, for a long season, the greatest pleasure I had desired on this side eternity was,

*Tacitum sylvas inter reptare salubres,  
Quarentem quicquid dignum sapiente bonoque.* <sup>f26</sup>

And we had attained our desire. We wanted nothing. We looked for nothing more in this world when we were dragged out again, by earnest importunity, to preach at one place, and another, and another, and so carried on, we knew not how, without any design but the general one of saving souls, into a situation, which, had it been named to us at first, would have appeared far worse than death.

**19.** What a surprising apparatus of Providence was here! And what stronger demonstrations could have been given, of men's acting from a zeal for God, whether it were "according to knowledge" or no? What persons could, in the nature of things, have been (antecedently) less liable to exception, with regard to their moral character, at least, than those the all-wise God hath now employed? Indeed I cannot devise what manner of men could have been more unexceptionable on all accounts. Had God endued us with greater natural or acquired abilities, that very thing might have been turned into an objection. Had we been remarkably defective, it would have been matter of objection on the other hand. Had we been Dissenters of any kind, or even Low-Church men, (so called,) it would have been a great stumbling-block in the way of those who are zealous for the Church. And yet had we continued in the impetuosity of our High-Church zeal, neither should we have been willing to converse with Dissenters, nor they to receive any good at our hands. Some objections were kept out of the way, by our known contempt of money and preferment; and others, by that rigorous strictness of life which we exacted, not of others, but ourselves only. Insomuch, that, twelve or fourteen years ago, the censure of one who had narrowly observed us (me in particular) went no farther than this: —

*Does John beyond his strength persist to go,  
To his frail carcase literally foe?  
Careless of health, as if in haste to die,  
And lavish time to' insure eternity!*

So that, upon the whole, I see not what God could have done more in this respect which he hath not done; or what instruments he could have employed in such a work, who would have been less liable to exception.

**20.** Neither can I conceive how it was possible to do that work, the doing of which, we are still under the strongest conviction, is bound upon us at the peril of our own souls, in a less exceptionable manner. We have, by the grace of God, behaved, not only with meekness, but with all tenderness toward all men; with all the tenderness which we conceived it was possible to use, without betraying their souls. And from the very first it has been our special care, to deal tenderly with our brethren, the Clergy. We have not willingly provoked them at any time; neither any single Clergyman. We have not sought occasion to publish their faults; we have not used a

thousand occasions that offered. When we were constrained to speak something, we spake as little as we believed we could, without offending God; and that little, though in plain and strong words, yet as mildly and lovingly as we were able. And in the same course we have steadily persevered, (as well as in earnestly advising others to tread in our steps,) even though we saw that, with regard to them, by all this we profited nothing; though we knew we were still continually represented as implacable enemies to the Clergy, as railers against them, as slanderers of them, as seeking all opportunities to blacken and asperse them. When a Clergyman himself has vehemently accused me of doing this, I bless God he could not provoke me to do it. I still “kept my mouth as it were with a bridle,” and committed my cause to a higher hand.

**21.** The truth is, you impute that hatred to us, which is in your own breast. (I speak not this of all the Clergy; God forbid! But let it fall on whom it concerns.) You, it is certain, have shown the utmost hatred to us, and in every possible way; unless you were actually to beat us, (of which also we are not without precedent,) or to shoot us through the head. And if you could prevail upon others to do this, I suppose you would think you did God service. I do not speak without ground. I have heard with my own ears such sermons, (in Staffordshire particularly,) that I should not have wondered if, as soon as we came out of the church, the people had stoned me with stones. And it was a natural consequence of what that poor Minister had lately heard at the Bishop’s visitation; as it was one great cause of the miserable riots and outrages which soon followed.

It is this, my brethren, it is your own preaching, and not ours, which sets the people against you. The very same persons who are diverted with those sermons, cannot but despise you for them in their hearts; even those who on your authority believe most of the assertions which you advance. What then must they think of you, who know the greatest part of what you assert to be utterly false? They may pity and pray for you; but they can esteem you no other than false witnesses against God and your brethren.

**22.** “But what need is there,” say even some of a milder spirit, “of this preaching in fields and streets? Are there not churches enough to preach in?” No, my friend, there are not; not for us to preach in. You forget; we

are not suffered to preach there, else we should prefer them to any places whatever. “Well, there are Ministers enough without you.” *Ministers enough, and churches enough!* for what? to reclaim all the sinners within the four seas? If there were, they would all be reclaimed. But they are not reclaimed: Therefore, it is evident that there are not churches enough. And one plain reason why, notwithstanding all these churches, they are no nearer being reclaimed, is this, — they never come into a church, perhaps not once in a twelvemonth, perhaps not for many years together. Will you say, (as I have known some tender-hearted Christians,) “Then it is their own fault; let them die, and be damned?” I grant it is their own fault; and so it was my fault and yours when we went astray like sheep that were lost. Yet the Shepherd of souls sought after us, and went after us into the wilderness. And “oughtest not thou to have compassion on thy fellow servants, as he had pity on thee?” Ought not we also “to seek,” as far as in us lies, “and to save, that which is lost?”

Behold the amazing love of God to the outcasts of men! His tender condescension to their folly! They would regard nothing done in the usual way. All this was lost upon them. The ordinary preaching of the word of God, they would not even deign to hear. So the devil made sure of these careless ones; for who should pluck them out of his hand? Then God was moved to jealousy, and went out of the usual way to save the souls which he had made. Then, over and above what was ordinarily spoken in his name in all the houses of God in the land, he commanded a voice to cry in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord. The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

**23.** Consider coolly, if it was not highly expedient that something of this kind should be. How expedient, were it only on the account of those poor sinners against their own souls who, to all human appearance, were utterly inaccessible every other way! And what numbers of these are still to be found, even in or near our most populous cities! What multitudes of them were, some years since, both in Kingswood, and the Fells about Newcastle! who, week after week, spent the Lord’s day, either in the ale-house, or in idle diversions, and never troubled themselves about going to church, or to any public worship at all. Now, would you really have desired that these poor wretches should have sinned on till they dropped into hell? Surely you would not. But by what other means was it possible

they should have been plucked out of the fire? Had the Minister of the parish preached like an angel, it had profited them nothing; for they heard him not. But when one came and said, “Yonder is a man preaching on the top of the mountain,” they ran in droves to hear what he would say; and God spoke to their hearts. It is hard to conceive anything else which could have reached them. Had it not been for field-preaching, the uncommonness of which was the very circumstance that recommended it, they must have run on in the error of their way, and perished in their blood.

**24.** But suppose field-preaching to be, in a case of this kind, ever so expedient or even necessary, yet who will contest with us for this province? May we not enjoy this quiet and unmolested? Unmolested, I mean, by any competitors: For who is there among you, brethren, that is willing (examine your own hearts) even to save souls from death at this price? Would not you let a thousand souls perish, rather than you would be the instruments of rescuing them thus? I do not speak now with regard to conscience, but to the inconveniences that must accompany it. Can you sustain them, if you would? Can you bear the summer sun to beat upon your naked head? Can you suffer the wintry rain or wind, from whatever quarter it blows? Are you able to stand in the open air without any covering or defence when God casteth abroad his snow like wool, or scattereth his hoar-frost like ashes? And yet these are some of the smallest inconveniences which accompany field-preaching. Far beyond all these, are the contradiction of sinners, the scoffs both of the great vulgar and the small; contempt and reproach of every kind; often more than verbal affronts, stupid, brutal violence, sometimes to the hazard of health, or limbs, or life. Brethren, do you envy us this honor? What, I pray, would buy you to be a field-preacher? Or what, think you, could induce any man of common sense to continue therein one year, unless he had a full conviction in himself that it was the will of God concerning him?

Upon this conviction it is (were we to submit to these things on any other motive whatsoever, it would furnish you with a better proof of our distraction than any that has yet been found) that we now do, for the good of poor souls, what you cannot, will not, dare not do: And we desire not that you should. But this one thing we may reasonably desire of you, — Do not increase the difficulties, which are already so great, that, without the mighty power of God, we must sink under them. Do not assist in

trampling down a little handful of men, who, for the present, stand in the gap between ten thousand poor wretches and destruction, till you find some others to take their places.

**25.** Highly needful it is that some should do this, lest those poor souls be lost without remedy: And it should rejoice the hearts of all who desire the kingdom of God should come, that so many of them have been snatched already from the mouth of the lion, by an uncommon, though not unlawful, way. This circumstance, therefore, is no just excuse for not acknowledging the work of God; especially, if we consider, that whenever it has pleased God to work any great work upon the earth, even from the earliest times, he hath stepped more or less out of the common way; — whether to excite the attention of a greater number of people than might otherwise have regarded it; or to separate the proud and haughty of heart, from those of an humble, childlike spirit; the former of whom he foresaw, trusting in their own wisdom, would fall on that stone and be broken; while the latter, inquiring with simplicity, would soon know of the work, that it was of God.

**26.** “Nay,” say some, “but God is a God of wisdom: And it is his work to give understanding. Whereas this man is one of them, and he is a fool. You see the fruits of their preaching.” No, my friend, you do not. That is your mistake. A fool very possibly he may be. So it appears by his talking, perhaps writing too. But this is none of the fruits of our preaching. He was a fool before ever he heard us. We found and are likely to leave him so. Therefore his folly is not to be imputed to us, even if it continue to the day of his death. As we were not the cause, so we undertake not the cure, of disorders of this kind. No fair man, therefore, can excuse himself thus, from acknowledging the work of God.

Perhaps you will say, “He is not a natural fool, neither; but he is so ignorant. He knows not the first principles of religion.” It is very possible. But have patience with him, and he will know them by and by; yea, if he be in earnest to save his soul, far sooner than you can conceive. And, in the mean time, neither is this an objection of any weight. Many, when they begin to hear us, may, without any fault of ours, be utter strangers to the whole of religion. But this is no incurable disease. Yet a little while, and they may be wise unto salvation.

Is the ignorance you complain of among this people (you who object to the people more than to their teachers) of another kind? Do not they “know how in meekness to reprove or instruct those that oppose themselves?” I believe what you say: All of them do not; they have not put on gentleness and longsuffering. I wish they had: Pray for them that they may; that they may be mild and patient toward all men. But what, if they are not? Sure, you do not make this an argument that God hath not sent us! Our Lord came, and we come, “not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;” passionate sinners, (such as these whereof you complain,) as well as those of every other kind. Nor can it be expected they should be wholly delivered from their sin as soon as they begin to hear his word.

**27.** A greater stumbling-block than this is laid before you, by those that “say and do not.” Such, I take it for granted, will be among us, although we purge them out as fast as we can; persons that talk much of religion, that commend the Preachers, perhaps are diligent in hearing them; it may be, read all their books, and sing their hymns; and yet no change is wrought in their hearts. Were they of old time as lions in their houses? They are the same still. Were they (in low life) slothful or intemperate? Were they tricking or dishonest, over-reaching or oppressive? Or did they use to borrow and not pay? The Ethiopian hath not changed his skin. Were they (in high life) delicate, tender, self-indulgent? Were they nice in furniture or apparel? Were they fond of trifles, or of their own dear persons? The leopard hath not changed her spots. Yet their being with us for a time proves no more than that we have not the miraculous discernment of spirits.

Others you may find, in whom there was a real change. But it was only for a season. They are now turned back, and are two-fold more the children of hell than before. Yet neither is this any manner of proof that the former work was not of God. No, not though these apostates should, with the utmost confidence, say all manner of evil against us. I expect they should. For every other injury hath been forgiven, and will be to the end of the world. But hardly shall any one forgive the intolerable injury of almost persuading him to be a Christian. When these men, therefore, who were with us, but went out from among us, assert things that may cause your ears to tingle, if you consider either the Scripture or the nature of man it

will not stagger you at all: Much less will it excuse you for not acknowledging the work in general to be of God.

**28.** But to all this it may possibly be replied, “When you bring your credentials with you, when you prove by miracles what you assert, then we will acknowledge that God hath sent you.”

What is it you would have us prove by miracles? that the doctrines we preach are true? This is not the way to prove that. (As our first Reformers replied to those of the Church of Rome, who, you may probably remember, were continually urging them with this very demand.) We prove the doctrines we preach by Scripture and reason, and, if need be, by antiquity.

What else is it then we are to prove by miracles?

Is it,

**(1.)** That A. B. was for many years without God in the world, a common swearer, a drunkard, a Sabbath-breaker?

Or,

**(2.)** That he is not so now?

Or,

**(3.)** That he continued so till he heard us preach, and from that time was another man?

Not so. The proper way to prove these facts is by the testimony of competent witnesses; and these witnesses are ready whenever required, to give full evidence of them.

Or, would you have us prove by miracles,

**(4.)** That this was not done by our own power or holiness? that God only is able to raise the dead, those who are dead in trespasses and sins? Nay, if you “hear not Moses and the Prophets” and Apostles, on this head, neither would you believe, “though one rose from the dead.”

It is therefore utterly unreasonable and absurd to require or expect the proof of miracles, in questions of such a kind as are always decided by proofs of quite another nature.

**29.** “But you relate them yourself.” I relate just what I saw, from time to time: And this is true, that some of those circumstances seem to go beyond the ordinary course of nature. But I do not peremptorily determine, whether they were supernatural or no; much less do I rest upon them either the proof of other facts, or of the doctrines which I preach. I prove these in the ordinary way; the one by testimony, the other by Scripture and reason.

“But if you can work miracles when you please, is not this the surest way of proving them? This would put the matter out of dispute at once, and supersede all other proof.”

You seem to lie under an entire mistake, both as to the nature and use of miracles. It may reasonably be questioned whether there ever was that man living upon earth, except the man Christ Jesus, that could work miracles when he pleased. God only, when he pleased, exerted that power, and by whomsoever it pleased him.

But if a man could work miracles when he pleased, yet there is no Scripture authority, nor even example, for doing it in order to satisfy such a demand as this. I do not read that either our Lord, or any of his Apostles, wrought any miracle on such an occasion. Nay, how sharply does our Lord rebuke those who made a demand of this kind! When “certain of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee;” (observe, this was their method of answering the strong reasons whereby he had just proved the works in question to be of God!) “he answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; but there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas.” (<sup>123</sup> Matthew 12:38, 39.) “An evil and adulterous generation!” else they would not have needed such a kind of proof. Had they been willing to do his will, they would, without this, have known that the doctrine was of God.

Miracles, therefore, are quite needless in such a case. Nor are they so conclusive a proof as you imagine. If a man could and did work them in

defence of any doctrine, yet this would not supersede other proof; for there may be *τερατα ψευδους*, “lying wonders,” miracles wrought in support of falsehood. Still, therefore, his doctrine would remain to be proved from the proper topics of Scripture and reason: And these even without miracles are sufficient; but miracles without these are not. Accordingly, our Savior and all his Apostles, in the midst of their greatest miracles, never failed to prove every doctrine they taught by clear Scripture and cogent reason.

**30.** I presume, by this time you may perceive the gross absurdity of demanding miracles in the present case; seeing one of the propositions in question, (over and above our general doctrines,) viz., “That sinners are reformed,” can only be proved by testimony; and the other, “This cannot be done but by the power of God,” needs no proof, being self-evident.

“Why, I did once myself rejoice to hear,” says a grave citizen, with an air of great importance, “that so many sinners were reformed, till I found they were only turned from one wickedness to another; that they were turned from cursing or swearing, or drunkenness, into a no less damnable sin, that of schism.”

Do you know what you say? You have, I am afraid, a confused huddle of ideas in your head; and I doubt you have not capacity to clear them up yourself, nor coolness enough to receive help from others.

However, I will try. What is schism? Have you any determinate idea of it? I ask the rather, because I have found, by repeated experiments, that a common English tradesman receives no more light when he hears or reads, “This is schism,” than if he heard or read, —

*Bombalio, stridor, clangor, taratantara, murmur.*

Honest neighbor, do not be angry. Lay down your hammer, and let us talk a little on this head.

You say, we are in the damnable sin of schism, and therefore in as bad a state as adulterers or murderers.

I ask once more, What do you mean by schism? “Schism! schism! why, it is separating from the Church.” Ay, so it is. And yet every separating from the Church to which we once belonged is not schism; else you will

make all the English to be schismatics, by separating from the Church of Rome. “But we had just cause.” So doubtless we had; whereas schism is a causeless separation from the Church of Christ. So far so good. But you have many steps to take before you can make good that conclusion, that a separation from a particular national Church, such as the Church of England is, whether with sufficient cause or without, comes under the scriptural notion of schism.

However, taking this for granted will you ever in cool blood, that all who die in such a separation, that is, every one who dies a Quaker, a Baptist, an Independent, or a Presbyterian, is as infallibly damned as if he died in the act of murder or adultery? Surely you start at the thought! It makes even nature recoil. How then can you reconcile it to the love that “hopeth all things?”

**31.** But whatever state they are in, who causelessly separate from the Church of England, it affects not those of whom we are speaking; for they do not separate from it at all. You may easily be convinced of this, if you will only weigh the particulars following: —

**(1.)** A great part of these went to no church at all before they heard us preach. They no more pretended to belong to the Church of England, than to the Church of Muscovy. If, therefore, they went to no church now, they would be no farther from the Church than they were before.

**(2.)** Those who did sometimes go to church before, go three times as often now. These, therefore, do not separate from the Church. Nay, they are united to it more closely than before.

**(3.)** Those who never went to church at all before, do go now, at all opportunities. Will common sense allow any one to say, that these are separated from the Church?

**(4.)** The main question is, Are they turned from doing the works of the devil, to do the works of God? Do they now live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world? If they do, if they live according to the directions of the Church, believe her doctrines, and join in her ordinances; with what face can you say, that these men separate from the Church of England?

**32.** But in what state are they whom the Clergy and Gentry (and perhaps you for one) have successfully labored to preserve from this damnable sin of schism, whom you have kept from hearing these men, and separating from the Church?

Is not the drunkard that was, a drunkard still? Inquire of his poor wife and family. Is not the common swearer still horribly crying to God for damnation upon his soul? Is not the sinner in every other kind, exactly the same man still? Not better at least, if he be not worse, than he was ten years ago.

Now, consider,

- (1.)** Does the Church of England gain either honor, or strength, or blessing, by such wretches as these calling themselves her members? by ten thousand drunkards, or whoremongers, or common swearers? Nay, ought she not immediately to spew them out, to renounce all fellowship with them? Would she not be far better without them than with them? Let any man of reason judge.
- (2.)** Is the drunkard's calling himself of the Church of England, of any more use to him than to the Church? Will this save him from hell, if he die in his sin? Will it not rather increase his damnation?
- (3.)** Is not a drunkard of any other Church just as good as a drunkard of the Church of England? Yea, is not a drunken Papist as much in the favor of God as a drunken Protestant?
- (4.)** Is not a cursing, swearing Turk, (if there be such an one to be found) full as acceptable to God, as a cursing, swearing Christian?

Nay,

- (5.)** If there be any advantage, does it not lie on the side of the former? Is he not the less inexcusable of the two, as sinning against less light?

O why will you sink these poor souls deeper into perdition than they are sunk already? Why will you prophesy unto them, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace? Why, if you do it not yourself, (whether you cannot, or will not, God knoweth,) should you hinder us from "guiding them into the way of peace?"

**33.** Will you endeavor to excuse yourself by saying, “There are not many who are the better for your preaching; and these by and by will be as bad as ever; as such and such an one is already?”

I would to God I could set this in a just light! But I cannot: All language fails.

God begins a glorious work in our land. You set yourself against it with all your might, to prevent its beginning where it does not yet appear, and to destroy it wherever it does. In part you prevail. You keep many from hearing the word that is able to save their souls. Others who had heard it, you induce to turn back from God, and to list under the devil’s banner again. Then you make the success of your own wickedness an excuse for not acknowledging the work of God! You urge, that not many sinners were reformed; and that some of those are now as bad as ever!

Whose fault is this? Is it ours, or your own? Why have not thousands more been reformed? Yea, for every one who is now turned to God, why are there not ten thousand? Because you and your associates labored so heartily in the cause of hell; because you and they spared no pains, either to prevent or to destroy the work of God! By using all the power and wisdom you had, you hindered thousands from hearing the gospel which they might have found to be the power of God unto salvation. Their blood is upon your heads. By inventing, or countenancing, or retailing lies, some refined, some gross and palpable, you hindered others from profiting by what they did hear. You are answerable to God for these souls also. Many who began to taste the good word, and run the way of God’s commandments, you, by various methods, prevailed on to hear it no more: So they soon drew back to perdition. But know, that, for every one of these also, God will require an account of you in the day of judgment.

**34.** And yet, in spite of all the malice, and wisdom, and strength, not only of men, but of “principalities and powers,” of the “rulers of the darkness of this world,” of the “wicked spirits in high places,” there are thousands found who are turned from “dumb idols to serve the living and true God.” What a harvest then might we have seen before now, if all who say they are “on the Lord’s side,” had come, as in all reason they ought, “to the help of the Lord against the mighty!” Yea, had they only not opposed the work of God, had they only refrained from his messengers, might not the

trumpet of God have been heard long since in every corner of our land; and thousands of sinners in every county been brought to “fear God and honor the King?”

Judge of what immense service we might have been, even in this single point, both to our King and country. All who hear and regard the word we preach, “honor the King” for God’s sake. They “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s,” as well as “unto God the things that are God’s.” They have no conception of piety without loyalty; knowing “the powers that be are ordained of God.” I pray God to strengthen all that are of this mind, how many soever they be! But might there not have been at this day a hundred thousand in England, thus minded, more than are now? Yea verily, even by our ministry, had not they who should have strengthened us weakened our hands.

**35.** Surely you are not wise! What advantages do you throw away! What opportunities do you lose! Such as, another day, you may earnestly seek, and, nevertheless, may not find them. For if it please God to remove us, whom will you find to supply our place? We are in all things “your servants for Jesus’s sake;” though the more we love you, the less we are loved. Let us be employed, not in the highest, but in the meanest, and not in the easiest, but the hottest, service. Ease and plenty we leave to those that want them. Let us go on in toil, in weariness, in painfulness, in cold or hunger, so we may but testify the gospel of the grace of God. The rich, the honorable, the great, we are thoroughly willing (if it be the will of our Lord) to leave to you. Only let us alone with the poor, the vulgar, the base, the outcasts of men. Take also to yourselves the saints of the world: But suffer us “to call sinners to repentance;” even the most vile, the most ignorant, the most abandoned, the most fierce and savage of whom we can hear. To these we will go forth in the name of our Lord, desiring nothing, receiving nothing of any man, (save the bread we eat, while we are under his roof,) and let it be seen whether God hath sent us. Only let not your hands, who fear the Lord, be upon us. Why should we be stricken of you any more?

## IV.

**1.** Surely ye are without excuse, all who do not yet know the day of your visitation! the day wherein the great God, who hath been forgotten among us days without number, is arising at once to be avenged of his adversaries, and to visit and redeem his people. Are not his judgments and mercies both abroad? and still will ye not learn righteousness? Is not the Lord passing by? Doth not a great and strong wind already begin “to rend the mountains and to break in pieces the rocks before the Lord?” Is not the earthquake also felt already? and a fire hath begun to burn in his anger. Who knoweth what will be the end thereof? But at the same time, he is speaking to many in “a still, small voice.” He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, lest he be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy!

**2.** What excuse can possibly be made for those who are regardless of such a season as this? who are, at such a crisis, stupid, senseless, unapprehensive? caring for none of these things; who do not give themselves the pains to think about them, but are still easy and unconcerned? What! can there ever be a point on which it more behoves you to think; and that with the coolest and deepest attention? As long as the heaven and the earth remain, can there be anything of so vast importance, as God’s last call to a guilty land, just perishing in its iniquity?

You, with those round about you, deserved long ago to have “drank the dregs of the cup of trembling;” yea, to have been “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” But he hath not dealt with you according to your sins, neither rewarded you after your iniquities. And once more he is mixing mercy with judgment. Once more he is crying aloud, “Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” And will you not deign to give him the hearing? If you are not careful to answer him in this matter, do not still shut your eyes, and stop your ears, and harden your stubborn heart. O beware, lest God laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh!

**3.** Will you plead that you have other concerns to mind; that other business engages your thoughts? It does so indeed? But this is your

foolishness; this is the very thing that leaves you without excuse. For what business can be of equal moment: The mariner may have many concerns to mind, and many businesses to engage his thoughts; but not when the ship is sinking. In such a circumstance (it is your own) you have but one thing to think of, — save the ship and your own life together! And the higher post you are in, the more deeply intent should you be on this one point. Is this a time for diversions; for eating and drinking, and rising up to play? Keep the ship above water. Let all else go, and mind this one thing!

**4.** Perhaps you will say, “So I do: I do mind this one thing, — how to save the sinking nation. And therefore now I must think of arms and provisions. I have no time now to think of religion.” This is exactly as if the mariner should say, “Now I must think of my guns and stores. I have no time now to think of the hold.” Why, man, you must think of this, or perish. It is there the leak is sprung. Stop that, or you and all your stores will go together to the bottom of the sea.

Is not this your very case? Then, whatever you do, stop the leak; else you go to the bottom! I do not speak against your stores: They are good in their kind; and it may be well they are laid in. But all your stores will not save the sinking ship, unless you can stop the leak. Unless you can some way keep out these floods of ungodliness, that are still continually pouring in, you must soon be swallowed up in the great deep, in the abyss of God’s judgments. This, this is the destruction of the English nation. It is vice, bursting in on every side, that is just ready to sink us into slavery first, and then into the nethermost hell. “Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you?” Let him think of this. Think of this, all that love your country, or that care for your own souls. If now especially you do not think of this one thing, you have no excuse before God or man.

**5.** Little more excuse have you who are still in doubt concerning this day of your visitation. For you have all the proof that you can reasonably expect or desire, all that the nature of the thing requires. That in many places, abundance of notorious sinners are totally reformed, is declared by a thousand eye and ear witnesses both of their present and past behavior. And you are sensible, the proof of such a point as this must, in the nature of things, rest upon testimony. And that God alone is able to work such

are formation, you know all the Scriptures testify. What would you have more? What pretense can you have for doubting any longer? You have not the least room to expect or desire any other or any stronger evidence.

I trust you are not of those who fortify themselves against conviction; who are resolved they will never believe this. They ask, “Who are these men?” We tell them plainly; but they credit us not. Another and another of their own friends is convinced, and tells them the same thing. But their answer is ready, “Are you turned Methodist too?” So their testimony likewise goes for nothing. Now, how is it possible these should ever be convinced? for they will believe none but those who speak on one side.

**6.** Do you delay fixing your judgment till you see a work of God, without any stumbling-block attending it? That never was yet, nor ever will. “It must needs be that offenses will come.” And scarce ever was there such a work of God before, with so few as have attended this.

When the Reformation began, what mountainous offenses lay in the way of even the sincere members of the Church of Rome! They saw such failings in those great men, Luther and Calvin! Their vehement tenaciousness of their own opinions; their bitterness toward all who differed from them; their impatience of contradiction, and utter want of forbearance, even with their own brethren.

But the grand stumbling-block of all was their open, avowed separation from the Church; their rejecting so many of the doctrines and practices, which the others accounted the most sacred; and their continual invectives against the Church they separated from, so much sharper than Michael’s reproof of Satan. Were there fewer stumbling-blocks attending the Reformation in England? Surely no: For what was Henry the Eighth? Consider either his character, his motives to the work, or his manner of pursuing it! And even King Edward’s ministry we cannot clear of persecuting in their turns, yea, and burning heretics. The main stumbling-block also still remained, viz., open separation from the Church.

**7.** Full as many were the offenses that lay in the way of even the sincere members of the Church of England, when the people called Quakers first professed that they were sent of God to reform the land. Whether they were or no is beside our question; it suffices for the present purpose to

observe, that over and above their open, avowed, total separation from the Church, and their vehement invectives against many of her doctrines, and the whole frame of her discipline, they spent their main strength in disputing about opinions and externals, rather than in preaching faith, mercy, and the love of God.

In these respects the case was nearly the same when the Baptists first appeared in England. They immediately commenced a warm dispute, not concerning the vitals of Christianity, but concerning the manner and time of administering one of the external ordinances of it. And as their opinion hereof totally differed from that of all the other members of the Church of England, so they soon openly declared their separation from it, not without sharp censures of those that continued therein.

**8.** The same occasion of offense was, in a smaller degree, given by the Presbyterians and Independents; for they also spent great part of their time and strength in opposing the commonly-received opinions concerning some of the circumstantialities of religion; and, for the sake of these, separated from the Church.

But I do not include that venerable man, Mr. Philip Henry, nor any that were of his spirit, in this number. I know they abhorred contending about externals. Neither did they separate themselves from the Church. They continued therein till they were driven out, whether they would or no. I cannot but tenderly sympathize with these; and the more, because this is in part our own case. Warm men spare no pains, at this very day, to drive us out of the Church. They cry out to the people, wherever one of us comes, “A mad dog, a mad dog!” if haply we might fly for our lives, as many have done before us. And sure it is, we should have complied with their desire, we should merely for peace and quietness have left the Church long before now, but that we could not in conscience do it. And it is on this single motive, it is for conscience’ sake, that we still continue therein; and shall continue, (God being our helper,) unless they by violence thrust us out.

**9.** But to return: What are the stumbling-blocks in the present case, compared to those in any of the preceding?

We do not dispute concerning any of the externals or circumstantial of religion. There is no room; for we agree with you therein. We approve of, and adhere to, them all; all that we learned together when we were children, in our Catechism and Common-Prayer Book. We were born and bred up in your own Church, and desire to die therein. We always were, and are now, zealous for the Church; only not with a blind, angry zeal. We hold, and ever have done, the same opinions which you and we received from our forefathers. But we do not lay the main stress of our religion on any opinions, right or wrong; neither do we ever begin, or willingly join in, any dispute concerning them. The weight of all religion, we apprehend, rests on holiness of heart and life. And consequently, wherever we come, we press this with all our might. How wide then is the difference between our case and the case of any of those that are above mentioned! They avowedly separated from the Church: We utterly disavow any such design. They severely, and almost continually, inveighed against the doctrines and discipline of the Church they left: We approve both the doctrines and discipline of our Church, and inveigh only against ungodliness and unrighteousness. They spent great part of their time and strength in contending about externals and circumstantial: We agree with you in both; so that having no room to spend any time in such vain contention, we have our desire of spending and being spent, in promoting plain, practical religion. How many stumbling-blocks are removed out of your way! Why do not you acknowledge the work of God?

**10.** If you say, “Because you hold opinions which I cannot believe are true:” I answer, Believe them true or false; I will not quarrel with you about any opinion. Only see that your heart be right toward God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ; that you love your neighbor, and walk as your Master walked; and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions: I am weary to hear them. My soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion; give me an humble, gentle lover of God and man; a man full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love. Let my soul be with these Christians, wheresoever they are, and whatsoever opinion they are of. “Whosoever” thus “doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

**11.** Inexcusably infatuated must you be, if you can even doubt whether the propagation of this religion be of God! Only more inexcusable are those unhappy men who oppose, contradict, and blaspheme it.

How long will you stop your ears against Him that still crieth, “Why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks;” for a man to “contend with his Maker.” How long will you despise the well-known advice of a great and learned man? — “Refrain from these men, and let them alone. If this work be of man, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.” And why should you “be found even to fight against God?” If a man fight with God, shall he prevail? “Canst thou thunder with a voice like him?” Make haste! Fall down! Humble thyself before him, lest he put forth his hand, and thou perish!

**12.** How long will you fight under the banner of the great enemy of God and man? You are now in his service; you are “taking part with the devil” against God. Even supposing there were no other proof, this would undeniably appear from the goodly company among whom you are enlisted, and who war one and the same warfare. I have heard some affirm, that the most bitter enemies to the present work of God were Pharisees. They meant, men who had the form of godliness, but denied the power of it. But I cannot say so. The sharpest adversaries thereof whom I have hitherto known (unless one might except a few honorable men whom I may be excused from naming) were the scum of Cornwall, the rabble of Bilston and Darlaston, the wild beasts of Walsal, and the turnkeys of Newgate.

**13.** Might not the sight of these troops show any reasonable man to what General they belonged; as well as the weapons they never fail to use? — the most horrid oaths and execrations, and lawless violence, carrying away as a flood whatsoever it is which stands before it; having no eyes, nor ears, no regard to the loudest cries of reason, justice, or humanity. Can you join heart or hands with these any longer? with such an infamous, scandalous rabble-rout, roaring and raging as if they were just broke loose, with their captain Apollyon, from the bottomless pit? Does it not rather concern you, and that in the highest degree, as well as every friend to his King and country, every lover of peace, justice, and mercy, immediately to join and

stop any such godless crew, as they would join to stop a fire just beginning to spread, or an inundation of the sea?

**14.** If, on the contrary, you join with that godless crew, and strengthen their hands in their wickedness, must not you, in all reason, be accounted (like them) a public enemy of mankind? And indeed such must every one appear, in the eye of unprejudiced reason, who opposes, directly or indirectly, the reformation of mankind. By reformation, I mean the bringing them back (not to this or that system of opinions, or this or that set of rites and ceremonies, how decent and significant soever; but) to the calm love of God and one another, to an uniform practice of justice, mercy, and truth. With what color can you lay any claim to humanity, to benevolence, to public spirit, if you can once open your mouth, or stir one finger, against such a reformation as this?

It is a poor excuse to say, “O, but the people are brought into several erroneous opinions!” It matters not a straw, whether they are or no; (I speak of such opinions as do not touch the foundation;) it is scarce worth while to spend ten words about it. Whether they embrace this religious opinion or that, is no more concern to me, than whether they embrace this or that system of astronomy. Are they brought to holy tempers and holy lives? This is mine, and should be your, inquiry; since on this, both social and personal happiness depend, happiness temporal and eternal. Are they brought to the love of God and the love of their neighbor? Pure religion and undefiled is this. How long then will you “darken counsel by words without knowledge?” The plain religion now propagated is *Love*. And can you oppose this without being an enemy to mankind?

**15.** No, nor without being an enemy to your King and country; especially at such a time as this. For, however men of no thought may not see or regard it, or hectoring cowards may brave it out, it is evident to every man of calm reflection, that our nation stands on the very brink of destruction. And why are we thus, but because “the cry of our wickedness is gone up to heaven?” because we have so exceedingly, abundantly, beyond measure, “corrupted our ways before the Lord?” and because to all our other abominations we have added the open fighting against God; the not only rejecting, but even denying, yea, blaspheming his last offers of mercy; the hindering others who were desirous to close therewith; the despitely

using his messengers, and the variously troubling and oppressing those who did accept of his grace, break off their sins, and turn to him with their whole heart.

**16.** I cannot but believe, it is chiefly on this account that God hath now “a controversy with our land.” And must not any considerate man be inclined to form the same judgment, if he reviews the state of public affairs for only a few year a last past? I will not enter into particulars; but, in general, can you possibly help observing, that, whenever there has been any thing like a public attempt to suppress this new sect, (for so it was artfully represented,) another and another public trouble arose? This has been repeated so often, that it is surprising any man of sense can avoid taking notice of it. May we “turn” at length “to Him that smiteth us, hearing the rod and Him that appointeth it!” May we “humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God,” before the great deep swallow us up!

**17.** Just now, viz., on the 4th of this instant December, the Reverend Mr. Henry Wickham, one of His Majesty’s Justices of Peace for the West-riding of Yorkshire, writes an order —

*To the Constable of Keighley*, commanding him, “to convey the body of Jonathan Reeves” (whose real crime is, the calling sinners to repentance) “to His Majesty’s gaol and castle of York; suspected,” said the precept, “of being a spy among us, and a dangerous man to the person and government of His Majesty King George.”

God avert the omen! I fear this is no presage either of the repentance or deliverance of our poor nation!

**18.** If we will not turn and repent, if we will harden our hearts, and acknowledge neither his judgments nor mercies; what remains, but the fulfilling of that dreadful word, which God spake by the Prophet Ezekiel: “Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch forth my hand upon it, and break the staff of the bread thereof. — Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls. Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land: Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood: — Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver

neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.” (~~2443~~14:13, 14, 17, 19, 20.)

“Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant, that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters. — And ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem. — And ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord God.” (Verses 22, 23.)

**LONDON**, December 18, 1745.

A PLAIN ACCOUNT  
OF  
THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS:  
IN A LETTER TO THE  
REVEREND MR. PERRONET,  
VICAR OF SHOREHAM, IN KENT.

*Written in the year 1748.*

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

**1.** SOME time since, you desired an account of the whole economy of the people commonly called *Methodists*, And you received a true, (as far as it went,) but not a full, account. To supply what I think was wanting in that, I send you this account, that you may know, not only their practice on every head, but likewise the reasons whereon it is grounded, the occasion of every step they have taken, and the advantages reaped thereby.

**2.** But I must premise, that as they had not the least expectation, at first, of any thing like what has since followed, so they had no previous design or plan at all; but every thing arose just as the occasion offered. They saw or felt some impending or pressing evil, or some good end necessary to be pursued. And many times they fell unawares on the very thing which secured the good, or removed the evil. At other times, they consulted on the most probable means, following only common sense and Scripture: Though they generally found, in looking back, something in Christian antiquity likewise, very nearly parallel thereto.

## I.

**1.** About ten years ago, my brother and I were desired to preach in many parts of London. We had no view therein, but, so far as we were able, (and we knew God could work by whomsoever it pleased him,) to convince those who would hear what true Christianity was, and to persuade them to embrace it.

**2.** The points we chiefly insisted upon were four:

**First**, that orthodoxy, or right opinions, is, at best, but a very slender part of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part of it at all; that neither does religion consist in negatives, in bare harmlessness of any kind; nor merely in externals, in doing good, or using the means of grace, in works of piety (so called) or of charity; that it is nothing short of, or different from, “the mind that was in Christ;” the image of God stamped upon the heart; inward righteousness, attended with the peace of God; and “joy in the Holy Ghost.”

**Secondly**, that the only way under heaven to this religion is to “repent and believe the gospel;” or, (as the Apostle words it,) “repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**Thirdly**, that by this faith, “he that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, is justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ.” And,

**Lastly**, that “being justified by faith,” we taste of the heaven to which we are going; we are holy and happy; we tread down sin and fear, and “sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.”

**3.** Many of those who heard this began to cry out that we brought “strange things to their ears;” that this was doctrine which they never heard before, or at least never regarded. They “searched the Scriptures, whether these things were so,” and acknowledged “the truth as it is in Jesus.” Their hearts also were influenced as well as their understandings, and they determined to follow “Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

**4.** Immediately they were surrounded with difficulties; — all the world rose up against them; neighbors, strangers, acquaintance, relations, friends,

began to cry out amain, “Be not righteous overmuch; why shouldest thou destroy thyself?” Let not “much religion make thee mad.”

**5.** One, and another, and another came to us, asking, what they should do, being distressed on every side; as every one strove to weaken, and none to strengthen, their hands in God. We advised them, “Strengthen you one another. Talk together as often as you can. And pray earnestly with and for one another, that you may ‘endure to the end, and be saved.’” Against this advice we presumed there could be no objection; as being grounded on the plainest reason, and on so many scriptures both of the Old Testament and New, that it would be tedious to recite them.

**6.** They said, “But we want you likewise to talk with us often, to direct and quicken us in our way, to give us the advices which you well know we need, and to pray with us, as well as for us.” I asked, Which of you desire this? Let me know your names and places of abode. They did so. But I soon found they were too many for me to talk with severally so often as they wanted it. So I told them, “If you will all of you come together every Thursday, in the evening, I will gladly spend some time with you in prayer and give you the best advice I can.”

**7.** Thus arose, without any previous design on either side what was afterwards called *a Society*; a very innocent name, and very common in London, for any number of people associating themselves together. The thing proposed in their associating themselves together was obvious to every one. They wanted to “flee from the wrath to come,” and to assist each other in so doing. They therefore united themselves “in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they might help each other to work out their salvation.”

**8.** There is one only condition previously required in those who desire admission into this society, — “a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.”<sup>f27</sup>

They now likewise agreed, that as many of them as had an opportunity would meet together every Friday, and spend the dinner hour in crying to God, both for each other, and for all mankind.

**9.** It quickly appeared, that their thus uniting together answered the end proposed therein. In a few months, the far greater part of those who had

begun to “fear God, and work righteousness,” but were not united together, grew faint in their minds, and fell back into what they were before. Meanwhile the far greater part of those who were thus united together continued “striving to enter in at the strait gate,” and to “lay hold on eternal life.”

**10.** Upon reflection, I could not but observe, This is the very thing which was from the beginning of Christianity. In the earliest times, those whom God had sent forth “preached the gospel to every creature.” And the **οἱ ακροαται**, “the body of hearers,” were mostly either Jews or Heathens. But as soon as any of these were so convinced of the truth, as to forsake sin and seek the gospel salvation, they immediately joined them together, took an account of their names, advised them to watch over each other, and met these **κατηχουμενοι**, “catechumens,” (as they were then called,) apart from the great congregation, that they might instruct, rebuke, exhort, and pray with them, and for them, according to their several necessities.

**11.** But it was not long before an objection was made to this, which had not once entered into my thought: — “Is not this making a schism? Is not the joining these people together, gathering Churches out of Churches?”

It was easily answered, If you mean only gathering people out of buildings called churches, it is. But if you mean, dividing Christians from Christians, and so destroying Christian fellowship, it is not. For,

**(1.)** These were not Christians before they were thus joined. Most of them were barefaced Heathens.

**(2.)** Neither are they Christians, from whom you suppose them to be divided. You will not look me in the face and say they are. What! drunken Christians! cursing and swearing Christians! lying Christians! cheating Christians! If these are Christians at all, they are devil Christians, as the poor Malabarians term them.

**(3.)** Neither are they divided any more than they were before, even from these wretched devil Christians. They are as ready as ever to assist them, and to perform every office of real kindness towards them.

**(4.)** If it be said, “But there are some true Christians in the parish, and you destroy the Christian fellowship between these and them; “I answer, That which never existed, cannot be destroyed. But the fellowship you speak of never existed. Therefore it cannot be destroyed. Which of those true Christians had any such fellowship with these? Who watched over them in love? Who marked their growth in grace? Who advised and exhorted them from time to time? Who prayed with them and for them, as they had need? This, and this alone, is Christian fellowship:

But, alas! where is it to be found? Look east or west, north or south; name what parish you please: Is this Christian fellowship there? Rather, are not the bulk of the parishioners a mere rope of sand? What Christian connection is there between them? What intercourse in spiritual things? What watching over each other’s souls? What bearing of one another’s burdens? What a mere jest is it then, to talk so gravely of destroying what never was! The real truth is just the reverse of this: We introduce Christian fellowship where it was utterly destroyed. And the fruits of it have been peace, joy, love, and zeal for every good word and work.

## II.

**1.** But as much as we endeavored to watch over each other, we soon found some who did not live the gospel. I do not know that any hypocrites were crept in; for indeed there was no temptation: But several grew cold, and gave way to the sins which had long easily beset them. We quickly perceived there were many ill consequences of suffering these to remain among us. It was dangerous to others; inasmuch as all sin is of an infectious nature. It brought such a scandal on their brethren as exposed them to what was not properly the reproach of Christ. It laid a stumbling-block in the way of others, and caused the truth to be evil spoken of.

**2.** We groaned under these inconveniences long, before a remedy could be found. The people were scattered so wide in all parts of the town, from Wapping to Westminster, that I could not easily see what the behavior of

each person in his own neighborhood was: So that several disorderly walkers did much hurt before I was apprised of it.

**3.** At length, while we were thinking of quite another thing, we struck upon a method for which we have cause to bless God ever since. I was talking with several of the society in Bristol concerning the means of paying the debts there, when one stood up and said, "Let every member of the society give a penny a week till all are paid." Another answered, "But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it." "Then," said he, "put eleven of the poorest with me; and if they can give anything, well: I will call on them weekly; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbors weekly; receive what they give, and make up what is wanting." It was done. In a while, some of these informed me, they found such and such an one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, "This is the thing; the very thing we have wanted so long." I called together all the Leaders of the classes, (so we used to term them and their companies,) and desired, that each would make a particular inquiry into the behavior of those whom he saw weekly. They did so. Many disorderly walkers were detected. Some turned from the evil of their ways. Some were put away from us. Many saw it with fear, and rejoiced unto God with reverence.

**4.** As soon as possible, the same method was used in London and all other places. Evil men were detected, and reproved. They were born with for a season. If they forsook their sins, we received them gladly; if they obstinately persisted therein, it was openly declared that they were not of us. The rest mourned and prayed for them, and yet rejoiced, that, as far as in us lay, the scandal was rolled away from the society.

**5.** It is the business of a Leader,

**(1.)** To see each person in his class, once a week at the least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; to receive what they are willing to give, toward the relief of the poor.

**(2.)** To meet the Minister and the Stewards of the society, in order to inform the Minister of any that are sick, or of any that are disorderly

and will not be reproved; to pay to the Stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding.

**6.** At first they visited each person at his own house; but this was soon found not so expedient. And that on many accounts:

**(1.)** It took up more time than most of the Leaders had to spare.

**(2.)** Many persons lived with masters, mistresses, or relations, who would not suffer them to be thus visited.

**(3.)** At the houses of those who were not so averse, they often had no opportunity of speaking to them but in company. And this did not at all answer the end proposed, — of exhorting, comforting, or reproving.

**(4.)** It frequently happened that one affirmed what another denied. And this could not be cleared up without seeing them together.

**(5.)** Little misunderstandings and quarrels of various kinds frequently arose among relations or neighbors; effectually to remove which, it was needful to see them all face to face. Upon all these considerations it was agreed, that those of each class should meet all together.

And by this means, a more full inquiry was made into the behavior of every person. Those who could not be visited at home, or no otherwise than in company, had the same advantage with others. Advice or reproof was given as need required, quarrels made up, misunderstandings removed: And after an hour or two spent in this labor of love, they concluded with prayer and thanksgiving.

**7.** It can scarce be conceived what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to “bear one another’s burdens,” and naturally to “care for each other.” As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for, each other. And “speaking the truth in love, they grew up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplied, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, increased unto the edifying itself in love.”

**8.** But notwithstanding all these advantages, many were at first extremely averse to meeting thus. Some, viewing it in a wrong point of light, not as a privilege, (indeed an invaluable one,) but rather a restraint, disliked it on that account, because they did not love to be restrained in anything. Some were ashamed to speak before company. Others honestly said, “I do not know why; but I do not like it.”

**9.** Some objected, “There were no such meetings when I came into the society first: And why should there now? I do not understand these things, and this changing one thing after another continually.” It was easily answered: It is pity but they had been at first. But we knew not then either the need or the benefit of them. Why we use them, you will readily understand, if you read over the rules of the society. That with regard to these little prudential helps we are continually changing one thing after another, is not a weakness or fault, as you imagine, but a peculiar advantage which we enjoy. By this means we declare them all to be merely prudential, not essential, not of divine institution. We prevent, so far as in us lies, their growing formal or dead. We are always open to instruction; willing to be wiser everyday than we were before, and to change whatever we can change for the better.

**10.** Another objection was, “There is no scripture for this, for classes and I know not what.” I answer,

**(1.)** There is no scripture against it. You cannot show one text that forbids them.

**(2.)** There is much scripture for it, even all those texts which enjoin the substance of those various duties whereof this is only an indifferent circumstance, to be determined by reason and experience.

**(3.)** You seem not to have observed, that the Scripture, in most points, gives only general rules; and leaves the particular circumstances to be adjusted by the common sense of mankind. The Scripture, for instance, gives that general rule, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” But common sense is to determine, on particular occasions, what order and decency require.

So, in another instance, the Scripture lays it down as a general, standing direction: “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory

of God.” But it is common prudence which is to make the application of this, in a thousand particular cases.

**11.** “But these,” said another, “are all man’s inventions.” This is but the same objection in another form. And the same answer will suffice for any reasonable person. These are man’s inventions. And what then? That is, they are methods which men have found, by reason and common sense, for the more effectually applying several Scripture rules, couched in general terms, to particular occasions.

**12.** They spoke far more plausibly than these, who said, “The thing is well enough in itself. But the Leaders are insufficient for the work: They have neither gifts nor graces for such an employment.” I answer,

(1.) Yet such Leaders as they are, it is plain God has blessed their labor.

(2.) If any of these is remarkably wanting in gifts or grace, he is soon taken notice of and removed.

(3.) If you know any such, tell it to me, not to others, and I will endeavor to exchange him for a better.

(4.) It may be hoped they will all be better than they are, both by experience and observation, and by the advices given them by the Minister every Tuesday night, and the prayers (then in particular) offered up for them.

### III.

**1.** About this time, I was informed that several persons in Kingswood frequently met together at the school; and, when they could spare the time, spent the greater part of the night in prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving. Some advised me to put an end to this; but, upon weighing the thing thoroughly, and comparing it with the practice of the ancient Christians, I could see no cause to forbid it. Rather, I believed it might be made of more general use. So I sent them word, I designed to watch with them on the Friday nearest the full moon, that we might have light thither and back again. I gave public notice of this the Sunday before, and, withal,

that I intended to preach; desiring they, and they only, would meet me there, who could do it without prejudice to their business or families. On Friday abundance of people came. I began preaching between eight and nine; and we continued till a little beyond the noon of night, singing, praying, and praising God.

**2.** This we have continued to do once a month ever since, in Bristol, London, and Newcastle, as well as Kingswood; and exceeding great are the blessings we have found therein: It has generally been an extremely solemn season; when the word of God sunk deep into the heart, even of those who till then knew him not. If it be said, “This was only owing to the novelty of the thing, (the circumstance which still draws such multitudes together at those seasons,) or perhaps to the awful silence of the night:” I am not careful to answer in this matter. Be it so: However, the impression then made on many souls has never since been effaced. Now, allowing that God did make use either of the novelty or any other indifferent circumstance, in order to bring sinners to repentance, yet they are brought. And herein let us rejoice together.

**3.** Nay, may I not put the case farther yet? If I can probably conjecture, that, either by the novelty of this ancient custom, or by any other indifferent circumstance, it is in my power to “save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins,” am I clear before God if I do it not, if I do not snatch that brand out of the burning?

#### IV.

**1.** As the society increased, I found it required still greater care to separate the precious from the vile. In order to this, I determined, at least once in three months, to talk with every member myself, and to inquire at their own mouths, as well as of their Leaders and neighbors, whether they grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. At these seasons I likewise particularly inquire whether there be any misunderstanding or difference among them; that every hindrance of peace and brotherly love may be taken out of the way.

**2.** To each of those of whose seriousness and good conversation I found no reason to doubt, I gave a testimony under my own hand, by writing

their name on a ticket prepared for that purpose; every ticket implying as strong a recommendation of the person As whom it was given as if I had wrote at length, “I believe the bearer hereof to be one that fears God and works righteousness.”

3. Those who bore these tickets, (these *συμβολα* or *tesserae*, as the ancients termed them, being of just the same force with the *επιστολαι συστατικαι*, *commendatory letters* mentioned by the Apostle,) wherever they came, were acknowledged by their brethren, and received with all cheerfulness. These were likewise of use in other respects. By these it was easily distinguished, when the society were to meet apart, who were members of it, and who not. These also supplied us with a quiet and inoffensive method of removing any disorderly member. He has no new ticket at the quarterly visitation; (for so often the tickets are changed;) and hereby it is immediately known that he is no longer of the community.

## V.

The thing which I was greatly afraid of all this time, and which I resolved to use every possible method of preventing, was, a narrowness of spirit, a party zeal, a being straitened in our own bowels; that miserable bigotry which makes many so unready to believe that there is any work of God but among themselves. I thought it might be a help against this, frequently to read, to all who were willing to hear, the accounts I received from time to time of the work which God is carrying on in the earth, both in our own and other countries not among us alone, but among those of various opinions and denominations. For this I allotted one evening in every month; and I find no cause to repent my labor. It is generally a time of strong consolation to those who love God, and all mankind for his sake; as well as of breaking down the partition-walls which either the craft of the devil or the folly of men has built up; and of encouraging every child of God to say, (O when shall it once be!) “Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

## VI.

**1.** By the blessing of God upon their endeavors to help one another, many found the pearl of great price. Being justified by faith, they had “peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” These felt a more tender affection than before, to those who were partakers of like precious faith; and hence arose such a confidence in each other, that they poured out their souls into each other’s bosom. Indeed they had great need so to do; for the war was not over, as they had supposed; but they had still to wrestle both with flesh and blood, and with principalities and powers: So that temptations were on every side; and often temptations of such a kind, as they knew not how to speak in a class; in which persons of every sort, young and old, men and women, met together.

**2.** These, therefore, wanted some means of closer union; they wanted to pour out their hearts without reserve, particularly with regard to the sin which did still easily beset them, and the temptations which were most apt to prevail over them. And they were the more desirous of this, when they observed it was the express advice of an inspired writer: “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.”

**3.** In compliance with their desire, I divided them into smaller companies; putting the married or single men, and married or single women, together. The chief rules of these bands (that is, little companies; so that old English word signifies) run thus: —

“In order to ‘confess our faults one to another,’ and pray one for another that we may be healed, we intend,

**(1.)** To meet once a week, at the least.

**(2.)** To come punctually at the hour appointed.

**(3.)** To begin with singing or prayer.

**(4.)** To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our soul, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting.

(5.) To desire some person among us (thence called a Leader) to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations.”

4. That their design in meeting might be the more effectually answered, I desired all the men-bands to meet me together every Wednesday evening, and the women on Sunday, that they might receive such particular instructions and exhortations as, from time to time, might appear to be most needful for them; that such prayers might be offered up to God, as their necessities should require; and praise returned to the Giver of every good gift, for whatever mercies they had received.

5. In order to increase in them a grateful sense of all his mercies, I desired that, one evening in a quarter, all the men in band, on a second, all the women, would meet; and on a third, both men and women together; that we might together “eat bread,” as the ancient Christians did, “with gladness and singleness of heart.” At these love-feasts (so we termed them, retaining the name, as well as the thing, which was in use from the beginning) our food is only a little plain cake and water. But we seldom return from them without being fed, not only with the “meat which perisheth,” but with “that which endureth to everlasting life.”

6. Great and many are the advantages which have ever since flowed from this closer union of the believers with each other. They prayed for one another, that they might be healed of the faults they had confessed; and it was so. The chains were broken, the hands were burst in sunder, and sin had no more dominion over them. Many were delivered from the temptations out of which, till they, they found no way to escape. They were built up in our most holy faith. They rejoiced in the Lord more abundantly. They were strengthened in love, and more effectually provoked to abound in every good work.

7. But it was soon objected to the bands, (as to the classes before,) “These were not at first. There is no Scripture for them. These are man’s works, man’s building, man’s invention.” I reply, as before, these are also prudential helps, grounded on reason and experience, in order to apply the general rules given in Scripture according to particular circumstances.

**8.** An objection much more boldly and frequently urged, is, that “all these bands are mere Popery.” I hope I need not pass a harder censure on those (most of them at least) who affirm this, than that they talk of they know not what; they betray in themselves the most gross and shameful ignorance. Do not they yet know, that the only Popish confession is, the confession made by a single person to a Priest? — and this itself is in nowise condemned by our Church; nay, she recommends it in some cases. Whereas, that we practice is, the confession of several persons conjointly, not to a Priest, but to each other. Consequently, it has no analogy at all to Popish confession. But the truth is, this is a stale objection, which many people make against anything they do not like. It is all Popery out of hand.

## VII.

**1.** And yet while most of these who were thus intimately joined together, went on daily from faith to faith; some fell from the faith, either all at once, by falling into known, wilful sin; or gradually, and almost insensibly, by giving way in what they called little things; by sins of omission, by yielding to heart-sins, or by not watching unto prayer. The exhortations and prayers used among the believers did no longer profit these. They wanted advice and instructions suited to their case; which as soon as I observed, I separated them from the rest, and desired them to meet me apart on Saturday evenings.

**2.** At this hour, all the hymns, exhortations, and prayers are adapted to their circumstances; being wholly suited to those who *did* see God, but have now lost sight of the light of his countenance; and who mourn after him, and refuse to be comforted till they know he has healed their backsliding.

**3.** By applying both the threats and promises of God to these real, not nominal, penitents, and by crying to God in their behalf, we endeavored to bring them back to the great “Shepherd and Bishop of their souls;” not by any of the fopperies of the Roman Church, although, in some measure, countenanced by antiquity. In prescribing hair-shirts, and bodily austerities, we durst not follow even the ancient Church; although we had

unawares, both in dividing **οι πιστοι**, the believers, from the rest of the society, and in separating the penitents from them, and appointing a peculiar service for them.

## VIII.

**1.** Many of these soon recovered the ground they had lost. Yea, they rose higher than before; being more watchful than ever, and more meek and lowly, as well as stronger in the faith that worketh by love. They now outran the greater part of their brethren, continually walking in the light of God, and having fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

**2.** I saw it might be useful to give some advices to all those who continued in the light of God's countenance, which the rest of their brethren did not want, and probably could not receive. So I desired a small number of such as appeared to be in this state, to spend an hour with me every Monday morning. My design was, not only to direct them how to press after perfection; to exercise their every grace, and improve every talent they had received; and to incite them to love one another more, and to watch more carefully over each other; but also to have a select company, to whom I might unbosom myself on all occasions, without reserve; and whom I could propose to all their brethren as a pattern of love, of holiness, and of good works.

**3.** They had no need of being incumbered with many rules; having the best rule of all in their hearts. No peculiar directions were therefore given to them, excepting only these three: —

**First.** Let nothing spoken in this society be spoken again. Hereby we had the more full confidence in each other.

**Secondly.** Every member agrees to submit to his Minister in all indifferent things.

**Thirdly.** Every member will bring, once a week, all he can spare toward a common stock.

**4.** Every one here has an equal liberty of speaking, there being none greater or less than another. I could say freely to these, when they were met together, “Ye may all prophesy one by one,” (taking that word in its lowest sense,) “that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” And I often found the advantage of such a free conversation, and that “in the multitude of counselors there is safety.” Any who is inclined so to do is likewise encouraged to pour out his soul to God. And here especially we have found, that “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

## IX.

**1.** This is the plainest and clearest account I can give of the people commonly called *Methodists*. It remains only to give you a short account of those who serve their brethren in love. These are Leaders of classes and bands, (spoken of before,) Assistants, Stewards, Visitors of the sick, and Schoolmasters.

**2.** In the third part of the “Appeal,” I have mentioned how we were led to accept of Lay-Assistants. Their office is, in the absence of the Minister,

(1.) To expound every morning and evening.

(2.) To meet the united society, the bands, the select society, and the penitents, once a week.

(3.) To visit the classes once a quarter.

(4.) To hear and decide all differences.

(5.) To put the disorderly back on trial, and to receive on trial for the bands or society.

(6.) To see that the Stewards, the Leaders, and the Schoolmasters faithfully discharge their several offices.

(7.) To meet the Leaders of the bands and classes weekly, and the Stewards, and to overlook their accounts.

## X.

**1.** But, long before this, I felt the weight of a far different care, namely, care of temporal things. The quarterly subscriptions amounted, at a mean computation, to above three hundred pounds a year. This was to be laid out, partly in repairs, partly in other necessary expenses, and partly in paying debts. The weekly contributions fell little short of eight pounds a week; which was to be distributed as every one had need. And I was expected to take thought for all these things: But it was a burden I was not able to bear; so I chose out first one, then four, and after a time, seven, as prudent men as I knew, and desired them to take charge of these things upon themselves, that I might have no incumbrance of this kind.

**2.** The business of these Stewards is,

To manage the temporal things of the society. To receive the subscriptions and contributions. To expend what is needful from time to time. To send relief to the poor. To keep an exact account of all receipts and expenses. To inform the Minister if any of the rules of the society are not punctually observed. To tell the Preachers in love, if they think anything amiss, either in their doctrine or life.

**3.** The rules of the Stewards are,

- (1.)** Be frugal. Save everything that can be saved honestly.
- (2.)** Spend no more than you receive. Contract no debts.
- (3.)** Have no long accounts. Pay everything within the week.
- (4.)** Give none that asks relief, either an ill word or an ill look. Do not hurt them, if you cannot help.
- (5.)** Expect no thanks from man.

**4.** They met together at six every Thursday morning; consulted on the business which came before them; sent relief to the sick, as every one had need; and gave the remainder of what had been contributed each week to those who appeared to be in the most pressing want. So that all was concluded within the week; what was brought on Tuesday being constantly expended on Thursday. I soon had the pleasure to find, that all

these temporal things were done with the utmost faithfulness and exactness; so that my cares of this kind were at an end. I had only to revise the accounts, to tell them if I thought anything might be amended, and to consult how deficiencies might be supplied from time to time; for these were frequent and large, (so far were we from abundance,) the income by no means answering the expenses. But that we might not faint, sometimes we had unforeseen helps in times of the greatest perplexity. At other times we borrowed larger or smaller sums: Of which the greatest part has since been repaid. But I owe some hundred pounds to this day. So much have I gained by preaching, the gospel!

## XI.

**1.** But it was not long before the Stewards found a great difficulty with regard to the sick. Some were ready to perish before they knew of their illness; and when they did know, it was not in their power (being persons generally employed in trade) to visit them so often as they desired.

**2.** When I was apprised of this, I laid the case at large before the whole society; showed how impossible it was for the Stewards to attend all that were sick in all parts of the town; desired the Leaders of classes would more carefully inquire, and more constantly inform them, who were sick; and asked, “Who among you is willing, as well as able, to supply this lack of service?”

**3.** The next morning many willingly offered themselves. I chose six-and-forty of them, whom I judged to be of the most tender, loving spirit; divided the town into twenty-three parts, and desired two of them to visit the sick in each division.

**4.** It is the business of a Visitor of the sick,

To see every sick person within his district thrice a week. To inquire into the state of their souls, and to advise them as occasion may require. To inquire into their disorders, and procure advice for them. To relieve them, if they are in want. To do any thing for them, which he (or she) can do. To bring in his accounts weekly to the Stewards. <sup>f28</sup>

Upon reflection, I saw how exactly, in this also, we had copied after the primitive Church. What were the ancient Deacons? What was Phebe the Deaconess, but such a Visitor of the sick?

**5.** I did not think it needful to give them any particular rules beside these that follow: —

**(1.)** Be plain and open in dealing with souls.

**(2.)** Be mild, tender, patient.

**(3.)** Be cleanly in all you do for the sick.

**(4.)** Be not nice.

**6.** We have ever since had great reason to praise God for his continued blessing on this undertaking. Many lives have been saved, many sicknesses healed, much pain and want prevented or removed. Many heavy hearts have been made glad, many mourners comforted: And the Visitors have found, from Him whom they serve, a present reward for all their labor.

## XII.

**1.** But I was still in pain for many of the poor that were sick; there was so great expense, and so little profit. And first, I resolved to try, whether they might not receive more benefit in the hospitals. Upon the trial, we found there was indeed less expense, but no more good done, than before. I then asked the advice of several Physicians for them; but still it profited not. I saw the poor people pining away, and several families ruined, and that without remedy.

**2.** At length I thought of a kind of desperate expedient. “I will prepare, and give them physic myself.” For six or seven and twenty years, I had made anatomy and physic the diversion of my leisure hours; though I never properly studied them, unless; for a few months when I was going to America, where I imagined I might be of some service to those who had no regular Physician among them. I applied to it again. I took into my assistance an Apothecary, and an experienced Surgeon; resolving, at the

same time, not to go out of my depth, but to leave all difficult and complicated cases to such Physicians as the patients should choose.

**3.** I gave notice of this to the society; telling them, that all who were ill of chronical distempers (for I did not care to venture upon acute) might, if they pleased, come to me at such a time, and I would give them the best advice I could, and the best medicines I had.

**4.** Many came: (And so every Friday since:) Among the rest was one William Kirkman, a weaver, near Old Nichol-street. I asked him, "What complaint have you?" "O Sir," said he, "a cough, a very sore cough. I can get no rest day nor night."

I asked, "How long have you had it?" He replied, "About threescore years: It began when I was eleven years old." I was nothing glad that this man should come first, fearing our not curing him might discourage others. However, I looked up to God, and said, "Take this three or four times a day. If it does you no good, it will do you no harm." He took it two or three days. His cough was cured, and has not returned to this day.

**5.** Now, let candid men judge, does humility require me to deny a notorious fact? If not, which is vanity? to say, I by my own skill restored this man to health; or to say, God did it by his own almighty power? By what figure of speech this is called boasting, I know not. But I will yet no name to such a fact as this. I leave that to the Revelation Dr. Middleton.

**6.** In five months, medicines were occasionally given to above five hundred persons. Several of these I never saw before; for I did not regard whether they were of the society or not. In that time seventy-one of these, regularly taking their medicines, and following the regimen prescribed, (which three in four would not do,) were entirely cured of distempers long thought to be incurable. The whole expense of medicines during this time, was nearly forty pounds. We continued this ever since, and, by the blessing of God, with more and more success.

## XIII.

**1.** But I had for some years observed many who, although not sick, were not able to provide for themselves, and had no one who took care to provide for them: These were chiefly feeble, aged widows. I consulted with the Stewards, how they might be relieved. They all agreed, if we could keep them in one house, it would not only be far less expensive to us, but also far more comfortable for them. Indeed we had no money to begin; but we believed He would provide “who defendeth the cause of the widow:” So we took a lease of two little houses near; we fitted them up, so as to be warm and clean. We took in as many widows as we had room for, and provided them with things needful for the body; toward the expense of which I set aside, first, the weekly contributions of the bands, and then all that was collected at the Lord’s Supper. It is true, this does not suffice: So that we are considerably in debt, on this account also. But we are persuaded, it will not always be so; seeing “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.”

**2.** In this (commonly called The Poor-house) we have now nine widows, one blind woman, two poor children, two upper-servants, a maid and a man. I might add, four or five Preachers; for I myself, as well as the other Preachers who are in town, diet with the poor, on the same food, and at the same table; and we rejoice herein, as a comfortable earnest of our eating bread together in our Father’s kingdom.

**3.** I have blessed God for this house ever since it began; but lately much more than ever. I honor these widows; for they “are widows indeed.” So that it is not in vain, that, without any design of so doing, we have copied after another of the institutions of the Apostolic age. I can now say to all the world, Come and see how these Christians love one another!” <sup>f29</sup>

## XIV.

**1.** Another thing which had given me frequent concern was, the case of abundance of children. Some their parents could not afford to put to school: So they remained like “a wild ass’s colt.” Others were sent to school, and learned, at least, to read and write; but they learned all kind of

vice at the same time: So that it had been better for them to have been without their knowledge, than to have bought it at so dear a price.

**2.** At length I determined to have them taught in my own house, that they might have an opportunity of learning to read, write, and cast accounts, (if no more,) without being under almost a necessity of learning Heathenism at the same time: And after several unsuccessful trials, I found two such Schoolmasters as I wanted; men of honesty and of sufficient knowledge, who had talents for, and their hearts in, the work.

**3.** They have now under their care near sixty children: The parents of some pay for their schooling; but the greater part, being very poor, do not; so that the expense is chiefly defrayed by voluntary contributions. We have of late clothed them too, as many as wanted. The rules of the school are these that follow: — <sup>f30</sup>

**First.** No child is admitted under six years of age.

**Secondly.** All the children are to be present at the morning sermon.

**Thirdly.** They are at school from six to twelve, and from one to five.

**Fourthly.** They have no play-days.

**Fifthly.** No child is to speak in school, but to the masters.

**Sixthly.** The child who misses two days in one week, without leave, is excluded the school.

**4.** We appointed two Stewards for the school also. The business of these is, to receive the school subscriptions, and expend what is needful; to talk with each of the masters weekly; to pray with and exhort the children twice a week; to inquire diligently, whether they grow in grace and in learning, and whether the rules are punctually observed; every Tuesday morning, in conjunction with the masters, to exclude those children that do not observe the rules; every Wednesday morning, to meet with and exhort their parents, to train them up at home in the ways of God.

**5.** A happy change was soon observed in the children, both with regard to their tempers and behavior. They learned reading, writing; and arithmetic swiftly; and at the same time they were diligently instructed in the sound

principles of religion, and earnestly exhorted to fear God, and work out their own salvation.

## XV.

**1.** A year or two ago, I observed among many a distress of another kind. They frequently wanted, perhaps in order to carry on their business, a present supply of money. They scrupled to make use of a pawnbroker; but where to borrow it they knew not. I resolved to try if we could not find a remedy for this also. I went, in a few days, from one end of the town to the other, and exhorted those who had this world's goods, to assist their needy brethren. Fifty pounds were contributed. This was immediately lodged in the hands of two Stewards; who attended every Tuesday morning, in order to lend to those who wanted any small sum, not exceeding twenty shillings, to be repaid within three months. <sup>f31</sup>

**2.** It is almost incredible, but it manifestly appears from their accounts, that, with this inconsiderable sum, two hundred and fifty have been assisted, within the space of one year. Will not God put it into the heart of some lover of mankind to increase this little stock? If this is not "lending unto the Lord," what is? O confer not with flesh and blood, but immediately

Join hands with God, to make a poor man live!

**3.** I think, Sir, now you know all that I know of this people. You see the nature, occasion, and design of whatever is practiced among them. And, I trust, you may be pretty well able to answer any questions which may be asked concerning them; particularly by those who inquire concerning my revenue, and what I do with it all.

**4.** Some have supposed this was no greater than that of the Bishop of London. But others computed that I received eight hundred a year from Yorkshire only. Now, if so, it cannot be so little as ten thousand pounds a-year which I receive out of all England!

**5.** Accordingly, a gentleman in Cornwall (the Rector of Redruth) extends the calculation pretty considerably. "Let me see," said he: "Two millions

of Methodists; and each of these paying two-pence a week.” If so, I must have eight hundred and sixty thousand pounds, with some odd shillings and pence, a-year.

**6.** A tolerable competence! But be it more or less, it is nothing at all to me. All that is contributed or collected in every place is both received and expended by others; nor have I so much as the “beholding thereof with my eyes.” And so it will be, till I turn Turk or Pagan. For I look upon all this revenue, be it what it may, as sacred to God and the poor; out of which, if I want anything, I am relieved, even as another poor man. So were originally all ecclesiastical revenues, as every man of learning knows: And the Bishops and Priests used them only as such. If any use them otherwise now, God help them!

**7.** I doubt not, but if I err in this, or any other point, you will pray God to show me his truth. To have “a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man” is the desire of,

Reverend and dear Sir,  
Your affectionate brother and servant,  
*JOHN WESLEY.*

THE  
NATURE, DESIGN, AND GENERAL RULES  
OF THE  
UNITED SOCIETIES,  
IN LONDON, BRISTOL, KINGSWOOD,  
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, ETC.

1. IN the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday, in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them, (for their number increased daily,) I gave those advices, from time to time, which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.
2. This was the rise of the United Society, first in London, and then in other places. Such a society is no other than “a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.”
3. That it may the more easily be discerned, whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called *classes*, according to their respective places of abode.

There are about twelve persons in every class; one of whom is styled *the Leader*. It is his business,

(1.) To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the poor.

(2.) To meet the Minister and the Stewards of the society once a week; in order to inform the Minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reproved; to pay to the Stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding; and to show their account of what each person has contributed.

4. There is one only condition previously required in those who desire admission into these societies, — a desire “to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.” But, wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind; especially that which is most generally practiced: Such is, the taking the name of God in vain; the profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling; drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity; fighting, quarreling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling; the buying or selling unaccustomed goods; the giving or taking things on usury, that is, unlawful interest; uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, particularly speaking evil of Magistrates or of Ministers; doing to others as we would not they should do unto us; doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as the “putting on of gold or costly apparel;” the taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus; the singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God; softness, and needless self-indulgence; laying up treasures upon earth; borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

5. It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly, by doing good, by being, in every kind, merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible, to all men; — to their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick, or in prison; — to their souls, by instructing reproving, or exhorting all they have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that “we are not to do good unless our heart be free to it:” By doing good especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another; helping each other in business; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only: By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed: By running with patience the race that is set before them, “denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily;” submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and off-scouring of the world; and looking that men should “say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord’s sake.”

**6.** It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Thirdly, by attending upon all the ordinances of God. Such are, the public worship of God; the ministry of the word, either read or expounded; the supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures; and fasting, or abstinence.

**7.** These are the General Rules of our societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these, we know, his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways; we will bear with him for a season: But then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

*JOHN WESLEY,*

*CHARLES WESLEY.*

*May 1, 1743.*

# RULES OF THE BAND-SOCIETIES,

**DRAWN UP DECEMBER 25, 1738.**

THE design of our meeting is, to obey that command of God, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.”

To this end, we intend, —

- 1.** To meet once a week, at the least.
- 2.** To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason.
- 3.** To begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour, with singing or prayer.
- 4.** To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt, since our last meeting.
- 5.** To end every meeting with prayer, suited to the state of each person present.
- 6.** To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations.

Some of the questions proposed to every one before he is admitted among us may be to this effect: —

- 1.** Have you the forgiveness of your sins?
- 2.** Have you peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ?
- 3.** Have you the witness of God’s Spirit with your spirit, that you are a child of God?

- 4.** Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart?
- 5.** Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you?
- 6.** Do you desire to be told of your faults?
- 7.** Do you desire to be told of all your faults, and that plain and home?
- 8.** Do you desire that every one of us should tell you, from time to time, whatsoever is in his heart concerning you?
- 9.** Consider! Do you desire we should tell you whatsoever we think, whatsoever we fear, whatsoever we hear, concerning you?
- 10.** Do you desire that, in doing this, we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom?
- 11.** Is it your desire and design to be on this, and all other occasions, entirely open, so as to speak everything that is in your heart without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?

Any of the preceding questions may be asked as often as occasion others; the four following at every meeting: —

- 1.** What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?
- 2.** What temptations have you met with?
- 3.** How were you delivered?
- 4.** What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?

# DIRECTIONS

## GIVEN TO THE BAND-SOCIETIES,

**DECEMBER 25, 1744.**

YOU are supposed to have the faith that “overcometh the world.” To you, therefore, it is not grievous, —

### I.

Carefully to abstain from doing evil; in particular, —

- 1.** Neither to buy nor sell anything at all on the Lord’s day.
- 2.** To taste no spirituous liquor, no dram of any kind, unless prescribed by a Physician.
- 3.** To be at a word both in buying and selling.
- 4.** To pawn nothing, no, not to save life.
- 5.** Not to mention the fault of any behind his back, and to stop those short that do.
- 6.** To wear no needless ornaments, such as rings, earrings, necklaces, lace, ruffles.
- 7.** To use no needless self-indulgence, such as taking snuff or tobacco, unless prescribed by a Physician.

### II.

Zealously to maintain good works; in particular, —

- 1.** To give alms of such things as you possess, and that to the uttermost of your power.
- 2.** To reprove all that sin in your sight, and that in love and meekness of wisdom.
- 3.** To be patterns of diligence and frugality, of self-denial, and taking up the cross daily.

### III.

Constantly to attend on all the ordinances of God; in particular, —

- 1.** To be at church and at the Lord's table every week, and at every public meeting of the Bands.
- 2.** To attend the ministry of the word every morning, unless distance, business, or sickness prevent.
- 3.** To use private prayer everyday; and family prayer, if you are at the head of a family.
- 4.** To read the Scriptures, and meditate therein, at every vacant; hour. And,
- 5.** To observe, as days of fasting or abstinence, all Fridays in the year.

MINUTES  
OF  
SOME LATE CONVERSATIONS  
BETWEEN  
THE REV. MR. WESLEYS AND OTHERS.

CONVERSATION 1.

MONDAY, *JUNE 25TH*, 1744.

THE following persons being met at the Foundry, — John Wesley; Charles Wesley; John Hodges, Rector of Wenvo; Henry Piers, Vicar of Bexley; Samuel Taylor, Vicar of Quinton; and John Meriton; after some time spent in prayer, the design of our meeting was proposed; namely, to consider,

1. What to teach;
2. How to teach; and,
3. What to do; that is, how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practice.

We began with considering the doctrine of justification: The questions relating to, with the substance of the answers given thereto, were as follows: —

*Q. 1.* What is it to be justified?

*A.* To be pardoned and received into God's favor; into such a state, that, if we continue therein, we shall be finally saved.

*Q. 2.* Is faith the condition of justification?

**A.** Yes; for every one who believeth not is condemned; and every one who believes is justified.

**Q. 3.** But must not repentance, and works meet for repentance, go before this faith?

**A.** Without doubt; if by repentance you mean conviction of sin; and by works meet for repentance, obeying God as far as we can, forgiving our brother, leaving off from evil, doing good, and using his ordinances, according to the power we have received.

**Q. 4.** What is faith?

**A.** Faith in general is a divine, supernatural ελεγχος (*elenchos*) of things not seen; that is, of past, future, or spiritual things: It is a spiritual sight of God and the things of God.

First. A sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost, “Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.” This is that faith by which he is justified, or pardoned, the moment he receives it. Immediately the same Spirit bears witness, “Thou art pardoned; thou hast redemption in his blood.” And this is saving faith, whereby the love of God is shed abroad in his heart.

**Q. 5.** Have all Christians this faith? May not a man be justified, and not know it?

**A.** That all true Christians have such a faith as implies an assurance of God’s love, appears from ῥῶμ Romans 8:15; ἑφ Ephesians 4:32; ῥῶμ 2 Corinthians 13:5; ἑβ Hebrews 8:10; ἰω 1 John 4:10, and 19. And that no man can be justified and not know it, appears farther from the nature of the thing: For faith after repentance is ease after pain, rest after toil, light after darkness. It appears also from the immediate, as well as distant, fruits thereof.

**Q. 6.** But may not a man go to heaven without it?

**A.** It does not appear from holy writ that a man who hears the gospel can, (ἰω Mark 16:16,) whatever a Heathen may do. (ῥῶμ Romans 2:14.)

**Q. 7.** What are the immediate fruits of justifying faith?

**A.** Peace, joy, love, power over all outward sin, and power to keep down inward sin.

**Q. 8.** Does any one believe, who has not the witness in himself, or any longer than he sees, loves, obeys God?

**A.** We apprehend not; seeing God being the very essence of faith; love and obedience, the inseparable properties of it.

**Q. 9.** What sins are consistent with justifying faith?

**A.** No wilful sin. If a believer wilfully sins, he casts away his faith. Neither is it possible he should have justifying faith again without previously repenting.

**Q. 10.** Must every believer come into a state of doubt, or fear, or darkness? Will he do so, unless by ignorance, or unfaithfulness? Does God otherwise withdraw himself?

**A.** It is certain, a believer need never again come into condemnation. It seems he need not come into a state of doubt, or fear, or darkness; and that (ordinarily at least) he will not, unless by ignorance or unfaithfulness. Yet it is true, that the first joy does seldom last long; that it is commonly followed by doubts and fears; and that God frequently permits great heaviness before any large manifestation of himself.

**Q. 11.** Are works necessary to the continuance of faith?

**A.** Without doubt; for a man may forfeit the free gift of God, either by sins of omission or commission.

**Q. 12.** Can faith be lost but for want of works?

**A.** It cannot but through disobedience.

**Q 13.** How is faith “made perfect by works?”

**A.** The more we exert our faith, the more it is increased. “To him that hath, shall be given.”

**Q. 14.** St. Paul says, Abraham was not justified by works; St. James, he was justified by works. Do they not contradict each other?

**A.** No:

(1.) Because they do not speak of the same justification. St. Paul speaks of that justification which was when Abraham was seventy-five years old, above twenty years before Isaac was born; St. James, of that justification which was when he offered up Isaac on the altar.

(2.) Because they do not speak of the same works; St. Paul speaking of works that precede faith; St. James, of works that spring from it.

**Q. 15.** In what sense is Adam's sin imputed to all mankind?

**A.** In Adam all die; that is,

(1.) Our bodies then became mortal.

(2.) Our souls died; that is, were disunited from God. And hence,

(3.) We are all born with a sinful, devilish nature. By reason whereof,

(4.) We are children of wrath, liable to death eternal. (~~cf~~ Romans 5:18; ~~cf~~ Ephesians 2:3.)

**Q. 16.** In what sense is the righteousness of Christ imputed to all mankind, or to believers?

**A.** We do not find it expressly affirmed in Scripture, that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to any; although we do find that "faith is imputed" to us "for righteousness."

That text, "As by one man's disobedience all men were made sinners, so by the obedience of One, all were made righteous," we conceive means, By the merits of Christ, all men are cleared from the guilt of Adam's actual sin.

We conceive farther, that through the obedience and death of Christ,

(1.) The bodies of all men become immortal after the resurrection.

(2.) Their souls receive a capacity of spiritual life. And,

(3.) An actual spark or seed thereof.

- (4.) All believers become children of grace, reconciled to God; and,
- (5.) Made partakers of the divine nature.

**Q. 17.** Have we not then unawares leaned too much towards Calvinism?

**A.** We are afraid we have.

**Q. 18.** Have we not also leaned towards Antinomianism?

**A.** We are afraid we have.

**Q. 19.** What is Antinomianism?

**A.** The doctrine which makes void the law through faith.

**Q. 20.** What are the main pillars hereof?

**A.**

(1.) That Christ abolished the moral law.

(2.) That therefore Christians are not obliged to observe it.

(3.) That one branch of Christian liberty is, liberty from obeying the commandments of God.

(4.) That it is bondage to do a thing because it is commanded, or forbear it because it is forbidden.

(5.) That a believer is not obliged to use the ordinances of God, or to do good works.

(6.) That a Preacher ought not to exhort to good works; not unbelievers, because it is hurtful; not believers, because it is needless.

**Q. 21.** What was the occasion of St. Paul's writing his Epistle to the Galatians?

**A.** The coming of certain men amongst the Galatians, who taught; "Except ye be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

**Q. 22.** What is his main design therein?

**A.** To prove,

(1.) That no man can be justified or saved by the works of the law, either moral or ritual.

(2.) That every believer is justified by faith in Christ, without the works of the law.

**Q. 23.** What does he mean by “the works of the law?” (<sup><R16></sup>Galatians 2:16, etc.)

**A.** All works which do not spring from faith in Christ.

**Q. 24.** What, by being “under the law?” (<sup><R17></sup>Galatians 3:23.)

**A.** Under the Mosaic dispensation.

**Q. 25.** What law has Christ abolished?

**A.** The ritual law of Moses.

**Q. 26.** What is meant by liberty? (<sup><R18></sup>Galatians 5:1.)

**A.** Liberty,

(1.) From that law.

(2.) From sin.

**ON TUESDAY MORNING JUNE 26TH,  
WAS CONSIDERED THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION.**

WITH regard to which, the questions asked, and the substance of the answers given, were as follows: —

**Q. 1.** What is it to be sanctified?

**A.** To be renewed in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.

**Q. 2.** Is faith the condition, or the instrument, of sanctification?

**A.** It is both the condition and instrument of it. When we begin to believe, then sanctification begins. And as faith increases, holiness increases, till we are created anew.

**Q. 3.** What is implied in being a perfect Christian?

**A.** The loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and soul, and strength. (~~Lev~~ Deuteronomy 6:5, ~~Lev~~ 30:6; ~~Lev~~ Ezekiel 36:25-29.)

**Q. 4.** Does this imply that all inward sin is taken away?

**A.** Without doubt; or how could we be said to be saved “from all our uncleannesses?” (Verse 29.)

**Q. 5.** Can we know one who is thus saved? What is a reasonable proof of it?

**A.** We cannot, without the miraculous discernment of spirits, be infallibly certain of those who are thus saved. But we apprehend, these would be the best proofs which the nature of the thing admits:

(1.) If we had sufficient evidence of their unblamable behavior preceding.

(2.) If they gave a distinct account of the time and manner wherein they were saved from sin and of the circumstances thereof, with such sound speech as could not be reproved. And,

(3.) If, upon a strict inquiry afterwards from time to time, it appeared that all their tempers, and words, and actions, were holy and unprovable.

**Q. 6.** How should we treat those who think they have attained this?

**A.** Exhort them to forget the things that are behind, and to watch and pray always, that God may search the ground of their hearts.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27TH,  
WE BEGAN TO CONSIDER POINTS OF DISCIPLINE:**

WITH regard to which, the questions asked, and the substance of the answers given, were as follows: —

**Q. 1.** What is the Church of England?

**A.** According to the Twentieth Article, the visible Church of England is the congregation of English believers, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered.

(But the word “Church” is sometimes taken, in a looser sense, for “a congregation professing to believe.” So it is taken in the Twenty-sixth Article; and in the first, second, and third chapters of the Revelation.)

**Q. 2.** Who is a member of the Church of England?

**A.** A believer, hearing the pure word of God preached, and partaking of the sacraments duly administered, in that Church.

**Q. 3.** What is it to be zealous for the Church?

**A.** To be earnestly desirous of its welfare and increase: Of its welfare, by the confirmation of its present members, in faith, hearing, and communicating; and of its increase, by the addition of new members.

**Q. 4.** How are we to defend the doctrine of the Church?

**A.** Both by our preaching and living.

**Q. 5.** How should we behave at a false or railing sermon?

**A.** If it only contain personal reflections, we may quietly suffer it: If it blaspheme the work and Spirit of God, it may be better to go out of the Church. In either case, if opportunity serve, it would be well to speak or write to the Minister.

**Q. 6.** How far is it our duty to obey the Bishops?

**A.** In all things indifferent. And on this ground of obeying them, we should observe the Canons, so far as we can with a safe conscience.

**Q. 7.** Do we separate from the Church?

**A.** We conceive not: We hold communion therewith for conscience' sake, by constantly attending both the word preached, and the sacraments administered therein.

**Q. 8.** What then do they mean, who say, “You separate from the Church?”

**A.** We cannot certainly tell. Perhaps they have no determinate meaning; unless, by the Church they mean themselves; that is, that part of the Clergy who accuse us of preaching false doctrine. And it is sure we do herein separate from them, by maintaining that which they deny.

**Q. 9.** But do you not weaken the Church?

**A.** Do not they who ask this, by *the Church*, mean themselves? We do not purposely weaken any man’s hands. But accidentally we may, thus far: They who come to know the truth by us, will esteem such as deny it less than they did before.

But the Church, in the proper sense, the congregation of English believers, we do not weaken at all.

**Q. 10.** Do you not entail a schism on the Church? that is, Is it not probable that your hearers, after your death, will be scattered into all sects and parties; or that they will form themselves into a distinct sect?

**A.**

**(1.)** We are persuaded the body of our hearers will even after our death remain in the Church, unless they be thrust out.

**(2.)** We believe notwithstanding, either that they will be thrust out, or that they will leaven the whole Church.

**(3.)** We do, and will do, all we can to prevent those consequences which are supposed likely to happen after our death.

**(4.)** But we cannot with a good conscience neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live, for fear of consequences which may possibly or probably happen after we are dead.

## CONVERSATION 2

**BRISTOL, THURSDAY, *AUGUST 1ST*, 1745.**

THE following persons being met together at the New-Room, in Bristol; John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Thomas Richards, Samuel Larwood, Thomas Meyrick, Richard Moss, John Slocombe, Herbert Jenkins, and Marmaduke Gwynne; it was proposed to review the Minutes of the last Conference with regard to justification. And it was asked:

**Q. 1.** How comes what is written on this subject to be so intricate and obscure? Is this obscurity from the nature of the thing itself; or, from the fault or weakness of those who have generally treated of it?

**A.** We apprehend this obscurity does not arise from the nature of the subject; but, perhaps, partly from hence, that the devil peculiarly labors to perplex a subject of the greatest importance; and partly from the extreme warmth of most writers who have treated of it?

**Q. 2.** We affirm, faith in Christ is the sole condition of justification. But does not repentance go before that faith? yea, and, supposing there be opportunity for them, fruits or works meet for repentance?

**A.** Without doubt they do.

**Q. 3.** How then can we deny them to be conditions of justification? Is not this a mere strife of words? But is it worth while to continue a dispute on the term condition?

**A.** It seems not, though it has been grievously abused. But so the abuse cease, let the use remain.

**Q. 4.** Shall we read over together Mr. Baxter's "Aphorisms concerning Justification?"

**A.** By all means.

Which were accordingly read. And it was desired, that each person present would in the afternoon consult the scriptures cited therein, and bring what objections might occur the next morning.

**FRIDAY AUGUST 2D, THE QUESTION WAS PROPOSED: —**

**Q. 1.** Is a sense of God's pardoning love absolutely necessary to our being in his favor? Or may there be some exempt cases?

**A.** We dare not say there are not.

**Q. 2.** Is it necessary to inward and outward holiness?

**A.** We incline to think it is.

**Q. 3.** Is it indispensably necessary to final salvation? suppose in a Papist; or a Quaker; or, in general, among those who never heard it preached?

**A.** Love hopeth all things. We know not how far any of these may fall under the case of invincible ignorance.

**Q. 4.** But what can we say of one of our own society, who dies without it, as J. W., at London?

**A.** It may be an exempt case, if the fact was really so. But we determine nothing. We leave his soul in the hands of Him that made it.

**Q. 5.** Does a man believe any longer than he sees a reconciled God?

**A.** We conceive not. But we allow there may be infinite degrees in seeing God: Even as many as there are between him who sees the sun when it shines on his eye lids closed, and him who stands with his eyes wide open in the full blaze of his beams.

**Q. 6.** Does a man believe any longer than he loves God?

**A.** In nowise. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails without faith working by love.

**Q. 7.** Have we duly considered the case of Cornelius? Was not he in the favor of God, when “his prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God:” that is, before he believed in Christ?

**A.** It does seem that he was, in some degree. But we speak not of those who have not heard the gospel.

**Q. 8.** But were those works of his “splendid sins?”

**A.** No; nor were they done without the grace of Christ.

**Q. 9.** How then can we maintain, that all works done before we have a sense of the pardoning love of God are sin, and, as such, an abomination to Him?

**A.** The works of him who has heard the gospel, and does not believe, are not done as God hath “willed and commanded them to be done.” And yet we know not how to say that they are an abomination to the Lord in him who feareth God, and, from that principle, does the best he can.

**Q. 10.** Seeing there is so much difficulty in this subject, can we deal too tenderly with them that oppose us?

**A.** We cannot; unless we were to give up any part of the truth of God.

**Q. 11.** Is a believer constrained to obey God?

**A.** At first he often is. The love of Christ constraineth him. After this, he may obey, or he may not; no constraint being laid upon him.

**Q. 12.** Can faith be lost, but through disobedience?

**A.** It cannot. A believer first inwardly disobeys, inclines to sin with his heart: Then his intercourse with God is cut off; that is, his faith is lost: And after this, he may fall into outward sin, being now weak, and like another man.

**Q. 13.** How can such an one recover faith?

**A.** By “repenting, and doing the first works.” (~~and~~ Revelation 2:5.)

**Q. 14.** Whence is it that so great a majority of those who believe fall more or less into doubt or fear?

**A.** Chiefly from their own ignorance or unfaithfulness: Often from their not watching unto prayer: Perhaps sometimes from some defect, or want of the power of God in the preaching they hear.

**Q. 15.** Is there not a defect in us? Do we preach as we did at first? Have we not changed our doctrines?

**A.**

(1.) At first we preached almost wholly to unbelievers. To those therefore we spake almost continually of remission of sins through the death of Christ, and the nature of faith in his blood. And so we do still, among those who need to be taught the first elements of the gospel of Christ.

(2.) But those in whom the foundation is already laid, we exhort to go on to perfection; which we did not see so clearly at first; although we occasionally spoke of it from the beginning.

(3.) Yet we now preach, and that continually, faith in Christ, as the Prophet, Priest, and King, at least, as clearly, as strongly, and as fully, as we did six years ago.

**Q. 16.** Do we not discourage visions and dreams too much, as if we condemned them *toto genere*?

**A.** We do not intend to do this. We neither discourage nor encourage them. We learn from <sup>CHAP.</sup>Acts 2:17, etc., to expect something of this kind “in the last days.” And we cannot deny that saving faith is often given in dreams or visions of the night; which faith we account neither better nor worse, than if it came by any other means.

**Q. 17.** Do not some of our assistants preach too much of the wrath, and too little of the love, of God?

**A.** We fear they have leaned to that extreme; and hence some of their hearers may have lost the joy of faith.

**Q. 18.** Need we ever preach the terrors of the Lord to those who know they are accepted of him?

**A.** No: It is folly so to do; for love is to them the strongest of all motives.

**Q. 19.** Do we ordinarily represent a justified state so great and happy as it is?

**A.** Perhaps not. A believer, walking in the light, is inexpressibly great and happy.

**Q. 20.** Should we not have a care of depreciating justification, in order to exalt the state of full sanctification?

**A.** Undoubtedly we should beware of this; for one may insensibly slide into it.

**Q. 21.** How shall we effectually avoid it?

**A.** When we are going to speak of entire sanctification, let us first describe the blessings of a justified state, as strongly as possible.

**Q. 22.** Does not the truth of the gospel lie very near both to Calvinism and Antinomianism?

**A.** Indeed it does; as it were, within a hair's breadth: So that it is altogether foolish and sinful, because we do not quite agree either with one or the other, to run from them as far as ever we can.

**Q. 23** Wherein may we come to the very edge of Calvinism?

**A.**

(1.) In ascribing all good to the free grace of God.

(2.) In denying all natural free-will, and all power antecedent to grace. And,

(3.) In excluding all merit from man; even for what he has or does by the grace of God.

**Q. 24.** Wherein may we come to the edge of Antinomianism?

**A.**

(1.) In exalting the merits and love of Christ.

(2.) In rejoicing evermore.

**Q. 25.** Does faith supersede (set aside the necessity of) holiness or good works?

**A.** In no wise. So far from it, that it implies both, as a cause does its effects.

**ABOUT TEN, WE BEGAN TO SPEAK OF SANCTIFICATION:  
WITH REGARD TO WHICH IT WAS INQUIRED: —**

**Q. 1.** WHEN does inward sanctification begin?

**A.** In the moment we are justified. The seed of every virtue is then sown in the soul. From that time the believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace. Yet sin remains in him; yea, the seed of all sin, till he is sanctified throughout in spirit, soul, and body.

**Q. 2.** What will become of a Heathen, a Papist, a Church of England man, if he dies without being thus sanctified?

**A.** He cannot see the Lord. But none who seeks it sincerely shall or can die without it; though possibly he may not attain it, till the very article of death.

**Q. 3.** Is it ordinarily given till a little before death?

**A.** It is not, to those that expect it no sooner, nor consequently ask for it, at least, not in faith.

**Q. 4.** But ought we to expect it sooner?

**A.** Why not? For although we grant,

(1.) That the generality of believers whom we have hitherto known were not so sanctified till near death:

(2.) That few of those to whom St. Paul wrote his Epistles were so at the time he wrote:

(3.) Nor he himself at the time of writing his former Epistles: Yet this does not prove that we may not today.

**Q. 5.** But would not one who was thus sanctified be incapable of worldly business?

**A.** He would be far more capable of it than ever, as going through all without distraction.

**Q. 6.** Would he be capable of marriage?

**A.** Why should he not?

**Q. 7.** Should we not beware of bearing hard on those who think they have attained?

**A.** We should. And the rather, because if they are faithful to the grace they have received, they are in no danger of perishing at last. No, not even if they remain in luminous faith, as some term it, for many months or years; perhaps till within a little time of their spirits returning to God.

**Q. 8.** In what manner should we preach entire sanctification?

**A.** Scarce at all to those who are not pressing forward. To those who are, always by way of promise; always drawing, rather than driving.

**Q. 9.** How should we wait for the fulfilling of this promise?

**A.** In universal obedience; in keeping all the commandments; in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily. These are the general means which God hath ordained for our receiving his sanctifying grace. The particular are, — prayer, searching the Scripture, communicating, and fasting.

## CONVERSATION 3

**TUESDAY, *MAY 13TH*, 1746.**

THE following persons being met at the New-Room, in Bristol: John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Jonathan Reeves, Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Westell, and Thomas Willis; it was inquired, —

**Q. 1.** Call an unbeliever (whatever he be in other respects) challenge anything of God's justice?

**A.** Absolutely nothing but hell. And this is a point which we cannot too much insist on.

**Q. 2.** Do we empty men of their own righteousness, as we said at first? Do we sufficiently labor, when they begin to be convinced of sin, to take away all they lean upon? Should we not then endeavor with all our might to overturn their false foundations?

**A.** This was at first one of our principal points: And it ought to be so still. For, till all other foundations are overturned, they cannot build upon Christ.

**Q. 3.** Did we not then purposely throw them into convictions; into strong sorrow and fear? Nay, did we not strive to make them inconsolable, refusing to be comforted?

**A.** We did. And so we should do still. For the stronger the conviction, the speedier is the deliverance. And none so soon receive the peace of God, as those who steadily refuse all other comfort.

**Q. 4.** Let us consider a particular case. Was you, Jonathan Reeves, before you received the peace of God, convinced that, notwithstanding all you did, or could do, you was in a state of damnation?

**J. R.** I was convinced of it, as fully as that I am now alive.

**Q. 5.** Are you sure that conviction was from God?

**J. R.** I can have no doubt but it was.

**Q. 6.** What do you mean by a state of damnation?

**J. R.** A state wherein if a man dies, he perisheth for ever.

**Q. 7.** How did that conviction end?

**J. R.** I had first a strong hope that God would deliver me: And this brought a degree of peace. But I had not that solid peace of God till Christ was revealed in me.

**Q. 8.** But is not such a trust in the love of God, though it be as yet without a distinct sight of God reconciled to me through Christ Jesus, a low degree of justifying faith?

**A.** It is an earnest of it. But this abides for a short time only; nor is this the proper Christian faith.

**Q. 9.** By what faith were the Apostles clean before Christ died?

**A.** By such a faith as this; by a Jewish faith: For “the Holy Ghost was not then given.”

**Q. 10.** Of whom then do you understand those words, — “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?” (<sup>2300</sup>Isaiah 50:10.)

**A.** Of a believer under the Jewish dispensation; one in whose heart God hath not yet shined, to give him the light of the glorious love of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

**Q. 11.** Who is a Jew, inwardly?

**A.** A servant of God: One who sincerely obeys him out of fear. Whereas a Christian, inwardly, is a child of God: One who sincerely obeys him out of love. But was not you sincere before Christ was revealed in you?

**J. R.** It seemed to me that I was, in some measure.

**Q. 12.** What is sincerity?

**A.** Willingness to know and do the whole will of God. The lowest species thereof seems to be “faithfulness in that which is little.”

**Q. 13.** Has God any regard to man’s sincerity?

**A.** So far, that no man in any state can possibly please God without it; neither, indeed, in any moment wherein he is not sincere.

**Q. 14.** But can it be conceived that God has any regard to the sincerity of an unbeliever?

**A.** Yes, so much, that, if he persevere therein, God will infallibly give him faith.

**Q. 15.** What regard may we conceive him to have to the sincerity of a believer?

**A.** So much, that in every sincere believer he fulfills all the great and precious promises.

**Q. 16.** Whom do you term a sincere believer?

**A.** One that walks in the light, as God is in the light.

**Q. 17.** Is sincerity the same with a single eye?

**A.** Not altogether. The latter refers to our intention; the former, to our will or desires.

**Q. 18.** Is it not all in all?

**A.** All will follow persevering sincerity. God gives every thing with it; nothing without it.

**Q. 19.** Are not then sincerity and faith equivalent terms?

**A.** By no means. It is at least as nearly related to works as it is to faith. For example, Who is sincere before he believes? He that then does all he can; he that, according to the power he has received, brings forth “fruits meet for repentance.” Who is sincere after he believes? He that, from a sense of God’s love, is zealous of all good works.

**Q. 20.** Is not sincerity what St. Paul terms a willing mind, ἡ προθυμία? (~~4th~~ 2 Corinthians 8:12.)

**A.** Yes: If that word be taken in a general sense. For it is a constant disposition to use all the grace given.

**Q. 21.** But do we not then set sincerity on a level with faith?

**A.** No. For we allow a man may be sincere, and not be justified, as he may be penitent, and not be justified; (not as yet;) but he cannot have faith, and not be justified. The very moment he believes, he is justified.

**Q. 22.** But do we not give up faith, and put sincerity in its place, as the condition of our acceptance with God?

**A.** We believe it is one condition of our acceptance, as repentance likewise is. And we believe it a condition of our continuing in a state of acceptance. Yet we do not put it in the place of faith. It is by faith the merits of Christ are applied to my soul. But if I am not sincere, they are not applied.

**Q. 23.** Is not this that “going about to establish your own righteousness,” whereof St. Paul speaks, ~~6th~~ Romans 10:3?

**A.** St. Paul there manifestly speaks of unbelievers, who sought to be accepted for the sake of their own righteousness. We do not seek to be accepted for the sake of our sincerity; but through the merits of Christ alone. Indeed, so long as any man believes, he cannot go about (in St. Paul’s sense) to “establish his own righteousness.”

**Q. 24.** But do you consider, that we are under the covenant of grace, and that the covenant of works is now abolished?

**A.** All mankind were under the covenant of grace, from the very hour that the original promise was made. If by the covenant of works you mean, that of unsinning obedience made with Adam before the fall, no man but Adam was ever under that covenant; for it was abolished before Cain was born. Yet it is not so abolished, but that it will stand, in a measure, even to the end of the world; that is, If we “do this,” we shall live; if not, we shall die eternally: If we do well, we shall live with God in glory; if evil, we

shall die the second death. For every man shall be judged in that day, and rewarded “according to his works.”

**Q. 25.** What means then, “To him that believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness?”

**A.** That God forgives him that is unrighteous as soon as he believes, accepting his faith instead of perfect righteousness. But then observe, universal righteousness follows, though it did not precede, faith.

**Q. 26.** But is faith thus “counted to us for righteousness,” at whatsoever time we believe?

**A.** Yes. In whatsoever moment we believe, all our past sins vanish away: They are as though they had never been, and we stand clear in the sight of God.

### MINUTES OF SOME TUESDAY, TEN O’CLOCK.

MR. TAYLOR of Quinton, and T. Glascot, being added, it was inquired,

**Q. 1.** Are not the assurance of faith, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and the revelation of Christ in us, terms nearly of the same import?

**A.** He that denies one of them must deny all; they are so closely connected together.

**Q. 2.** Are they ordinarily, where the pure gospel is preached, essential to our acceptance?

**A.** Undoubtedly they are; and, as such, to be insisted on, in the strongest terms.

**Q. 3.** Is not the whole dispute of salvation by faith or by works a mere strife of words?

**A.** In asserting salvation by faith, we mean this:

**(1.)** That pardon (salvation begun) is received by faith producing works.

(2.) That holiness (salvation continued) is faith working by love.

(3.) That heaven (salvation finished) is the reward of this faith.

If you who assert salvation by works, or by faith and works, mean the same thing, (understanding by faith, the revelation of Christ in us, — by salvation, pardon, holiness, glory,) we will not strive with you at all. If you do not, this is not a strife of words; but the very vitals, the essence of Christianity is the thing in question.

**Q. 4.** Wherein does our doctrine now differ from that we preached when at Oxford?

**A.** Chiefly in these two points:

(1.) We then knew nothing of that righteousness of faith, in justification; nor

(2.) Of the nature of faith itself, as implying consciousness of pardon.

**Q. 5.** May not some degree of the love of God go before a distinct sense of justification?

**A.** We believe it may.

**Q. 6.** Can any degree of sanctification or holiness?

**A.** Many degrees of outward holiness may; yea, and some degree of meekness, and several other tempers which would be branches of Christian holiness, but that they do not spring from Christian principles. For the abiding love of God cannot spring but from faith in a pardoning God. And no true Christian holiness can exist without that love of God for its foundation.

**Q. 7.** Is every man, as soon as he believes, a new creature, sanctified, pure in heart? Has he then a new heart? Does Christ dwell therein? And is he a temple of the Holy Ghost?

**A.** All these things may be affirmed of every believer, in a true sense. Let us not therefore contradict those who maintain it. Why should we contend about words?

## CONVERSATION 4

**TUESDAY JUNE 16TH, 1747.**

THE following persons being met at the Foundry: John Wesley, Charles Wesley, and Charles Manning, Vicar of Hayes; Richard Thomas Bateman, Rector of St. Bartholomew's the Great; Henry Piers, Howell Harris, and Thomas Hardwick; it was inquired,

**Q. 1.** Is justifying faith a divine assurance that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me?

**A.** We believe it is.

**Q. 2.** What is the judgment of most of the serious Dissenters concerning this?

**A.** They generally allow, that many believers have such an assurance; and, that it is to be desired and prayed for by all. But then they affirm, that this is the highest species or degree of faith; that it is not the common privilege of believers: Consequently, they deny that this is justifying faith, or necessarily implied therein.

**Q. 3.** And are there not strong reasons for their opinion? For instance: If the true believers of old had not this assurance, then it is not necessarily implied in justifying faith. But the true believers of old had not this assurance.

**A.** David, and many more of the believers of old, undeniably had this assurance. But even if the Jews had it not, it would not follow that this is not implied in Christian faith.

**Q. 4.** But do you not know that the Apostles themselves had it not till after the day of Pentecost?

**A.** The Apostles themselves had not the proper Christian faith till after the day of Pentecost.

**Q. 5.** But were not those Christian believers, in the proper sense, to whom St. John wrote his First Epistle? Yet to these he says, "These

things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (~~ABB~~ 5:13.)

**A.** This does not prove that they did not know they had eternal life, any more than that they did not believe. His plain meaning is, “I have written unto you that you may be the more established in the faith.” Therefore, it does not follow from hence, that they had not this assurance; but only that there are degrees therein.

**Q. 6.** But were not the Thessalonians true believers? Yet they had not this assurance; they had only a “good hope.” (~~ABB~~ 2 Thessalonians 2:16.)

**A.** The text you refer to runs thus: “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.” This *good hope* does not exclude, but necessarily implies, a strong assurance of the love of God.

**Q. 7.** But does not St. Paul say even of himself, “I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified?” (~~ABB~~ 1 Corinthians 4:4.)

**A.** He does not say of himself here, that he was not justified, or that he did not know it; but only, that though he had a conscience void of offense, yet this did not justify him before God. And must not every believer say the same? This, therefore, is wide of the point.

**Q. 8.** But does he not disclaim any such assurance in those words, “I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling?” (~~ABB~~ 1 Corinthians 2:3.)

**A.** By no means. For these words do not imply any fear either of death or hell. They express only a deep sense of his utter insufficiency for the great work wherein he was engaged.

**Q. 9.** However, does he not exclude Christians in general from such an assurance, when he bids them “work out” their “salvation with fear and trembling?” (~~ABB~~ Philippians 2:12.)

**A.** No more than from love; which is always joined with filial fear and reverential trembling. And the same answer is applicable to all those texts which exhort a believer to fear.

**Q. 10.** But does not matter of fact prove, that justifying faith does not necessarily imply assurance? For can you believe that such a person as J. A., or E. V., who have so much integrity, zeal, and fear of God, and walk so unblamably in all things, is void of justifying faith? Can you suppose such as these to be under the wrath and under the curse of God; especially if you add to this, that they are continually longing, striving, praying for the assurance which they have not?

**A.** This contains the very strength of the cause; and inclines us to think that some of these may be exempt cases. But, however that be, we answer,

**(1.)** It is dangerous to ground a general doctrine on a few particular experiments.

**(2.)** Men may have many good tempers, and a blameless life, (speaking in a loose sense,) by nature and habit, with preventing grace; and yet not have faith and the love of God.

**(3.)** It is scarce possible for us to know all the circumstances relating to such persons, so as to judge certainly concerning them.

**(4.)** But this we know, if Christ is not revealed in them, they are not yet Christian believers.

**Q. 11.** But what will become of them then, suppose they die in this state?

**A.** That is a supposition not to be made. They cannot die in this state: They must go backward or forward. If they continue to seek, they will surely find, righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. We are confirmed in this belief by the many instances we have seen of such as these finding peace at the last hour. And it is not impossible but others may then be made partakers of like precious faith, and yet go hence without giving any outward proof of the change which God hath wrought.

## CONVERSATION 5

**WEDNESDAY, *JUNE 17TH.***

**Q. 1.** How much is allowed by our brethren who differ from us, with regard to entire sanctification?

**A.** They grant,

(1.) That every one must be entirely sanctified in the article of death.

(2.) That, till then, a believer daily grows in grace, comes nearer and nearer to perfection.

(3.) That we ought to be continually pressing after this, and to exhort all others so to do.

**Q. 2.** What do we allow them?

**A.** We grant,

(1.) That many of those who have died in the faith, yea, the greater part of those we have known, were not sanctified throughout, not made perfect in love, till a little before death.

(2.) That the term “sanctified” is continually applied by St. Paul to all that were justified, were true believers.

(3.) That by this term alone, he rarely, if ever, means saved from all sin.

(4.) That, consequently, it is not proper to use it in this sense, without adding the word “wholly, entirely,” or the like.

(5.) That the inspired writers almost continually speak of or to those who were justified; but very rarely, either of or to those who were wholly sanctified.

(6.) That, consequently, it behooves us to speak in public almost continually of the state of justification; but, more rarely, in full and explicit terms, concerning entire sanctification.

**Q. 3.** What then is the point wherein we divide?

**A.** It is this: Whether we should expect to be saved from all sin before the article of death.

**Q. 4.** Is there any clear scripture promise of this; that God will save us from *all* sin?

**A.** There is: “He shall redeem Israel from *all* his sins.” (<sup>4108</sup>Psalm 130:8.) This is more largely expressed in the prophecy of Ezekiel: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: From *all* your filthiness, and from *all* your idols, will I cleanse you. I will also save you from *all* your uncleannesses.” (<sup>3852</sup>Ezekiel 36:25, 29.) No promise can be more clear. And to this the Apostle plainly refers in that exhortation: “Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (<sup>4001</sup>2 Corinthians 7:1.) Equally clear and express is that ancient promise: “The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” (<sup>4506</sup>Deuteronomy 30:6.)

**Q. 5.** But does any assertion answerable to this occur in the New Testament?

**A.** There does, and that laid down in the plainest terms. So St. John: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;” (1 Epist. <sup>4088</sup>3:8;) the works of the devil, without any limitation or restriction: But all sin is the work of the devil. Parallel to which is that assertion of St. Paul: “Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (<sup>4155</sup>Ephesians 5:25, 27.) And to the same effect is his assertion in the eighth of the Romans: “God sent his Son — that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Verses 3, 4.)

**Q. 6.** Does the New Testament afford any farther ground for expecting to be saved from all sin?

**A.** Undoubtedly it does, both in those prayers and commands which are equivalent to the strongest assertions.

**Q. 7.** What prayers do you mean?

**A.** Prayers for entire sanctification; which, were there no such thing, would be mere mockery of God. Such, in particular, are,

(1.) “Deliver us from evil;” or rather, “from the evil one.” Now, when this is done, when we are delivered from all evil, there can be no sin remaining.

(2.) “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” (<sup>487D</sup> John 17:20, 21, 23.)

(3.) “I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ — that he would grant you — that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” (<sup>488A</sup> Ephesians 3:14, 16-19.)

(4.) “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (<sup>489B</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:23.)

**Q. 8.** What command is there to the same effect?

**A.**

(1.) “Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (<sup>490A</sup> Matthew 5:48.)

(2.) “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” (<sup>492B</sup> Matthew 22:37.) But if the love of God fill all the heart, there can be no sin there.

**Q. 9.** But how does it appear that this is to be done before the article of death?

**A.** First. From the very nature of a command, which is not given to the dead, but to the living. Therefore, “Thou shalt love God with all thy

heart,” cannot mean, Thou shalt do this when thou diest, but while thou livest.

Secondly. From express texts of Scripture:

**(1.)** “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, having renounced (ἀρνησάμενοι) ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for — the glorious appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus 2:11-14.)

**(2.)** “He hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, — to perform the mercy promised to our fathers; the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.” (Luke 1:69-75.)

**Q. 10.** Is there any example in Scripture of persons who had attained to this?

**A.** Yes. St. John, and all those of whom he says in his First Epistle, “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment: Because as he is, so are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17.)

**Q. 11.** But why are there not more examples of this kind recorded in the New Testament?

**A.** It does not become us to be peremptory in this matter. One reason might possibly be, because the Apostles wrote to the Church while it was in a state of infancy. Therefore they might mention such persons the more sparingly, lest they should give strong meat to babes.

**Q. 12.** Can you show one such example now? Where is he that; is thus perfect?

**A.** To some who make this inquiry one might answer, “If I knew one here, I would not tell you. For you do not inquire out of love. You are like Herod. You only seek the young child, to slay it.”

But more directly we answer, There are numberless reasons why there should be few (if any indisputable) examples. What inconveniences would this bring on the person himself, set as a mark for all to shoot at! What a temptation would it be to others, not only to men who knew not God, but to believers themselves! How hardly would they refrain from idolizing such a person! And yet, how unprofitable to gainsayers! “For if they hear not Moses and the Prophets,” Christ and his Apostles, “neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

**Q. 13.** Suppose one had attained to this, would you advise him to speak of it?

**A.** Not to them who know not God. It would only provoke them to contradict and blaspheme: Nor to any, without some particular reason, without some particular good in view. And then they should have an especial care to avoid all appearance of boasting.

**Q. 14.** Is it a sin, not to believe those who say they have attained?

**A.** By no means, even though they said true. We ought not hastily to believe, but to suspend our judgment, till we have full and strong proof.

**Q. 15.** But are we not apt to have a secret distaste to any who say they are saved from all sin?

**A.** It is very possible we may, and that on several grounds; partly from a concern for the honor of God, and the good of souls, who may be hurt, yea, or turned out of the way, if these are not what they profess; partly from a kind of implicit envy at those who speak of higher attainments than our own; and partly from our slowness and unreadiness of heart to believe the works of God.

**Q. 16.** Does not the harshly preaching perfection tend to bring believers into a kind of bondage, or slavish fear?

**A.** It does: Therefore we should always place it in the most amiable light, so that it may excite only hope, joy, and desire.

**Q. 17.** Why may we not continue in the joy of faith even till we are made perfect?

**A.** Why indeed! since holy grief does not quench this joy; since, even while we are under the cross, while we deeply partake of the sufferings of Christ, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable.

**Q. 18.** Do we not discourage believers from rejoicing evermore?

**A.** We ought not so to do. Let them all their life long rejoice unto Gods so it be with reverence. And even if lightness or pride should mix with their joy, let us not strike at the joy itself, (this is the gift of God,) but at that lightness or pride, that the evil may cease and the good remain.

**Q. 19.** Ought we to be anxiously careful about perfection, lest we should die before we have attained?

**A.** In nowise. We ought to be thus careful for nothing, neither spiritual nor temporal.

**Q. 20.** But ought we not to be troubled on account of the sinful nature which still remains in us?

**A.** It is good for us to have a deep sense of this, and to be much ashamed before the Lord: But this should only incite us the more earnestly to turn unto Christ every moment, and to draw light, and life, and strength from him, that we may go on conquering and to conquer. And, therefore, when the sense of our sin most abounds, the sense of his love should much more abound.

**Q. 21.** Will our joy or our trouble increase as we grow in grace?

**A.** Perhaps both. But without doubt our joy in the Lord will increase as our love increases.

**Q. 22.** Is not the teaching believers to be continually poring upon their inbred sin, the ready way to make them forget that they were purged from their former sins?

**A.** We find by experience it is; or to make them undervalue and account it a little thing: whereas, indeed, (though there are still greater gifts behind,) this is inexpressibly great and glorious.

MINUTES  
OF  
SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS  
BETWEEN  
THE REV. MR. WESLEY AND OTHERS;

FROM THE YEAR 1744, TO THE YEAR 1789. <sup>F32</sup>

It is desired, that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God; that every person speak freely whatever is in his heart.

**Q. 1.** How may we best improve the time of this Conference?

**A.**

(1.) While we are conversing, let us have an especial care to set God always before us.

(2.) In the intermediate hours, let us redeem all the time we can for private exercises.

(3.) Therein let us give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing on this our labor.

**Q. 2.** Have our Conferences been as useful as they might have been?

**A.** No: We have been continually straitened for time. Hence, scarce anything has been searched to the bottom. To remedy this, let every Conference last nine days, concluding on Wednesday in the second week.

**Q. 3.** What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the Preachers called Methodists?

**A.** Not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land.

**Q. 4.** What was the rise of Methodism, so called?

**A.** In 1729, two young men, reading the Bible, saw they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737 they saw holiness comes by faith. They saw likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified; but still holiness was their point. God then thrust them out, utterly against their will, to raise a holy people. When Satan could no otherwise hinder this, he threw Calvinism in the way; and then Antinomianism, which strikes directly at the root of all holiness.

**Q. 5.** Is it advisable for us to preach in as many places as we can, without forming any societies?

**A.** By no means. We have made the trial in various places; and that for a considerable time. But all the seed has fallen as by the highway side. There is scarce any fruit remaining.

**Q. 6.** Where should we endeavor to preach most?

**A.**

(1.) Where there is the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers.

(2.) Where there is most fruit.

**Q. 7.** Is field-preaching unlawful?

**A.** We conceive not. We do not know that it is contrary to any law either of God or man.

**Q. 8.** Have we not used it too sparingly?

**A.** It seems we have;

(1.) Because our call is, to save that which is lost. Now, we cannot expect them to seek us. Therefore we should go and seek them.

(2.) Because we are particularly called, by “going into the highways and hedges,” which none else will do, “to compel them to come in.”

**(3.)** Because that reason against it is not good, “The house will hold all that come.” The house may hold all that come to the house; but not all that would come to the field.

The greatest hindrance to this you are to expect from rich, or cowardly, or lazy Methodists. But regard them not, neither Stewards, Leaders, nor people. Whenever the weather will permit, go out in God’s name into the most public places, and call all to repent and believe the gospel; every Sunday, in particular; especially where there are old societies, lest they settle upon their lees. The Stewards will frequently oppose this, lest they lose their usual collection. But this is not a sufficient reason against it. Shall we barter souls for money?

**Q. 9.** Ought we not diligently to observe in what places God is pleased at any time to pour out his Spirit more abundantly?

**A.** We ought; and at that time to send more laborers than usual into that part of the harvest.

But whence shall we have them?

**(1.)** So far as we can afford it, we will keep a reserve of Preachers at Kingswood.

**(2.)** Let an exact list be kept of those who are proposed for trial, but not accepted.

**Q. 10.** How often shall we permit strangers to be present at the meeting of the society?

**A.** At every other meeting of the society in every place let no stranger be admitted. At other times, they may; but the same person not above twice or thrice. In order to this, see that all in every place show their tickets before they come in. If the Stewards and Leaders are not elect herein, employ others that have more resolution.

**Q. 11.** How may the Leaders of classes be made more useful?

**A.**

**(1.)** Let each of them be diligently examined concerning his method of meeting a class. Let this be done with all possible exactness at the next

quarterly visitation. And in order to this, allow sufficient time for the visiting of each society.

**(2.)** Let each Leader carefully inquire how every soul in his class prospers; not only how each person observes the outward Rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.

**(3.)** Let the Leaders converse with the Assistant frequently and freely.

**Q. 12.** Can anything farther be done, in order to make the meetings of the classes lively and profitable?

**A.**

**(1.)** Change improper Leaders.

**(2.)** Let the Leaders frequently meet each other's classes.

**(3.)** Let us observe which Leaders are the most useful; and let these meet the other classes as often as possible.

**(4.)** See that all the Leaders be not only men of sound judgment, but men truly devoted to God.

**Q. 13.** How can we farther assist those under our care?

**A.**

**(1.)** By meeting the married men and women together, the first Sunday after the visitation, — the single men and women apart, on the two following, — in all the large societies: This has been much neglected.

**(2.)** By instructing them at their own houses. What unspeakable need is there of this! The world say, "The Methodists are no better than other people." This is not true. But it is nearer the truth than we are willing to believe.

N. B. For

**(1.)** Personal religion either toward God or man is amazingly superficial among us.

I can but just touch on a few generals. How little faith is there among us! How little communion with God! How little living in heaven, walking in

eternity, deadness to every creature! How much love of the world; desire of pleasure, of ease, of getting money! How little brotherly love! What continual judging one another! What gossiping, evil-speaking, tale-bearing! What want of moral honesty! To instance only in one or two particulars: Who does as he would be done by, in buying and selling, particularly in selling horses! Write him a knave that does not. And the Methodist knave is the worst of all knaves.

(2.) Family religion is shamefully wanting, and almost in every branch. And the Methodists in general will be little the better, till we take quite another course with them. For what avails public preaching alone, though we could preach like angels? We must, yea, every traveling Preacher must, instruct them from house to house. Till this is done, and that in good earnest, the Methodists will be little better than other people. Our religion is not deep, universal, uniform; but superficial, partial, uneven. It will be so, till we spend half as much time in this visiting, as we now do in talking uselessly.

Can we find a better method of doing this than Mr. Baxter's? If not, let us adopt it without delay. His whole tract, entitled *Gildas Salvianus*, is well worth a careful perusal. A short extract from it I will subjoin. Speaking of this visiting from house to house, he says: —

“We shall find many hindrances, both in ourselves, and in the people.

“1. In ourselves there is much dullness and laziness; so that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in the work.

“2. We have a base, man-pleasing temper; so that we let men perish, rather than lose their love. We let them go quietly to hell, lest we should anger them.

“3. Some of us have also a foolish bashfulness. We know not how to begin, and blush to contradict the devil.

“4. But the greatest hindrance is, weakness of faith. Our whole motion is weak, because the spring of it is weak.

“5. Lastly, we are unskilful in the work. How few know how to deal with men, so as to get within them, and suit all our discourse to their several conditions and tempers; to choose the fittest subjects, and

follow them with a holy mixture of seriousness, and terror, and love, and meekness!” (p. 351.)

And we have many difficulties to grapple with in our people.

- 1.** Too many of them will be unwilling to be taught, till we conquer their perverseness by the force of reason and the power of love.
- 2.** And many are so dull that they will shun being taught for fear of showing their dulness. And indeed you will find it extremely hard to make them understand the very plainest points.
- 3.** And it is still harder to fix things on their hearts, without which all our labor is lost. If you have not, therefore, great seriousness and fervency, what good can you expect? And, after all, it is grace alone that must do the work.
- 4.** And when we have made some impressions on their hearts, if we look not after them, they will soon die away.

But as great as this labor of private instruction is, it is absolutely necessary. For, after all our preaching, many of our people are almost as ignorant as if they had never heard the gospel. I speak as plain as I can, yet I frequently meet with those who have been my hearers many years, who know not whether Christ be God or man. And how few are there that know the nature of repentance, faith, and holiness! Most of them have a sort of confidence that God will save them, while the world has their hearts. I have found by experience, that one of these has learned more from one hour’s close discourse, than from ten years’ public preaching.

And undoubtedly this private application is implied in those solemn words of the Apostle: “I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering.”

O brethren, if we could but set this work on foot in all our societies, and prosecute it zealously, what glory would redound to God! If the common ignorance were banished, and every shop and every house busied in speaking of the word and works of God; surely God would dwell in our habitations, and make us his delight.

And this is absolutely necessary to the welfare of our people, many of whom neither believe nor repent to this day. Look round and see how many of them are still in apparent danger of damnation. And how can you walk and talk and be merry with such people, when you know their case? Methinks, when you look them in the face, you should break forth into tears, as the Prophet did when he looked upon Hazeal; and then set on them with the most vehement and importunate exhortations. O, for God's sake, and for the sake of poor souls bestir yourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation!

What cause have we to bleed before the Lord this day, that we have so long neglected this good work! If we had but set upon it sooner, how many more might have been brought to Christ! And how much holier and happier might we have made our societies before now! And why might we not have done it sooner? There were many hindrances; and so there always will be. But the greatest hindrance was in ourselves, in our littleness of faith and love.

But it is objected,

**(1.)** “This will take up so much time, that we shall not have time to follow our studies.”

I answer,

**(i.)** Gaining knowledge is a good thing; but saving souls is a better.

**(ii.)** By this very thing you will gain the most excellent knowledge, that of God and eternity.

**(iii.)** You will have time for gaining other knowledge too, if you spend all your mornings therein. Only sleep not more than you need; and never be idle, or triflingly employed. But,

**(iv.)** If you can do but one, let your studies alone. I would throw by all the libraries in the world, rather than be guilty of the loss of one soul.

I allow, in some of the country circuits, where you have only a day to spend in each place, you have not time for this excellent work. But you have, wherever you spend several days together in one town.

It is objected.

**(2.)** “The people will not submit to it.” If some will not, others will. And the success with them will repay all your labor. O let us herein follow the example of St. Paul!

**(i.)** For our general business, “Serving the Lord with all humility of mind.”

**(ii.)** Our special work, “Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock.”

**(iii.)** Our doctrine, “Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**(iv.)** The place, “I have taught you publicly, and from house to house.” The object and manner of teaching: “I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears.”

**(v.)** His innocence and self-denial herein: “I have coveted no man’s silver or gold.”

**(vi.)** His patience: “Neither count I my life dear unto myself.” And among all our motives, let these be ever before our eyes:

**(1.)** “The Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

**(2.)** “Grievous wolves shall enter in; yea, of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things.” Write this upon your hearts, and it will do you more good than twenty years’ study.

Let every Preacher, having a catalogue of those in each society, go to each house. Deal gently with them, that the report of it may move others to desire your coming. Give the children the “Instructions for Children,” and encourage them to get them by heart. Indeed, you will find it no easy matter to teach the ignorant the principles of religion. So true is the remark of Archbishop Usher: “Great scholars may think this work beneath them. But they should consider, the laying the foundation skilfully, as it is of the greatest importance, so it is the masterpiece of the wisest builder. And let the wisest of us all try whenever we please, we shall find, that to lay this ground-work rightly, to make the ignorant understand the grounds of religion, will put us to the trial of all our skill.”

Perhaps in doing this it may be well,

**(1.)** After a few loving words spoken to all in the house, to take each person singly into another room, where you may deal closely with him, about his sin, and misery, and duty. Set these home, or you lose all your labor. (At least, let none be present but those who are familiar with each other.)

**(2.)** Hear what the children have learned by heart.

**(3.)** Choose some of the weightiest points, and try if they understand them. As, “Do you believe you have sin in you? What does sin deserve? What remedy has God provided for guilty, helpless sinners?”

**(4.)** Often with the question suggest the answer. As, “What is repentance? Sorrow for sin, or a conviction that we are guilty, helpless sinners.” “What is faith? A divine conviction of things not seen.”

**(5.)** Where you perceive they do not understand the stress of your question, lead them into it by other questions. For instance, you ask, “How do you think your sins will be pardoned?” They answer, “By repenting and amending my life.” You ask farther, “But will your amendment make satisfaction for your past sins?” They will answer, “I hope so, or I know not what will.” One would think, these had no knowledge of Christ at all. And some have not. But others have; and give such answers, only because they do not understand the scope of the question. Ask them farther, “Can you be saved without the death of Christ?” They immediately say, “No.” And if you ask, “What has he suffered for you?” they will say, “He shed his blood for us.” But many cannot express even what they have some conception of; no, not even when expressions are put into their mouths. With these you are to deal exceeding tenderly, lest they be discouraged.

**(6.)** If you perceive them troubled, that they cannot answer, step in yourself, and take the burden off them; answering the question yourself. And do it thoroughly and plainly, making a full explication of the whole business to them.

**(7.)** When you have tried their knowledge, proceed to instruct; them, according to their several capacities. If a man understand the

fundamentals, speak what you perceive he most needs, either explaining farther some doctrines, or some duty, or showing him the necessity of something which he neglects. If he still understands not, go over it again till he does.

**(8.)** Next inquire into his state, whether convinced or unconvinced, converted or unconverted. Tell him, if need be, what conversion is; and then renew and enforce the inquiry.

**(9.)** If unconverted, labor with all your power to bring his heart to a sense of his condition. Set this home with a more earnest voice than you spoke before. Get to the heart, or you do nothing.

**(10.)** Conclude all with a strong exhortation, which should enforce,

**(i.)** The duty of the heart, in order to receive Christ.

**(ii.)** The avoiding former sins, and constantly using the outward means. And be sure, if you can, to get their promise, to forsake sin, change their company, and use the means. And do this solemnly, reminding them of the presence of God, who hears their promises, and expects the performance.

**(11.)** Before you leave them, engage the head of each family to call all his family together every Sunday before they go to bed, and hear what they can repeat, and so continue, till they have learned the “Instructions” perfectly; and afterwards let him take care that they do not forget what they have learned.

Do this in earnest, and you will soon find what a work you take in hand, in undertaking to be a Travelling Preacher!

**Q. 14.** How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating into the society?

**A.**

**(1.)** Give tickets to none till they are recommended by a Leader, with whom they have met at least two months on trial.

**(2.)** Give notes to none but those who are recommended by one you know, or till they have met three or four times in a class.

**(3.)** Give them the Rules the first time they meet. See that this be never neglected.

**Q. 15.** When shall we admit new members?

**A.** In large towns, admit them into the Bands at the quarterly love-feast following the visitation: Into the society, on the Sunday following the visitation. Then also read the names of them that are excluded.

**Q. 16.** Should we insist on the Band rules, particularly with regard to dress?

**A.** By all means. This is no time to give any encouragement to superfluity of apparel. Therefore give no Band-tickets to any till they have left off superfluous ornaments. In order to this,

**(1.)** Let every Assistant read the “Thoughts upon Dress” at least once a year, in every large society.

**(2.)** In visiting the classes, be very mild, but very strict.

**(3.)** Allow no exempt case, not even of a married woman. Better one suffer than many.

**(4.)** Give no ticket to any that wear calashes, high-heads, or enormous bonnets.

To encourage meeting in Band,

**(1.)** In every large society, have a love-feast quarterly for the Bands only.

**(2.)** Never fail to meet them once a week.

**(3.)** Exhort every believer to embrace the advantage.

**(4.)** Give a Band-ticket to none till they have met a quarter on trial.

Observe! You give none a Band-ticket before he meets, but after he has met.

**Q. 17.** Have those in Band left off snuff and drams?

**A.** No. Many are still enslaved to one or the other. In order to redress this,

- (1.) Let no Preacher touch either on any account.
- (2.) Strongly dissuade our people from them.
- (3.) Answer their pretenses, particularly curing the colic.

**Q. 18.** Do we observe any evil which has lately prevailed among our societies?

**A.** Many of our members have married with unbelievers, yea, with unawakened persons. This has had fatal effects. They had either a cross for life, or turned back to perdition.

**Q. 19.** What can be done to put a stop to this?

**A.**

- (1.) Let every Preacher publicly enforce the Apostle's caution, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers."
- (2.) Let him openly declare, whoever does this will be expelled the society.
- (3.) When any such is expelled, let a suitable exhortation be subjoined. And,
- (4.) Let all be exhorted to take no step in so weighty a matter without advising with the most serious of their brethren.

**Q. 20.** Ought any woman to marry without the consent of her parents?

**A.** In general she ought not. Yet there may be an exception. For if,

- (1.) A woman be under a necessity of marrying; if,
- (2.) Her parents absolutely refuse to let her marry any Christian; then she may, nay, ought to, marry without their consent. Yet, even then, a Methodist Preacher ought not to marry her.

**Q. 21.** Do not Sabbath-breaking, dram-drinking, evil-speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, expensiveness or gaiety of

apparel, and contracting debts without due care to discharge them, still prevail in several places? How may these evils be remedied?

**A.**

**(1.)** Let us preach expressly on each of these heads.

**(2.)** Read in every society the “Sermon on Evil-Speaking.”

**(3.)** Let the Leaders closely examine and exhort every person to put away the accursed thing.

**(4.)** Let the Preacher warn every society, that none who is guilty herein can remain with us.

**(5.)** Extirpate smuggling, buying or selling unaccustomed goods, out of every society. Let none remain with us, who will not totally abstain from every kind and degree of it. Speak tenderly, but earnestly, and frequently of it, in every society near the coasts; and read to them, and diligently disperse among them, the “Word to a Smuggler.”

**(6.)** Extirpate bribery, receiving any thing, directly or indirectly, for voting in any election. Show no respect of persons herein, but expel all that touch the accursed thing. Largely show, both in public and private, the wickedness of thus selling our country. And every where read the “Word to a Freeholder,” and disperse it with both hands.

**Q. 22.** What shall we do to prevent scandal, when any of our members become bankrupt?

**A.** Let the Assistant talk with him at large; and if he has not kept fair accounts, or has been concerned in that base practice of raising money by coining notes, (commonly called the bill-trade,) let him be expelled immediately.

**Q. 23.** What is the office of a Christian Minister?

**A.** To watch over souls, as he that must give account.

**Q. 24.** In what view may we and our Helpers be considered?

**A.** Perhaps as extraordinary messengers, (that is, out of the ordinary way,) designed,

**(1.)** To provoke the regular Ministers to jealousy.

**(2.)** To supply their lack of service toward those who are perishing for want of knowledge. But how hard is it to abide here! Who does not wish to be a little higher? suppose, to be ordained!

**Q. 25.** What is the office of a Helper?

**A.** In the absence of a Minister, to feed and guide the flock; in particular,

**(1.)** To preach morning and evening. (But he is never to begin later in the evening than seven o'clock, unless in particular cases.)

**(2.)** To meet the society and the Bands weekly.

**(3.)** To meet the Leaders weekly.

Let every preacher be particularly exact in this, and in the morning preaching. If he has twenty hearers, let him preach. If not, let him sing and pray.

N. B. We are fully determined never to drop the morning preaching, and to continue preaching at five, wherever it is practicable, particularly in London and Bristol.

**Q. 26.** What are the rules of a Helper?

**A.**

**(1.)** Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

**(2.)** Be serious. Let your motto be, "Holiness to the Lord." Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

**(3.)** Converse sparingly and cautiously with women; particularly, with young women.

**(4.)** Take no step toward marriage, without first consulting with your brethren.

- (5.)** Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on everything. You know the Judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.
- (6.)** Speak evil of no one; else your word especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned.
- (7.)** Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, as soon as may be; else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.
- (8.)** Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master. A Preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.
- (9.)** Be ashamed of nothing but sin: Not of fetching wood (if time permit) or drawing water; not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbor's.
- (10.)** Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And in general, do not mend our Rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.
- (11.)** You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most.

Observe: It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember! A Methodist Preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist discipline! Therefore you will need all the sense you have, and to have all your wits about you!

- (12.)** Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel. As such, it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct; partly, in preaching and visiting from house to house; partly, in reading, meditation, and prayer.

Above all, if you labor with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory.

**Q. 27.** What power is this which you exercise over both the Preachers and the societies?

**A.** Count Zinzendorf loved to keep all things close: I love to do all things openly. I will therefore tell you all I know of the matter, taking it from the very beginning.

**(1.)** In November, 1738, two or three persons who desired "to flee from the wrath to come," and then a few more, came to me in London, and desired me to advise and pray with them. I said, "If you will meet me on Thursday night, I will help you as well as I can." More and more then desired to meet with them, till they were increased to many hundreds. The ease was afterwards the same at Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, and many other parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It may be observed, the desire was on their part, not mine. My desire was, to live and die in retirement. But I did not see that I could refuse them my help, and be guiltless before God.

Here commenced my power; namely, a power to appoint when, and where, and how they should meet; and to remove those whose lives showed that they had not a desire "to flee from the wrath to come." And this power remained the same, whether the people meeting together were twelve, or twelve hundred, or twelve thousand.

**(2.)** In a few days some of them said, "Sir, we will not sit under you for nothing; we will subscribe quarterly." I said, "I will have nothing; for I want nothing. My Fellowship supplies me with all I want." One replied, "Nay, but you want a hundred and fifteen pounds to pay for the lease of the Foundry; and likewise a large sum of money to put it into repair." On this consideration, I suffered them to subscribe. And when the society met, I asked, "Who will take the trouble of receiving this money, and paying it where it is needful?" One said, "I will do it, and keep the account for you." So here was the first Steward. Afterwards, I desired one or two more to help me, as Stewards, and, in process of time, a greater number.

Let it be remarked, it was I myself, not the people, who chose these Stewards, and appointed to each the distinct work wherein he was to help me, as long as I desired. And herein I began to exercise another sort of power; namely, that of appointing and removing Stewards.

**(3.)** After a time a young man, named Thomas Maxfield, came and desired to help me as a son in the gospel. Soon after came a second, Thomas Richards; and then a third, Thomas Westell. These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labor when and where I should direct. Observe: These likewise desired me, not I them. But I durst not refuse their assistance. And here commenced my power, to appoint each of these when, and where, and how to labor; that is, while he chose to continue with me. For each had a power to go away when he pleased; as I had also, to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient cause. The case continued the same when the number of Preachers increased. I had just the same power still, to appoint when, and where, and how each should help me; and to tell any, (if I saw cause,) “I do not desire your help any longer.” On these terms, and no other, we joined at first: On these we continue joined. But they do me no favor in being directed by me. It is true, my “reward is with the Lord:” But at present I have nothing from it but trouble and care; and often a burden I scarce know how to bear.

**(4.)** In 1744 I wrote to several Clergymen, and to all who then served me as sons in the gospel, desiring them to meet me in London, and to give me their advice concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God. And when their number increased, so that it was not convenient to invite them all, for several years I wrote to those with whom I desired to confer, and they only met me at London, or elsewhere; till at length I gave a general permission, which I afterwards saw cause to retract.

Observe: I myself sent for these of my own free choice. And I sent for them to advise, not govern, me. Neither did I at any time divest myself of any part of the power above described, which the providence of God had cast upon me, without any desire or choice of mine.

**(5.)** What is that power? It is a power of admitting into, and excluding from, the societies under my care; of choosing and removing Stewards;

of receiving or not receiving Helpers, of appointing them when, where, and how to help me, and of desiring any of them to confer with me when I see good. And as it was merely in obedience to the providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at first accepted this power, which I never sought; so it is on the same consideration, not for profit, honor, or pleasure, that I use it at this day.

**(6.)** But “several gentlemen are offended at your having so much power.” I did not seek any part of it. But when it was come unawares, not daring to “bury that talent,” I used it to the best of my judgment. Yet I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now bear it as my burden; — the burden which God lays upon me, and therefore I dare not lay it down.

But if you can tell me any one, or any five men, to whom I may transfer this burden, who can and will do just what I do now, I will heartily thank both them and you.

**(7.)** But some of our Helpers say, “This is shackling free-born Englishmen;” and demand a free Conference, that is, a meeting of all the Preachers, wherein all things shall be determined by most votes. I answer, It is possible, after my death, something of this kind may take place; but not while I live.

To me the Preachers have engaged themselves to submit, to serve me as sons in the gospel; but they are not thus engaged to any man or number of men besides. To me the people in general will submit; but they will not thus submit to any other.

It is nonsense, then, to call my using this power, “shackling free-born Englishmen.” None needs to submit to it unless he will; so that there is no shackling in the case. Every Preacher and every member may leave me when he pleases. But while he chooses to stay, it is on the same terms that he joined me at first.

“But this is making yourself a Pope.” This carries no face of truth. The Pope affirms that every Christian must do all he bids, and believe all he says, under pain of damnation. I never affirmed anything that bears any the most distant resemblance to this. All I affirm is, the Preachers who choose to labor with me, choose to serve me as sons in the gospel. And the

people who choose to be under my care, choose to be so on the same terms they were at first.

Therefore all talk of this kind is highly injurious to me, who bear the burden merely for your sake. And it is exceeding mischievous to the people, tending to confound their understanding, and to fill their hearts with evil surmisings and unkind tempers toward me; to whom they really owe more, for taking all this load upon me, for exercising this very power, for shackling myself in this manner, than for all my preaching put together: Because preaching twice or thrice a day is no burden to me at all; but the care of all the Preachers and all the people is a burden indeed!

**Q. 28.** What reason can be assigned why so many of our Preachers contract nervous disorders?

**A.** The chief reason, on Dr. Cadogan's principles, is either indolence or intemperance.

**(1.)** Indolence. Several of them use too little exercise, far less than when they wrought at their trade. And this will naturally pave the way for many, especially nervous, disorders.

**(2.)** Intemperance, — though not in the vulgar sense.

They take more food than they did when they labored more: And let any man of reflection judge how long this will consist with health. Or they use more sleep than when they labored more: And this alone will destroy the firmness of the nerves. If, then, our Preachers would avoid nervous disorders, let them,

**(1.)** Take as little meat, drink, and sleep as nature will bear; and,

**(2.)** Use full as much exercise daily as they did before they were Preachers.

**Q. 29.** What general method of employing our time would you advise us to?

**A.** We advise you,

**(1.)** As often as possible to rise at four.

(2.) From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray, and read, partly the Scripture with the Notes, partly the closely practical parts of what we have published.

(3.) From six in the morning till twelve, (allowing an hour for breakfast,) to read in order with much prayer, first, “The Christian Library,” and the other books which we have published in prose and verse, and then those which we recommended in our Rules of Kingswood School.

**Q. 30.** Should our Helpers follow trades?

**A.** The question is not, whether they may occasionally work with their hands, as St. Paul did, but whether it be proper for thee to keep shop or follow merchandise. After long consideration, it was agreed by all our brethren, that no Preacher who will not relinquish his trade of buying and selling, (though it were only pills, drops, or balsams,) shall be considered as a Traveling Preacher any longer.

**Q. 31.** Why is it that the people under our care are no better?

**A.** Other reasons may concur; but the chief is, because we are not more knowing and more holy.

**Q. 32.** But why are we not more knowing?

**A.** Because we are idle. We forget our very first rule, “Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.”

I fear there is altogether a fault in this matter, and that few of us are clear. Which of you spends as many hours a day in God’s work as you did formerly in man’s work? We talk, — or read history, or what comes next to hand. We must, absolutely must, cure this evil, or betray the cause of God.

But how?

**(1.)** Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employ, or, at least, five hours in four-and-twenty.

“But I read only the Bible.” Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible, and, by parity of reason, to hear only the Bible: But if so, you need preach no more. Just so said George Bell. And what is the fruit? Why, now he neither reads the Bible, nor anything else. This is rank enthusiasm. If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. “Bring the books,” says he, “but especially the parchments,” those wrote on parchment. “But I have no taste for reading.” Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade.

“But I have no books.” I will give each of you, as fast as you will read them, books to the value of five pounds. And I desire the Assistants would take care that all the large societies provide our Works, or at least the Notes, for the use of the Preachers.

**(2.)** In the afternoon follow Mr. Baxter’s plan. Then you will have no time to spare: You will have work enough for all your time. Then, likewise, no Preacher will stay with us who is as salt that has lost its savor. For to such this employment would be mere drudgery. And in order to it, you will have need of all the knowledge you have, or can procure.

The sum is, Go into every house in course, and teach every one therein, young and old, if they belong to us, to be Christians inwardly and outwardly.

Make every particular plain to their understanding; fix it in their memory; write it in their heart. In order to this, there must be “line upon line, precept upon precept.” What patience, what love, what knowledge is requisite for this!

**Q. 33.** In what particular method should we instruct them?

**A.** You may, as you have time, read, explain, enforce,

**(1.)** “The Rules of the Society.”

**(2.)** “Instructions for Children.”

(3.) The fourth volume of “Sermons.” And,

(4.) Philip Henry’s “Method of Family Prayer.”

We must needs do this, were it only to avoid idleness. Do we not loiter away many hours in every week? Each try himself: No idleness can consist with growth in grace. Nay, without exactness in redeeming time, you cannot retain the grace you received in justification.

But what shall we do for the rising generation? Unless we take care of this, the present revival will be *res unius aetatis*; it will last only the age of a man. Who will labour herein? Let him that is zealous for God and the souls of men begin now.

(1.) Where there are ten children in a society, meet them at least an hour every week.

(2.) Talk with them every time you see any at home.

(3.) Pray in earnest for them.

(4.) Diligently instruct and vehemently exhort all parents at their own houses.

(5.) Preach expressly on education, particularly at Midsummer, when you speak of Kingswood. “But I have no gift for this.” Gift or no gift, you are to do it; else you are not called to be a Methodist Preacher. Do it as you can, till you can do it as you would. Pray earnestly for the gift, and use the means for it. Particularly, study the “Instructions” and “Lessons for Children.”

**Q. 34.** Why are not we more holy? Why do not we live in eternity; walk with God all the day long? Why are we not all devoted to God; breathing the whole spirit of Missionaries?

**A.** Chiefly because we are enthusiasts; looking for the end, without using the means. To touch only upon two or three instances: Who of you rises at four in summer; or even at five, when he does not preach? Do you recommend to all our societies the five o’clock hour for private prayer? Do you observe it, or any other fixed time? Do not you find by experience, that any time is no time? Do you know the obligation of the benefit of

fasting? How often do you practice it? The neglect of this is sufficient to account for our feebleness and faintness of spirit. We are continually grieving the Holy Spirit of God by the habitual neglect of plain duty! Let us amend from this hour.

**Q. 35.** But how can I fast, since it hurts my health?

**A.** There are several degrees of fasting which cannot hurt your health. I will instance in one: Let you and I every Friday (beginning on the next) avow this duty throughout the nation by touching no tea, coffee, or chocolate in the morning but (if we want it) half a pint of milk or water-gruel. Let us dine on potatoes, and (if we need it) eat three or four ounces of flesh in the evening. At other times let us eat no flesh-suppers: These exceedingly tend to breed nervous disorders.

**Q. 36.** What is the best general method of preaching?

**A.**

- (1.) To invite.
- (2.) To convince.
- (3.) To offer Christ.
- (4.) To build up; and to do this in some measure in every sermon.

**Q. 37.** Are there any smaller advices relative to preaching, which might be of use to us?

**A.** Perhaps these:

- (1.) Be sure never to disappoint a congregation, unless in case of life or death.
- (2.) Begin and end precisely at the time appointed.
- (3.) Let your whole deportment before the congregation be serious, weighty, and solemn.
- (4.) Always suit your subject to your audience.
- (5.) Choose the plainest texts you can.

- (6.) Take care not to ramble; but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand.
- (7.) Be sparing in allegorizing or spiritualizing.
- (8.) Take care of anything awkward or affected, either in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation.
- (9.) Sing no hymns of your own composing.
- (10.) Print nothing without my approbation.
- (11.) Do not usually pray above eight or ten minutes (at most) without intermission.
- (12.) Frequently read and enlarge upon a portion of the Notes. And let young Preachers often exhort, without taking a text.
- (13.) In repeating the Lord's Prayer, remember to say "hallowed," not *hollowed*; "trespass against *us*;" "amen."
- (14.) Repeat this prayer aloud after the Minister, as often as he repeats it.
- (15.) Repeat after him aloud every confession, and both the doxologies in the Communion-Service.
- (16.) Always kneel during public prayer.
- (17.) Everywhere avail yourself of the great festivals, by preaching on the occasion, and singing the hymns, which you should take care to have in readiness.
- (18.) Avoid quaint words, however in fashion, as *object*, *originate*, *very*, *high*, *etc.*
- (19.) Avoid the fashionable impropriety of leaving out the *u* in many words, as honor, vigor, etc. This is mere childish affectation.
- (20.) Beware of clownishness, either in speech or dress. Wear no slouched hat.
- (21.) Be merciful to your beast. Not only ride moderately, but see with your own eyes that your horse be rubbed, fed, and bedded.

**Q. 38.** Have not some of us been led off from practical preaching by what was called preaching Christ?

**A.** Indeed we have. The most effectual way of preaching Christ, is to preach him in all his offices, and to declare his law as well as his gospel, both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly and closely insist upon inward and outward holiness, in all its branches.

**Q. 39.** How shall we guard against formality in public worship; particularly in singing?

**A.**

(1.) By preaching frequently on the head.

(2.) By taking care to speak only what we feel.

(3.) By choosing such hymns as are proper for the congregation.

(4.) By not singing too much at once; seldom more than five or six verses.

(5.) By suiting the tune to the words.

(6.) By often stopping short, and asking the people, “Now, do you know what you said last? Did you speak no more than you felt?”

Is not this formality creeping in already, by those complex tunes, which it is scarcely possible to sing with devotion? Such is, “Praise the Lord, ye blessed ones:” Such the long quavering hallelujah annexed to the morning-song tune, which I defy any man living to sing devoutly. The repeating the same words so often, (but especially while another repeats different words, the horrid abuse which runs through the modern church-music,) as it shocks all common sense, so it necessarily brings in dead formality, and has no more of religion in it than a Lancashire hornpipe. Besides, it is a flat contradiction to our Lord’s command, “Use not vain repetitions.” For what is a vain repetition, if this is not? What end of devotion does it serve? Sing no anthems.

(7.) Do not suffer the people to sing too slow. This naturally tends to formality, and is brought in by them who have either very strong or very weak voices.

**(8.)** In every large society let them learn to sing; and let them always learn our own tunes first.

**(9.)** Let the women constantly sing their parts alone. Let no man sing with them, unless he understands the notes, and sings the bass, as it is pricked down in the book.

**(10.)** Introduce no new tunes till they are perfect in the old.

**(11.)** Let no organ be placed anywhere, till proposed in the Conference.

**(12.)** Recommend our tune-book everywhere; and if you cannot sing yourself, choose a person or two in each place to pitch the tune for you.

**(13.)** Exhort every one in the congregation to sing, not one in ten only.

**(14.)** If a Preacher be present, let no singer give out the words.

**(15.)** When they would teach a tune to the congregation, they must sing only the tenor.

After preaching, take a little lemonade, mild ale, or candied orange-peel. All spirituous liquors, at that time especially, are deadly poison.

**Q. 40.** Who is the Assistant?

**A.** That Preacher in each Circuit who is appointed, from time to time, to take charge of the societies and the other Preachers therein.

**Q. 41.** How should an Assistant be qualified for his charge?

**A.** By walking closely with God, and having his work greatly at heart; by understanding and loving discipline, ours in particular; and by loving the Church of England, and resolving not to separate from it. Let this be well observed. I fear, when the Methodists leave the Church, God will leave them. But if they are thrust out of it, they will be guiltless.

**Q. 42.** What is the business of an Assistant?

**A.**

- (1.) To see that the other Preachers in his Circuit behave well, and want nothing.
- (2.) To visit the classes quarterly, regulate the Bands, and deliver tickets.
- (3.) To take in or put out of the society or the Bands.
- (4.) To keep watch-nights and love-feasts.
- (5.) To hold quarterly-meetings, and therein diligently to inquire both into the temporal and spiritual state of each society.
- (6.) To take care that every society be duly supplied with books; particularly with “Kempis,” “Instructions for Children,” and the “Primitive Physic,” which ought to be in every house. O why is not this regarded!
- (7.) To send from every quarterly-meeting a circumstantial account to London of every remarkable conversion and remarkable death.
- (8.) To take exact lists of his societies every quarter, and send them up to London.
- (9.) To meet the married men and women, and the single men and women, in the large societies, once a quarter.
- (10.) To overlook the accounts of all the Stewards.

**Q. 43.** Has the office of an Assistant been well executed?

**A.** No, not by half the Assistants.

- (1.) Who has sent the word, whether the other Preachers behave well or ill?
- (2.) Who has visited all the classes and regulated the Bands quarterly?
- (3.) Love-feasts for the Bands have been neglected: Neither have persons been duly taken in and put out of the Bands.
- (4.) The societies are not half supplied with books; not even with those above-mentioned. O exert yourselves in this! Be not weary! Leave no stone unturned!

(5.) How few accounts have I had, either of remarkable deaths, or remarkable conversions!

(6.) How few exact lists of the societies!

(7.) How few have yet the married and single persons once a quarter!

**Q. 44.** Are there any other advices which you would give the Assistants?

**A.** Several.

(1.) Take a regular catalogue of your societies, as they live in house-row.

(2.) Leave your successor a particular account of the state of the Circuit.

(3.) See that every Band-Leader has the Rules of the Bands.

(4.) Vigorously, but calmly, enforce the Rules concerning needless ornaments, drams, snuff, and tobacco. Give no Band-ticket to any man or woman who does not promise to leave them off.

(5.) As soon as there are four men or women believers in any place, put them into a Band.

(6.) Suffer no love-feast to last above an hour and an half; and instantly stop all breaking the cake with one another.

(7.) Warn all, from time to time, that none are to remove from one society to another without a certificate from the Assistant in these words: (Else he will not be received in other societies:) “A. B., the bearer is a member of our society in C.: I believe he has sufficient cause for removing.” I beg every Assistant to remember this.

(8.) Everywhere recommend decency and cleanliness: Cleanliness is next to godliness.

(9.) Exhort all that were brought up in the Church, to continue therein. Set the example yourself; and immediately change every plan that would hinder their being at church at least two Sundays in four. Carefully avoid whatever has a tendency to separate men from the

Church; and let all the servants in our preaching-houses go to church once on Sunday at least.

Is there not a cause? Are we not unawares, by little and little, sliding into a separation from the Church? O use every means to prevent this!

- (1.) Exhort all our people to keep close to the Church and sacrament.
- (2.) Warn them all against niceness in hearing, — a prevailing evil.
- (3.) Warn them also against despising the Prayers of the Church.
- (4.) Against calling our society, “the Church.”
- (5.) Against calling our Preachers, “Ministers;” our Houses, “Meeting-houses.” Call them plain preaching-houses, or chapels.
- (6.) Do not license them as Dissenters. The proper paper to be sent in at the Assizes, Sessions, or Bishop’s Court is this: “A. B. has set apart his house in C. for public worship, of which he desires a certificate.” N. B. The Justice does not license the house, but the Act of Parliament.
- (7.) Do not license yourself till you are constrained; and then, not as a Dissenter, but a Methodist. It is time enough when you are prosecuted to take the oaths. And by so doing you are licensed.

**Q. 45.** But are we not Dissenters?

**A.** No: Although we call sinners to repentance in all places of God’s dominion; and although we frequently use extemporary prayer, and unite together in a religious society; yet we are not Dissenters in the only sense which our law acknowledges, namely, those who renounce the service of the Church. We do not, we dare not, separate from it. We are not Seceders, nor do we bear any resemblance to them. We set out upon quite opposite principles. The Seceders laid the very foundation of their work in judging and condemning others: We laid the foundation on our work in judging and condemning ourselves. They begin everywhere with showing their hearers how fallen the Church and Ministers are: We begin everywhere with showing our hearers how fallen they are themselves. What they do in

America, or what their Minutes say on this subject, is nothing to us. We will keep in the good old way.

And let us never make light of going to church, either by word or deed. Remember Mr. Hook, a very eminent and a zealous Papist. When I asked him, “Sir, what do you do for public worship here, where you have no Romish service?” he answered, “Sir, I am so fully convinced it is the duty of every man to worship God in public, that I go to church every Sunday. If I cannot have such worship as I would, I will have such worship as I can.”

But some may say, “Our own service is public worship.” Yes; but not such as supersedes the Church Service; it pre-supposes public prayer, like the sermons at the University. If it were designed to be instead of the Church Service, it would be essentially defective; for it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer, deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving.

If the people put ours in the room of the Church Service, we hurt them that stay with us, and ruin them that leave us; for then they will go nowhere, but lounge the Sabbath away without any public worship at all.

**Q. 46.** Nay, but is it not our duty to separate from the Church, considering the wickedness both of the Clergy and the people?

**A.** We conceive not:

**(1.)** Because both the Priests and the people were full as wicked in the Jewish Church; and yet it was not the duty of the holy Israelites to separate from them.

**(2.)** Neither did our Lord command his disciples to separate from them; he rather commanded the contrary.

**(3.)** Hence it is clear that could not be the meaning of St. Paul’s words: “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.”

**Q. 47.** But what reasons are there why we should not separate from the Church?

**A.** Among others, those which were printed above twenty years ago, entitled, “Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England.”

We allow two exceptions:

**(1.)** If the parish Minister be a notoriously wicked man.

**(2.)** If he preach Socinianism, Arianism, or any other essentially false doctrine.

**Q. 48.** Do we sufficiently watch over our Helpers?

**A.** We might consider those that are with us as our pupils; into whose behavior and studies we should inquire everyday. Should we not frequently ask each, Do you walk closely with God? Have you now fellowship with the Father and the Son? At what hour do you rise? Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hour of retirement? Do you spend the day in the manner which we advise? Do you converse seriously, usefully, and closely? To be more particular: Do you use all the means of grace yourself, and enforce the use of them on all other persons?

They are either Instituted or Prudential: —

## I.

The INSTITUTED are,

**(1.)** Prayer; private, family, public; consisting of deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Do you use each of these? Do you use private prayer every morning and evening? if you can, at five in the evening; and the hour before or after morning preaching? Do you forecast daily, wherever you are, how to secure these hours? Do you avow it everywhere? Do you ask everywhere, “Have you family prayer?” Do you retire at five o’clock?

**(2.)** Searching the Scriptures by,

**(i.)** Reading: Constantly, some part of everyday; regularly, all the Bible in order; carefully, with the Notes; seriously, with prayer before and after; fruitfully, immediately practicing what you learn there?

**(ii.)** Meditating: At set times? by any rule?

**(iii.)** Hearing: Every morning? carefully; with prayer before, at, after; immediately putting in practice? Have you a New Testament always about you?

**(3.)** The Lord's supper: Do you use this at every opportunity? with solemn prayer before; with earnest and deliberate self-devotion?

**(4.)** Fasting: How do you fast every Friday?

**(5.)** Christian conference: Are you convinced how important and how difficult it is to "order your conversation right?" Is it "always in grace? seasoned with salt? meet to minister grace to the hearers?" Do not you converse too long at a time? Is not an hour commonly enough? Would it not be well always to have a determinate end in view; and to pray before and after it?

## II.

PRUDENTIAL MEANS we may use either as common Christians, as Methodists, as Preachers, or as Assistants.

**(1.)** As common Christians. What particular rules have you in order to grow in grace? What arts of holy living?

**(2.)** As Methodists. Do you never miss your class, or Band?

**(3.)** As Preachers. Do you meet every society; also the Leaders and Bands, if any?

**(4.)** As Assistants. Have you thoroughly considered your office; and do you make a conscience of executing every part of it?

These means may be used without fruit: But there are some means which cannot; namely, watching, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, exercise of the presence of God.

**(1.)** Do you steadily watch against the world, the devil, yourselves, your besetting sin?

(2.) Do you deny yourself every useless pleasure of sense, imagination, honor? Are you temperate in all things? instance in food: Do you use only that kind and that degree which is best both for your body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this?

(3.) Do you eat no flesh suppers? no late suppers?

(4.) Do you eat no more at each meal than is necessary? Are you not heavy or drowsy after dinner?

(5.) Do you use only that kind and that degree of drink which is best both for your body and soul?

(6.) Do you drink water? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off? If not for health, when will you begin again? today?

(7.) How often do you drink wine or ale? everyday? Do you want it?

(8.) Wherein do you “take up your cross daily?” Do you cheerfully bear your cross (whatever is grievous to nature) as a gift of God, and labor to profit thereby?

(9.) Do you endeavor to set God always before you; to see his eye continually fixed upon you? Never can you use these means but a blessing will ensue. And the more you use them, the more will you grow in grace.

**Q. 49.** What can be done, in order to a closer union of our Helpers with each other.

**A.**

(1.) Let them be deeply convinced of the want there is of it at present, and the absolute necessity of it.

(2.) Let them pray for a desire of union.

(3.) Let them speak freely to each other.

(4.) When they meet, let them never part without prayer.

(5.) Let them beware how they despise each other’s gifts.

(6.) Let them never speak slightly of each other in any kind.

(7.) Let them defend one another's characters in everything, so far as consists with truth: And,

(8.) Let them labor in honor each to prefer the other before himself.

**Q. 50.** How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?

**A.** Inquire,

(1.) Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation?

(2.) Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

(3.) Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching?

As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is "moved thereto by the Holy Ghost."

**Q. 51.** What method may we use in receiving a new Helper?

**A.** A proper time for doing this is at a Conference after solemn fasting and prayer.

Every person proposed is then to be present; and each of them may be asked, — Have you faith in Christ? Are you "going on to perfection?" Do you expect to be "perfected in love" in this life? Are you groaning after it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and to his work? Do you know the Methodist plan? Have you read the "Plain Account?" the "Appeals?" Do you know the Rules of the Society? of the Bands? Do you keep them? Do you take no snuff, tobacco, drams? Do you constantly attend the church and sacrament? Have you read the "Minutes of the Conference?" Are you willing to conform to them? Have you considered

the Rules of a Helper; especially the First, Tenth, and Twelfth? Will you keep them for conscience' sake? Are you determined to employ all your time in the word of God? Will you preach every morning and evening; endeavoring not to speak too long, or too loud? Will you diligently instruct the children in every place? Will you visit from house to house? Will you recommend fasting, both by precept and example? Are you in debt? Are you engaged to marry?

(N.B. A Preacher who marries while on trial, is thereby set aside.)

We may then receive him as a probationer, by giving him the "Minutes of the Conference," inscribed thus: —

"To A. B.

"You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-laborer."

Let him then read and carefully weigh what is contained therein, that if he has any doubt it may be removed.

Observe: Taking on trial is entirely different from admitting a Preacher. One on trial may be either admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong; otherwise it would be no trial at all. Let every Assistant explain this to them that are on trial.

When he has been on trial four years, if recommended by the Assistant, he may be received into full connection, by giving him the "Minutes," inscribed thus: "As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavor to walk by, these Rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-laborer." Meantime, let none exhort in any of our societies, without a note of permission from the Assistant. Let every Exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly; and let every Assistant insist upon it.

**Q. 52.** What is the method wherein we usually proceed in our conferences?

**A.** We inquire,

- (1.) What Preachers are admitted? Who remain on trial? Who are admitted on trial? Who desist from traveling?
  - (2.) Are there any objections to any of the Preachers? who are named one by one.
  - (3.) How are the Preachers stationed this year?
  - (4.) What numbers are in the society?
  - (5.) What is the Kingswood collection?
  - (6.) What boys are received this year?
  - (7.) What girls are assisted?
  - (8.) What is contributed for the contingent expenses?
  - (9.) How was this expended?
  - (10.) What is contributed toward the fund, for superannuated and supernumerary Preachers?
  - (11.) What demands are there upon it?
  - (12.) How many Preachers' wives are to be provided for? By what societies?
  - (13.) Where and when may our next Conference begin?
- Q. 53.** How can we provide for superannuated and supernumerary Preachers?

**A.** Those who can preach four or five times a week are supernumerary Preachers. As for those who cannot,

- (1.) Let every Traveling Preacher contribute half-a-guinea yearly at the Conference.
- (2.) Let every one when first admitted as a Traveling Preacher pay a guinea.
- (3.) Let this be lodged in the hands of the Stewards.
- (4.) The present Stewards are John Murlin and John Pawson.

**(5.)** Out of this let provision be made, first for the worn-out Preachers, and then for the widows and children of those that are dead.

**(6.)** Every worn-out Preacher shall receive, if he wants it, at least ten pounds a-year.

**(7.)** Every widow of a Preacher shall receive yearly, if she wants it, during her widowhood, a sum not usually exceeding ten pounds.

**(8.)** Every child left by a Preacher shall receive, once for all, a sum not usually exceeding ten pounds.

**(9.)** But none is entitled to anything from this fund, till he has subscribed two guineas.

**(10.)** Nor any who neglects paying his subscription for four years together.

**(11.)** Let every Preacher who does not bring or send his subscription to the Conference, be fined two shillings and sixpence.

**(12.)** Let the fund never be reduced to less than a hundred pounds.

**(13.)** Let a Committee be named to see these Rules duly executed. The present Committee are, — Christopher Hopper, Thomas Coke, Thomas Hanby, John Allen, Robert Roberts, Henry Moore, Thomas Taylor, William Thompson, Andrew Blair.

**(14.)** Let an exact account of all receipts and disbursements be produced at the Conference.

**(15.)** Let every Assistant bring to the Conference the contribution of every Preacher in his Circuit.

**Q. 54.** Are not many of the Preachers' wives still straitened for the necessaries of life?

**A.** Some certainly have been. To prevent this for the time to come,

**(1.)** Let every Circuit either provide each with a lodging, coals, and candles, or allow her fifteen pounds a year.

(2.) Let the Assistant take this money at the Quarterly Meeting, before anything else be paid out of it. Fail not to do this.

**Q. 55.** How can we account for the decrease of the work of God in some Circuits, both this year and the last?

**A.** It may be owing either,

(1.) To the want of zeal and exactness in the Assistant, occasioning want of discipline throughout: Or

(2.) To want of life and diligence in the Preachers: Or

(3.) To our people's losing the life of God, and sinking into the spirit of the world.

It may be owing, farther, to the want of more field-preaching, and of trying more new places.

**Q. 56.** What can be done in order to revive the work of God where it is decayed?

**A.**

(1.) Let every Preacher read carefully over the "Life of David Brainerd." Let us be followers of him, as he was of Christ, in absolute self-devotion, in total deadness to the world, and in fervent love to God and man. Let us but secure this point, and the world and the evil must fall under our feet.

(2.) Let both Assistants and Preachers be conscientiously exact in the whole Methodist discipline.

(3.) See that no Circuit be at any time without Preachers. Therefore let no Preacher, who does not attend the Conference, leave the Circuit, at that time, on any pretense whatever. This is the most improper time in the whole year. Let every Assistant see to this, and require each of these to remain in the Circuit till the new Preachers come.

Let not all the Preachers in any Circuit come to the Conference.

Let those who do come, set out as late and return as soon as possible.

(4.) Wherever you can, appoint prayer-meetings, and particularly on Friday.

(5.) Let a fast be observed in all our societies, the last Friday in August, November, February, and May.

(6.) Be more active in dispersing the books, particularly the sermon on “The Good Steward,” on “Indwelling Sin,” “The Repentance of Believers,” and “The Scripture Way of Salvation.” Every Assistant may give away small tracts: And he may beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor.

(7.) Strongly and explicitly exhort all believers to “go on to perfection.” That we may “all speak the same thing,” I ask, once for all, Shall we defend this Perfection, or give it up? You’ll agree to defend it, meaning thereby, (as we did from the beginning,) salvation from all sin, by the love of God and man filling our heart. The Papists say, “This cannot be attained, till we have been refined by the fire of purgatory.” The Calvinists say, “Nay, it will be attained as soon as the soul and body part.” The old Methodists say, “It may be attained before we die: A moment after is too late.” Is it so or not? You are all agreed, we may be saved from all sin before death. The substance then is settled; but, as to the circumstance, is the change gradual or instantaneous? It is both the one and the other. From the moment we are justified, there may be a gradual sanctification, a growing in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God. And if sin cease before death, there must, in the nature of the thing, be an instantaneous change; there must be a last moment wherein it does exist, and a first moment wherein it does not.

“But should we in preaching insist both on one and the other?” Certainly we must insist on the gradual change; and that earnestly and continually. And are there not reasons why we should insist on the instantaneous also? If there be such a blessed change before death, should we not encourage all believers to expect it? and the rather, because constant experience shows, the more earnestly they expect this, the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their soul; the more watchful they are against all sin, the more careful to grow in grace, the more zealous of good works, and the more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God.

Whereas, just the contrary effects are observed whenever this expectation ceases. They are “saved by hope” by this hope of a total change, with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that salvation stands still, or, rather, decreases daily. Therefore whoever would advance the gradual change in believers should strongly insist on the instantaneous.

**Q. 57.** What can be done to increase the work of God in Scotland?

**A.**

- (1.) Preach abroad as much as possible.
- (2.) Try every town and village.
- (3.) Visit every member of the society at home.

**Q. 58.** How many Circuits are there now?

**A.** Of America we have no late account. There are seventy-four Circuits in England, Wales, and the Isle of Man; seven in Scotland, and twenty-eight in Ireland.

**Q. 59.** Are our preaching-houses safe?

**A.** Not all; for some of them are not settled on Trustees. Several of the Trustees for others are dead.

**Q. 60.** What then is to be done?

**A.**

- (1.) Let those who have debts on any of the Houses give a bond, to settle them as soon as they are indemnified.
- (2.) Let the surviving Trustees choose others without delay, by endorsing their deed thus: —

“**W**<sub>E</sub>, the remaining Trustees of the Methodist preaching-house in —, do, according to the power vested in us by this deed, choose — to be Trustees of the said House, in the place of —.

Witness our hands —.”

N. B. The deed must have three new stamps, and must be enrolled in Chancery within six months.

**Q. 61.** In what form may a House be settled?

**A.** In the following, which was drawn by three of the most eminent Lawyers in London. Whoever therefore objects to it, only betrays his own ignorance.

“The Indenture made —, between Benjamin Heap, of —, in the county of —, on the one part, and Thomas Philips, hatter, etc., on the other part, WITNESSETH, That in consideration of five shillings, lawful money of Great Britain, by the said T. P., etc., to the said B. H., truly paid, before the sealing and delivering hereof, (the receipt whereof the said B. H. doth hereby acknowledge,) and for divers other considerations him thereunto moving, the said B. H. hath granted, bargained, and sold, and by these presents doth bargain and sell unto the said T. P., etc., their heirs and assigns for ever, all that lately erected House or tenement, with the yard thereunto adjoining, situate —, in —, aforesaid, now in the tenure or occupation of —, together with all the ways, drains, and privileges to the said premises appertaining, and all the profits thereof, with all the right, title, and interest in law and equity: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said house, yard, and other premises, to the said T. P., etc., their heirs, and assigns for ever. NEVERTHELESS, upon special trust and confidence, and to the intent, that they and the survivors of them, and the Trustees for the time being, do and shall permit John Wesley, of the City-Road, London, Clerk, and such other persons as he shall from time to time appoint, at all times, during his natural life, and no other persons, to have and enjoy the free use and benefit of the said premises; that the said John Wesley, and such other persons as he appoints, may therein preach and expound God’s holy word. And after his decease, upon further trust and confidence, and to the intent, that the said T. P., etc., or the major part of them, or the survivors of them, and the major part of the Trustees of the said premises for the time being, shall, from time to time, and at all times for ever, permit such persons as shall be appointed at the yearly Conference of the

people called *Methodists*, in London, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, or elsewhere, specified by name in a Deed enrolled in Chancery, under the hand and seal of the said John Wesley, and bearing date the 28th day of February, 1784, and no others, to have and to enjoy the said premises, for the purposes aforesaid: Provided always, that the persons preach no other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's 'Notes upon the New Testament,' and four volumes of 'Sermons.' And upon farther trust and confidence, that, as often as any of these Trustees, or the Trustees for the time being, shall die, or cease to be a member of the society commonly called *Methodists*, the rest of the said Trustees, or of the Trustees for the time being, as soon as conveniently may be, shall and may choose another Trustee or Trustees, in order to keep up the number of Trustees for ever. In witness whereof, the said B. H. hath hereunto set his hand and seal, the day and year above-written."

In this form the proprietors of the House are to make it over to five, seven, or nine Trustees.

**Q. 62.** But is this form a safe one? Should we not have the opinion of a Counsel upon it?

**A.** I think this would be throwing money away;

(1.) Because this form was drawn up by three eminent Counselors:  
But,

(2.) It is the way of almost every Lawyer to blame what another has done. Therefore, you cannot at all infer, that they think a thing wrong, because they say so.

(3.) If they did in reality think it; wrong, this would not prove it was so.

(4.) If there was (which I do not believe) some defect therein, who would go to law with the body of Methodists? But,

(5.) If they did, would any Court in England put them out of possession; especially when the intent of the deed was plain and undeniable?

**Q. 63.** Is anything farther advisable with regard to building?

**A.**

(1.) Build all preaching-houses, where the ground will permit, in the octagon form. It is best for the voice, and, on many accounts, more commodious than any other.

(2.) Why should not any octagon House be built after the model of Yarm? any square house, after the model of Bath or Scarborough? Can we find any better model?

(3.) Let the roof rise only one-third of its breadth: This is the true proportion.

(4.) Have doors and windows enough; and let all the windows be sashes, opening downward.

(5.) Let there be no Chinese paling, and no tub-pulpit, but a square projection, with a long seat behind.

(6.) Let there be no pews, and no backs to the seats, which should have aisles on each side, and be parted in the middle by a rail running all along, to divide the men from the women; just as at Bath.

(7.) Let all preaching-houses be built plain and decent; but not more expensive than is absolutely unavoidable: Otherwise the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent upon them, yea, and governed by them. And then farewell to the Methodist discipline, if not doctrine too.

(8.) Wherever a preaching-house is built, see that lodgings for the Preachers be built also.

**Q. 64.** Is there any exception to the rule, “Let the men and women sit apart?”

**A.** In those galleries where they have always sat together, they may do so still. But let them sit apart everywhere below, and in all new-erected galleries.

**Q. 65.** But how can we secure their sitting apart there?

**A.** I must do it myself. If I come into any new House, and see the men and women together, I will immediately go out. I hereby give public notice of this: Pray let it be observed.

**Q. 66.** But there is a worse indecency than this creeping in among us, — talking in the preaching-houses, before and after service. How shall this be cured?

**A.** Let all the Preachers join as one man, and the very next Sunday they preach in any place, enlarge on the impropriety of talking before or after service, and strongly exhort them to do it no more. In three months, if we are in earnest, this vile practice will be banished out of every Methodist congregation. Let none stop till he has carried his point.

**Q. 67.** Is there not another shocking indecency frequently practiced by filthy men against the wall of a preaching-house; enough to make any modest woman blush?

**A.** There is: But I beg any one who sees another do this will give him a hearty clap on the back.

**Q. 68.** Complaint has been made that sluts spoil our houses. How may we prevent this?

**A.** Let none that has spoiled one, ever live in another. But what a shame is this! A Preacher's wife should be a pattern of cleanliness in her person, clothes, and habitation. Let nothing slatternly be seen about her; no rags, no dirt, no litter. And she should be a pattern of industry; always at work, either for herself, her husband, or the poor. I am not willing any should live in the Orphan-House at Newcastle, or any preaching-house, who does not conform to this rule.

**Q. 69.** It has been complained also, that people crowd into the Preachers' houses, as into coffee-houses, without any invitation. Is this right?

**A.** It is utterly wrong. Stop it at once. Let no person come into the Preacher's house, unless he wants to ask a question.

**Q. 70.** May any new preaching-houses be built?

**A.** Not unless,

(1.) They are proposed at the Conference: No, nor

(2.) Unless two-thirds of the expense be subscribed. And if any collection be made for them, it must be made between the Conference and the beginning of February.

**Q. 71.** What can be done to make the Methodists sensible of the excellency of Kingswood School?

**A.** Let every Assistant read the following account of it yearly in every congregation: —

(1.) The wisdom and love of God have now thrust out a large number of laborers into His harvest; men who desire nothing on earth but to promote the glory of God, by saving their own souls and those that hear them. And those to whom they minister spiritual things are willing to minister to them of their carnal things; so that they "have food to eat, and raiment to put on," and are content therewith.

(2.) A competent provision is likewise made for the wives of married Preachers. These also lack nothing, having a weekly allowance over and above for their little children; so that neither they nor their husbands need to be "careful about many things," but may "wait upon the Lord without distraction."

(3.) Yet one considerable difficulty lies on those that have boys, when they grow too big to be under their mother's direction. Having no father to govern and instruct them, they are exposed to a thousand temptations. To remedy this, we have a school on purpose for them, wherein they have all the instruction they are capable of, together with

all things necessary for the body, clothes only excepted. And it may be, if God prosper this labor of love, they will have these too, shortly.

**(4.)** In whatever view we look upon this, it is one of the noblest charities that can be conceived. How reasonable is the Institution! Is it fit that the children of those who leave wife, and all that is dear, to save souls from death, should want what is needful either for soul or body? Ought not we to supply what the parent cannot, because of his labors in the gospel? How excellent are the effects of this Institution! The Preacher eased of this weight, can the more cheerfully go on in his labor. And perhaps many of these children may hereafter fill up the place of those that shall “rest from their labors.”

**(5.)** It is not strange therefore, considering the excellence of this design, that Satan should have taken much pains to defeat, particularly by lies of every kind, which were plentifully invented and handed about for several years. But truth now generally prevails, and its adversaries are put to silence. It is well known that the children want nothing; that they scarce know what sickness means; that they are well instructed in whatever they are capable of learning; that they are carefully and tenderly governed; and that the behavior of all in the house, elder and younger, is “as becometh the gospel of Christ.”

**(6.)** But the expense of such an undertaking is very large, so that we are ill able to defray it. The best means we could think of at our Conference to supply the deficiency, is, once a year to desire the assistance of all those in every place, who wish well to the work of God; who long to see sinners converted to God, and the kingdom of Christ set up in all the earth.

**(7.)** All of you who are thus minded have an opportunity now of showing your love to the gospel. Now promote, as far as in you lies, one of the noblest charities in the world. Now forward, as you are able, one of the most excellent designs that ever was set on foot in this kingdom. Do what you can to comfort the parents who give up their all for you, and to give their children cause to bless you. You will be no poorer for what you do on such an occasion. God is a good paymaster. And you know, in doing this, you lend unto the Lord: In due time he shall pay you again.

**Q. 72.** But how can we keep out of debt?

**A.** Let a collection be made for this school the Sunday before or after Midsummer, in every preaching-house, great and small, throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland.

**Q. 73.** How may we raise a general fund for carrying on the whole work of God?

**A.** By a yearly subscription to be proposed by every Assistant when he visits the classes at Christmas, and received at the visitation following.

To this end he may then read and enlarge upon the following hints in every society: —

**(1.)** How shall we send laborers into those parts where they are most of all wanted? suppose the Northwest of Ireland, and the North of Scotland. Many are willing to hear, but not to bear the expense. Nor can it as yet be expected of them: Stay till the word of God has touched their hearts, and then they will gladly provide for them that preach it. Does it not lie upon us, in the mean time, to supply their lack of service? to raise a general fund, out of which, from time to time, that expense may be defrayed? By this means those who willingly offer themselves may travel through every part, and stay wherever there is a call, without being burdensome to any. Thus may the gospel, in the life and power thereof, be spread from sea to sea. Which of you will not rejoice to throw in your mite, to promote this glorious work?

**(2.)** Besides this, in carrying on so large a work through the three kingdoms, there are calls for money in various ways, and we must frequently be at considerable expense, or the work must be at a full stop. Many too are the occasional distresses of our Preachers or their families, which require all immediate supply. Otherwise their hands would hang down, if they were not constrained to depart from the work.

**(3.)** Let then every member of our society once a year set his shoulder to the work; contributing more or less as God hath prospered him, at the Lady-Day visitation of the classes. Let none be excluded from giving something, — be it a penny, a halfpenny, a farthing. Remember

the widow's two mites! And let those who are able to give shillings, crowns, and pounds do it willingly. The money contributed will be brought to the ensuing Conference.

**(4.)** Men and brethren, help! Was there ever a call like this, since you first heard the gospel sound? Help to relieve your companions in the kingdom of Jesus, who are pressed above measure.

“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Help to send forth able, willing laborers into your Lord's harvest: So shall ye be assistant in saving souls from death, and hiding a multitude of sins. Help to spread the gospel of your salvation into the remotest corners of the kingdom, till “the knowledge of our Lord shall cover the land, as the waters cover the sea.” So shall it appear to ourselves, and all men, that we are indeed one body, united by one spirit; so shall the baptized Heathens be yet again constrained to say, “See how these Christians love one another!” In this may not even the Romanists provoke us to jealousy? They have a general fund at Rome, and another at Paris, which bears all the expenses of their Missionaries throughout all the world.

**Q. 74.** What is the direct antidote to Methodism, the doctrine of heart-holiness?

**A.** Calvinism: All the devices of Satan, for these fifty years, have done far less toward stopping this work of God, than that single doctrine. It strikes at the root of salvation from sin, previous to glory, putting the matter on quite another issue.

**Q. 75.** But wherein lie the charms of this doctrine? What makes men swallow it so greedily?

**A.**

**(1.)** It seems to magnify Christ; although in reality it supposes him to have died in vain. For the absolutely elect must have been saved without him; and the non-elect cannot be saved by him.

**(2.)** It is highly pleasing to flesh and blood, final perseverance in particular.

**Q. 76.** What can be done to guard against it?

## A.

- (1.) Let all our Preachers carefully read over ours and Mr. Fletcher's Tracts.
  - (2.) Let them frequently and explicitly preach the truth, though not in a controversial way. But let them take care to do it in love and gentleness; not in bitterness, not returning railing for railing: Let those who preach it have all this to themselves.
  - (3.) Do not imitate them in screaming, allegorizing, boasting: Rather mildly expose these things when time serves.
  - (4.) Imitate them in this: They readily seize upon any one that is newly convinced or converted. Be diligent to prevent them, and to guard those tender minds against the predestination poison.
  - (5.) Answer all their objections, as occasion offers, both in public and private. But take care to do this with all possible sweetness both of look and of accent.
  - (6.) Very frequently, both in public and private, advise our people not to hear them.
  - (7.) Make it matter of constant and earnest prayer, that God would stop the plague.
- Q. 77.** We said in 1744, "We have leaned too much toward Calvinism." Wherein?

## A.

- (1.) With regard to man's faithfulness. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression: Therefore we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert upon his authority, that if a man is not "faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches."
- (2.) With regard to "working, for life," which our Lord expressly commands us to do. "Labor," **εργαζεσθε**, literally, "*work*, for the meat that endureth to everlasting life." And in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well as *from* life.

(3.) We have received it as a maxim, that “a man is to do nothing in order to justification.” Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favor with God, should “cease from evil, and learn to do well.” So God himself teaches by the Prophet Isaiah. Whoever repents, should “do works meet for repentance.” And if this is not in order to find favor, what does he do them for?

Once more review the whole affair:

(1.) Who of us is now accepted of God?

He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart.

(2.) But who among those that never heard of Christ?

He that, according to the light he has, “feareth God and worketh righteousness.”

(3.) Is this the same with “he that is sincere?”

Nearly, if not quite.

(4.) Is not this salvation by works?

Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition.

(5.) What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years?

I am afraid about words, namely, in some of the foregoing instances.

(6.) As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid: We are rewarded according to our works, yea, because of our works. How does this differ from, “for the sake of our works?” And how differs this from *secundum merita operum*? which is no more than, “as our works deserve.” Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot.

(7.) The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those who, by their own confession, either “feared God” nor “wrought righteousness.” Is this an exception to the general rule?

It is a doubt whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness?

His own thinking so is no proof. For we know how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect.

(8.) Does not talking, without proper caution, of a justified or sanctified state, tend to mislead men; almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works; according to the whole of our present inward tempers and outward behavior.

## THE

# CHARACTER OF A METHODIST.

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*Not as though I had already attained.*

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## TO THE READER.

**1.** SINCE the name first came abroad into the world, many have been at a loss to know what a Methodist is; what are the principles and the practice of those who are commonly called by that name; and what the distinguishing marks of this sect, “which is everywhere spoken against.”

**2.** And it being generally believed, that I was able to give the clearest account of these things, (as having been one of the first to whom that name was given, and the person by whom the rest were supposed to be directed,) I have been called upon, in all manner of ways, and with the utmost earnestness, so to do. I yield at last to the continued importunity both of friends and enemies; and do now give the clearest account I can, in the presence of the Lord and Judge of heaven and earth, of the principles and practice whereby those who are called Methodists are distinguished from other men.

**3.** I say those who are called Methodists; for, let it be well observed, that this is not a name which they take to themselves, but one fixed upon them by way of reproach, without their approbation or consent. It was first given to three or four young men at Oxford, by a student of Christ Church; either in allusion to the ancient sect of Physicians so called, from their teaching, that almost all diseases might be cured by a specific *method* of diet and exercise, or from their observing a more regular *method* of study and behavior than was usual with those of their age and station.

**4.** I should rejoice (so little ambitious am I to be at the head of any sect or party) if the very name might never be mentioned more, but be buried in eternal oblivion. But if that cannot be, at least let those who will use it,

know the meaning of the word they use. Let us not always be fighting in the dark. Come, and let us look one another in the face. And perhaps some of you who hate what I am *called*, may love what I *am* by the grace of God; or rather, what “I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

## THE

## CHARACTER OF A METHODIST.

**1.** THE distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions, his espousing the judgment of one man or of another, are all quite wide of the point. Whosoever, therefore, imagines that a Methodist is a man of such or such an opinion, is grossly ignorant of the whole affair; he mistakes the truth totally. We believe, indeed, that “all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God;” and herein we are distinguished from Jews, Turks, and Infidels. We believe the written word of God to be the only and sufficient rule both of Christian faith and practice; and herein we are fundamentally distinguished from those of the Romish Church. We believe Christ to be the eternal, supreme God; and herein we are distinguished from the Socinians and Arians. But as to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think. So that whatsoever they are, whether right or wrong, they are no distinguishing marks of a Methodist.

**2.** Neither are words or phrases of any sort. We do not place our religion, or any part of it, in being attached to any peculiar mode of speaking, any quaint or uncommon set of expressions. The most obvious, easy, common words, wherein our meaning can be conveyed, we prefer before others, both on ordinary occasions, and when we speak of the things of God. We never, therefore, willingly or designedly, deviate from the most usual way of speaking; unless when we express scripture truths in scripture words, which, we presume, no Christian will condemn. Neither do we affect to use any particular expressions of Scripture more frequently than others, unless they are such as are more frequently used by the inspired writers themselves. So that it is as gross an error, to place the marks of a Methodist in his words, as in opinions of any sort.

**3.** Nor do we desire to be distinguished by actions, customs, or usages, of an indifferent nature. Our religion does not lie in doing what God has not

enjoined, or abstaining from what he hath not forbidden. It does not lie in the form of our apparel, in the posture of our body, or the covering of our heads; nor yet in abstaining from marriage, or from meats and drinks, which are all good if received with thanksgiving. Therefore, neither will any man, who knows whereof he affirms, fix the mark of a Methodist here, — in any actions or customs purely indifferent, undetermined by the word of God.

**4.** Nor, lastly, is he distinguished by laying the whole stress of religion on any single part of it. If you say, “Yes, he is; for he thinks ‘we are saved by faith alone:’” I answer, You do not understand the terms. By salvation he means holiness of heart and life. And this he affirms to spring from true faith alone. Can even a nominal Christian deny it? Is this placing a part of religion for the whole? “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law.” We do not place the whole of religion (as too many do, God knoweth) either in doing no harm, or in doing good, or in using the ordinances of God. No, not in all of them together; wherein we know by experience a man may labor many years, and at the end have no religion at all, no more than he had at the beginning. Much less in any one of these; or, it may be, in a scrap of one of them: Like her who fancies herself a virtuous woman, only because she is not a prostitute; or him who dreams he is an honest man, merely because he does not rob or steal. May the Lord God of my fathers preserve me from such a poor, starved religion as this! Were this the mark of a Methodist, I would sooner choose to be a sincere Jew, Turk, or Pagan.

**5.** “What then is the mark? Who is a Methodist, according to your own account?” I answer: A Methodist is one who has “the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him;” one who “loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength.” God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul; which is constantly crying out, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee “my God and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!”

**6.** He is therefore happy in God, yea, always happy, as having in him “a well of water springing up into everlasting life,” and overflowing his soul with peace and joy. “Perfect love” having now “cast out fear,” he “rejoices

evermore.” He “rejoices in the Lord always,” even “in God his Savior;” and in the Father, “through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he hath now received the atonement.” “Having” found “redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of his sins,” he cannot but rejoice, whenever he looks back on the horrible pit out of which he is delivered; when he sees “all his transgressions blotted out as a cloud, and his iniquities as a thick cloud.” He cannot but rejoice, whenever he looks on the state wherein he now is; “being justified freely, and having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” For “he that believeth, hath the witness” of this “in himself;” being now the son of God by faith. “Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father!” And “the Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God.” He rejoiceth also, whenever he looks forward, “in hope of the glory that shall be revealed;” yea, this his joy is full, and all his bones cry out, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again to a living hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for me!”

**7.** And he who hath this hope, thus “full of immortality, in everything giveth thanks;” as knowing that this (whatsoever it is) a “is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning him.” From him, therefore, he cheerfully receives all, saying, “Good is the will of the Lord;” and whether the Lord giveth or taketh away, equally “blessing the name of the Lord.” For he hath “learned, in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content.” He knoweth “both how to be abased and how to abound. Everywhere and in all things he is instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need.” Whether in ease or pain, whether in sickness or health, whether in life or death, he giveth thanks from the ground of his heart to Him who orders it for good; knowing that as “every good gift cometh from above,” so none but good can come from the Father of Lights, into whose hand he has wholly committed his body and soul, as into the hands of a faithful Creator. He is therefore “careful” (anxiously or uneasily) “for nothing” as having cast all his care on Him that careth for him,” and “in all things” resting on him, after “making his request known to him with thanksgiving.”

**8.** For indeed he “prays without ceasing.” It is given him “always to pray, and not to faint.” Not that he is always in the house of prayer; though he neglects no opportunity of being there. Neither is he always on his knees, although he often is, or on his face, before the Lord his God. Nor yet is he always crying aloud to God, or calling upon him in words: For many times “the Spirit maketh intercession for him with groans that cannot be uttered.” But at all times the language of his heart is this: “Thou brightness of the eternal glory, unto thee is my heart, though without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee.” And this is true prayer, and this alone. But his heart is ever lifted up to God, at all times and in all places. In this he is never hindered, much less interrupted, by any person or thing. In retirement or company, in leisure, business, or conversation, his heart is ever with the Lord. Whether he lie down or rise up, God is in all his thoughts; he walks with God continually, having the loving eye of his mind still fixed upon him, and everywhere “seeing Him that is invisible.”

**9.** And while he thus always exercises his love to God, by praying without ceasing, rejoicing evermore, and in everything giving thanks, this commandment is written in his heart, “That he who loveth God, love his brother also.” And he accordingly loves his neighbor as himself; he loves every man as his own soul. His heart is full of love to all mankind, to every child of “the Father of the spirits of all flesh.” That a man is not personally known to him, is no bar to his love; no, nor that he is known to be such as he approves not, that he repays hatred for his goodwill. For he “loves his enemies;” yea, and the enemies of God, “the evil and the unthankful.” And if it be not in his power to “do good to them that hate him,” yet he ceases not to pray for them, though they continue to spurn his love, and still “despitefully use him and persecute him.”

**10.** For he is “pure in heart.” The love of God has purified his heart from all revengeful passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind temper or malign affection. It hath cleansed him from pride and haughtiness of spirit, whereof alone cometh contention. And he hath now “put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;” So that he “forbears and forgives, if he had a quarrel against any; even as God in Christ hath forgiven him.” And indeed all possible ground for contention, on his part, is utterly cut off. For none can take from him what he desires; seeing he “loves not the world, nor” any of “the

things of the world;" being now "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him;" being dead to all that is in the world, both to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." For "all his desire is unto God, and to the remembrance of his name."

**11.** Agreeable to this his one desire, is the one design of his life, namely, "not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him." His one intention at all times and in all things is, not to please himself, but Him whom his soul loveth. He has a single eye. And because "his eye is single, his whole body is full of light." Indeed, where the loving eye of the soul is continually fixed upon God, there can be no darkness at all, "but the whole is light; as when the bright shining of a candle doth enlighten the house." God then reigns alone. All that is in the soul is holiness to the Lord. There is not a motion in his heart, but is according to his will. Every thought that arises points to Him, and is in obedience to the law of Christ.

**12.** And the tree is known by its fruits. For as he loves God, so he keeps his commandments; not only some, or most of them, but all, from the least to the greatest. He is not content to "keep the whole law, and offend in one point;" but has, in all points, "a conscience void of offense towards God and towards man." Whatever God has forbidden, he avoids; whatever God hath enjoined, he doeth; and that whether it be little or great, hard or easy, joyous or grievous to the flesh. He "runs the way of God's commandments," now he hath set his heart; at liberty. It is his glory so to do; it is his daily crown of rejoicing, "to do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven;" knowing it is the highest privilege of "the angels of God, of those that excel in strength, to fulfill his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his word."

**13.** All the commandments of God he accordingly keeps, and that with all his might. For his obedience is in proportion to his love, the source from whence it flows. And therefore, loving God with all his heart, he serves him with all his strength. He continually presents his soul and body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; entirely and without reserve devoting himself, all he has, and all he is, to his glory. All the talents he has received, he constantly employs according to his Master's will; every power and faculty of his soul, every member of his body. Once he "yielded" them "unto sin" and the devil, "as instruments of

unrighteousness;" but now, "being alive from the dead, he yields" them all "as instruments of righteousness unto God."

**14.** By consequence, whatsoever he doeth, it is all to the glory of God. In all his employments of every kind, he not only aims at this, (which is implied in having a single eye,) but actually attains it. His business and refreshments, as well as his prayers, all serve this great end. Whether he sit in his house or walk by the way, whether he lie down or rise up, he is promoting, in all he speaks or does, the one business of his life; whether he put on his apparel, or labor, or eat and drink, or divert himself from too wasting labor, it all tends to advance the glory of God, by peace and goodwill among men. His one invariable rule is this, "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

**15.** Nor do the customs of the world at all hinder his "running the race that is set before him." He knows that vice does not lose its nature, though it becomes ever so fashionable; and remembers, that "every man is to give an account of himself to God." He cannot, therefore, "follow" even "a multitude to do evil." He cannot "fare sumptuously everyday," or "make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." He cannot "lay up treasures upon earth," any more than he can take fire into his bosom. He cannot "adorn himself," on any pretense, "with gold or costly apparel." He cannot join in or countenance any diversion which has the least tendency to vice of any kind. He cannot "speak evil" of his neighbor, any more than he can lie either for God or man. He cannot utter an unkind word of any one; for love keeps the door of his lips. He cannot speak "idle words;" "no corrupt communication" ever "comes out of his mouth," as is all that "which is" not "good to the use of edifying," not "fit to minister grace to the hearers." But "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are" justly "of good report," he thinks, and speaks, and acts, "adorning the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in all things."

**16.** Lastly. As he has time, he "does good unto all men;" unto neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies: And that in every possible kind; not only to their bodies, by "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those that are sick or in prison;" but much more does he labor to do good

to their souls, as of the ability which God giveth; to awaken those that sleep in death; to bring those who are awakened to the atoning blood, that, “being justified by faith, they may have peace with God;” and to provoke those who have peace with God to abound more in love and in good works. And he is willing to “spend and be spent herein,” even “to be offered up on the sacrifice and service of their faith,” so they may “all come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

**17.** These are the principles and practices of our sect; these are the marks of a true Methodist. By these alone do those who are in derision so called, desire to be distinguished from other men. If any man say, “Why, these are only the common fundamental principles of Christianity!” thou hast said; so I mean; this is the very truth; I know they are no other; and I would to God both thou and all men knew, that I, and all who follow my judgment, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men, by any but the common principles of Christianity, — the plain, old Christianity that I teach, renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction. And whosoever is what I preach, (let him be called what he will, for names change not the nature of things,) he is a Christian, not in name only, but in heart and in life. He is inwardly and outwardly conformed to the will of God, as revealed in the written word. He thinks, speaks, and lives, according to the method laid down in the revelation of Jesus Christ. His soul is renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and in all true holiness. And having the mind that was in Christ, he so walks as Christ also walked.

**18.** By these marks, by these fruits of a living faith, do we labor to distinguish ourselves from the unbelieving world, from all those whose minds or lives are not according to the Gospel of Christ. But from real Christians, of whatsoever denomination they be, we earnestly desire not to be distinguished at all, not from any who sincerely follow after what they know they have not yet attained. No: “Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” And I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that we be in no wise divided among ourselves. Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? I ask no farther question. If it be, give me thy hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not destroy the work of God. Dost thou love and serve God? It is enough. I give thee the right hand of fellowship. It there be any

consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; let us strive together for the faith of the Gospel; walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; remembering, there is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called with one hope of our calling; “one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

## A SHORT

# HISTORY OF METHODISM.

1. IT is not easy to reckon up the various accounts which have been given of the people called Methodists; very many of them as far remote from truth as that given by the good gentleman in Ireland: “*Methodists! Ay, they are the people who place all religion in wearing long beards.*”
2. Abundance of the mistakes which are current concerning them have undoubtedly sprung from this: Men lump together, under this general name, many who have no manner of connection with each other; and then whatever any of these speaks or does is of course imputed to all.
3. The following short account may prevent persons of a calm and candid disposition from doing this; although men of a warm or prejudiced spirit will do just as they did before. But let it be observed, this is not designed for a defense of the Methodists, (so called,) or any part of them. It is a bare relation of a series of naked facts, which alone may remove abundance of misunderstandings.
4. In November, 1729, four young gentlemen of Oxford, — Mr. John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College; Mr. Charles Wesley, Student of Christ Church; Mr. Morgan, Commoner of Christ Church; and Mr. Kirkham, of Merton College, — began to spend some evenings in a week together, in reading, chiefly, the Greek Testament. The next year two or three of Mr. John Wesley’s pupils desired the liberty of meeting with them; and afterwards one of Mr. Charles Wesley’s pupils. It was in 1732, that Mr. Ingham, of Queen’s College, and Mr. Broughton, of Exeter, were added to their number. To these, in April, was joined Mr. Clayton, of Brazen-nose, with two or three of his pupils. About the same time Mr. James Hervey was permitted to meet with them; and in 1735, Mr. Whitefield.
5. The exact regularity of their lives, as well as studies, occasioned a young gentleman of Christ Church to say, “Here is a new set of Methodists sprung up;” alluding to some ancient Physicians who were so called. The

name was new and quaint; so it took immediately, and the Methodists were known all over the University.

**6.** They were all zealous members of the Church of England; not only tenacious of all her doctrines, so far as they knew them, but of all her discipline, to the minutest circumstance. They were likewise zealous observers of all the University Statutes, and that for conscience' sake. But they observed neither these nor anything else any further than they conceived it was bound upon them by their one book, the Bible; it being their one desire and design to be downright Bible-Christians; taking the Bible, as interpreted by the primitive Church and our own, for their whole and sole rule.

**7.** The one charge then advanced against them was, that they were "righteous overmuch;" that they were abundantly too scrupulous, and too strict, carrying things to great extremes: In particular, that they laid too much stress upon the Rubrics and Canons of the Church; that they insisted too much on observing the Statutes of the University; and that they took the Scriptures in too strict and literal a sense; so that if they were right, few indeed would be saved.

**8.** In October, 1735, Mr. John and Charles Wesley, and Mr. Ingham, left England, with a design to go and preach to the Indians in Georgia: But the rest of the gentlemen continued to meet, till one and another was ordained and left the University. By which means, in about two years' time, scarce any of them were left.

**9.** In February, 1738, Mr. Whitefield went over to Georgia with a design to assist Mr. John Wesley; but Mr. Wesley just then returned to England. Soon after he had a meeting with Messrs. Ingham, Stonehouse, Hall, Hutchings, Kinchin, and a few other Clergymen, who all appeared to be of one heart, as well as of one judgment, resolved to be Bible — Christians at all events; and, wherever they were, to preach with all their might plain, old, Bible Christianity.

**10.** They were hitherto perfectly regular in all things, and zealously attached to the Church of England. Meantime, they began to be convinced, that "by grace we are saved through faith;" that justification by faith was the doctrine of the Church, as well as of the Bible. As soon as they

believed, they spake; salvation by faith being now their standing topic. Indeed this implied three things:

**(1.)** That men are all, by nature, “dead in sin,” and, consequently, “children of wrath.”

**(2.)** That they are “justified by faith alone.”

**(3.)** That faith produces inward and outward holiness: And these points they insisted on day and night. In a short time they became popular Preachers. The congregations were large wherever they preached. The former name was then revived; and all these gentlemen, with their followers, were entitled Methodists.

**11.** In March, 1741, Mr. Whitefield, being returned to England, entirely separated from Mr. Wesley and his friends, because he did not hold the decrees. Here was the first; breach, which warm men persuaded Mr. Whitefield to make merely for a difference of opinion. Those, indeed, who believed universal redemption had no desire at all to separate; but those who holden particular redemption would not hear of any accommodation, being determined to have no fellowship with men that “where in so dangerous errors.” So there were now two sorts of Methodists, so called; those for particular, and those for general, redemption.

**12.** Not many years passed, before William Cudworth and James Rely separated from Mr. Whitefield. These were properly Antinomians; absolute, avowed enemies to the law of God, which they never preached or professed to preach, but termed all legalists who did. With them, “preaching the law” was an abomination. They had “nothing to do” with the law. They would “preach Christ,” as they called it, but without one word either of holiness or good works. Yet these were still denominated Methodists, although differing from Mr. Whitefield, both in judgment and practice, abundantly more than Mr. Whitefield did from Mr. Wesley.

**13.** In the mean time, Mr. Venn and Mr. Romaine began to be spoken of; and not long after Mr. Madan and Mr. Berridge, with a few other Clergymen, who, although they had no connection with each other, yet preaching salvation by faith, and endeavoring to live accordingly, to be Bible-Christians, were soon included in the general name of Methodists. And so indeed were all others who preached salvation by faith, and

appeared more serious than their neighbors. Some of these were quite regular in their manner of preaching; some were quite irregular; (though not by choice; but necessity was laid upon them; they must preach irregularly, or not at all;) and others were between both, regular in most, though not in all, particulars.

**14.** In 1762, George Bell, and a few other persons, began to speak great words. In the latter end of the year, they foretold that the world would be at an end on the 28th of February. Mr. Wesley, with whom they were then connected, withstood them both in public and private. This they would not endure; so, in January and February, 1763, they separated from him. Soon after, Mr. Maxfield, one of Mr. Wesley's Preachers, and several of the people, left Mr. Wesley; but still Mr. Maxfield and his adherents go under the general name of Methodists.

**15.** At present, those who remain with Mr. Wesley are mostly Church-of-England men. <sup>f33</sup> They love her Articles, her Homilies, her Liturgy, her discipline, and unwillingly vary from it in any instance. Meantime, all who preach among them declare, "We are all by nature children of wrath:" But "by grace we are saved through faith;" saved both from the guilt and from the power of sin. They endeavor to live according to what they preach, to be plain Bible-Christians. And they meet together, at convenient times, to encourage one another therein. They tenderly love many that are Calvinists, though they do not love their opinions. Yea, they love the Antinomians themselves; but it is with a love of compassion only: For they hate their doctrines with a perfect hatred; they abhor them as they do hell fire; being convinced nothing can so effectually destroy all faith, all holiness, and all good works.

**16.** With regard to these, Mr. Relly and his adherents, it would not be strange if they should grow into reputation. For they will never shock the world, either by the harshness of their doctrine, or the singularity of their behavior. But let those who determine both to preach and to live the Gospel expect that men will say "all manner of evil of them." "The servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord. If, then, they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?" It is their duty, indeed, "as much as lieth in them, to live peaceably with all men." But when they labor after peace, the world

will “make themselves ready for battle.” It is their constant endeavor to “please all men, for their good, to edification.” But yet they know it cannot be done: They remember the word of the Apostle, “If I yet please men, I am not the servant of Christ.” They go on, therefore, “through honor and dishonor, through evil report and good report;” desiring only, that their Master may say in that day, “Servants of God, well done!”

## ADVICE

## TO THE

## PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS.

*Disce, docendus adhuc guae censet amicus. — HOR<sup>f34</sup>*

It may be needful to specify whom I mean by this ambiguous term; since it would be lost labor to speak to Methodists, so called, without first describing those to whom I speak.

By Methodists I mean, a people who profess to pursue (in whatsoever measure they have attained) holiness of heart and life, inward and outward conformity in all things to the revealed will of God; who place religion in an uniform resemblance of the great object of it; in a steady imitation of Him they worship, in all his imitable perfections; more particularly, in justice, mercy, and truth, or universal love filling the heart, and governing the life.

You, to whom I now speak, believe this love of human kind cannot spring but from the love of God. You think there can be no instance of one whose tender affection embraces every child of man, (though not endeared to him either by ties of blood, or by any natural or civil relation,) unless that affection flow from a grateful, filial love to the common Father of all; to God, considered not only as his Father, but as “the Father of the spirits of all flesh;” yea, as the general Parent and Friend of all the families both of heaven and earth.

This filial love you suppose to flow only from faith, which you describe as a supernatural evidence (or conviction) of things not seen; so that to him who has this principle,

*The things unknown to feeble sense,  
Unseen by reason’s glimmering ray,  
With strong commanding evidence  
Their heavenly origin display.*

*Faith lends its realizing light,  
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly;  
The' Invisible appears in sight,  
And God is seen by mortal eye.*

You suppose this faith to imply an evidence that God is merciful to me a sinner; that he is reconciled to me by the death of his Son, and now accepts me for his sake. You accordingly describe the faith of a real Christian as “a sure trust and confidence” (over and above his assent to the sacred writings) “which he hath in God, that his sins are forgiven; and that he is, through the merits of Christ, reconciled to the favor of God.”

You believe, farther, that both this faith and love are wrought in us by the Spirit of God; nay, that there cannot be in any man one good temper or desire, or so much as one good thought, unless it be produced by the almighty power of God, by the inspiration or influence of the Holy Ghost.

If you walk by this rule, continually endeavoring to know and love and resemble and obey the great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the God of love, of pardoning mercy; if from this principle of loving, obedient faith, you carefully abstain from all evil, and labor, as you have opportunity, to do good to all men, friends or enemies; if, lastly, you unite together, to encourage and help each other in thus working out your salvation, and for that end watch over one another in love, you are they whom I mean by Methodists.

The first general advice which one who loves your souls would earnestly recommend to every one of you is: “Consider, with deep and frequent attention, the peculiar circumstances wherein you stand.”

One of these is, that you are a new people: Your name is new, (at least, as used in a religious sense,) not heard of, till a few years ago, either in our own or any other nation. Your principles are new, in this respect, that there is no other set of people among us (and, possibly, not in the Christian world) who hold them all in the same degree and connection; who so strenuously and continually insist on the absolute necessity of universal holiness both in heart and life; of a peaceful, joyous love of God; of a supernatural evidence of things not seen; of an inward witness that we are the children of God; and of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in order to any good thought, or word, or work. And perhaps there is no other set

of people, (at least, not visibly united together,) who lay so much and yet no more stress than you do on rectitude of opinions, on outward modes of worship, and the use of those ordinances which you acknowledge to be of God. So much stress you lay even on right opinions, as to profess, that you earnestly desire to have a right judgment in all things, and are glad to use every means which you know or believe may be conducive thereto; and yet not so much as to condemn any man upon earth, merely for thinking otherwise than you do; much less, to imagine that God condemns him for this, if he be upright and sincere of heart. On those outward modes of worship, wherein you have been bred up, you lay so much stress as highly to approve them; but not so much as to lessen your love to those who conscientiously dissent from you herein. You likewise lay so much stress on the use of those ordinances which you believe to be of God, as to confess there is no salvation for you if you wilfully neglect them: And yet you do not judge them that are otherwise minded; you determine nothing concerning those who, not believing those ordinances to be of God, do, out of principle, abstain from them.

Your strictness of life, taking the whole of it together, may likewise be accounted new. I mean, your making it a rule, to abstain from fashionable diversions, from reading plays, romances, or books of humour, from singing innocent songs, or talking in a merry, gay, diverting manner; your plainness of dress; your manner of dealing in trade; your exactness in observing the Lord's day; your scrupulosity as to things that have not paid custom; your total abstinence from spirituous liquors (unless in cases of necessity); your rule, "not to mention the fault of an absent person, in particular of Ministers or of those in authority," may justly be termed new: Seeing, although some are scrupulous in some of these things, and others are strict with regard to other particulars, yet we do not find any other body of people who insist on all these rules together. With respect, therefore, both to your name, principles, and practice, you may be considered as a new people.

Another peculiar circumstance of your present situation is, that you are newly united together; that you are just gathered, or (as it seems) gathering rather, out of all other societies or congregations; nay, and that you have been hitherto, and do still subsist, without power, (for you are a low, insignificant people,) without riches, (for you are poor almost to a man,

having no more than the plain necessities of life,) and without either any extraordinary gifts of nature, or the advantages of education; most even of your Teachers being quite unlearned, and (in other things) ignorant men.

There is yet another circumstance, which is quite peculiar to yourselves: Whereas every other religious set of people, as soon as they were joined to each other, separated themselves from their former societies or congregations; you, on the contrary, do not; nay, you absolutely disavow all desire of separating from them. You openly and continually declare you have not, nor ever had, such a design. And whereas the congregations to which those separatists belonged have generally spared no pains to prevent that separation; those to which you belong spare no pains (not to prevent, but) to occasion this separation, to drive you from them, to force you on that division to which you declare you have the strongest aversion.

Considering these peculiar circumstances wherein you stand, you will see the propriety of a Second advice I would recommend to you: “Do not imagine you can avoid giving offense.” Your very name renders this impossible. Perhaps not one in a hundred of those who use the term *Methodist* have any ideas of what it means. To ninety-nine of them it is still heathen Greek. Only they think it means something very bad, — either a Papist, a heretic, an underminer of the Church, or some unheard-of monster; and, in all probability, the farther it goes, it must gather up more and more evil. It is vain, therefore, for any that is called a Methodist ever to think of not giving offense.

And as much offense as you give by your name, you will give still more by your principles. You will give offense to the bigots for opinions, modes of worship, and ordinances, by laying no more stress upon them; to the bigots against them, by laying so much; to men of form, by insisting so frequently and strongly on the inward power of religion; to moral men, (so called,) by declaring the absolute necessity of faith, in order to acceptance with God. To men of reason you will give offense, by talking of inspiration and receiving the Holy Ghost; to drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, common swearers, and other open sinners, by refraining from their company, as well as by that disapprobation of their behavior which you will often be obliged to express. And indeed your life must give them continual offense: Your sobriety is grievously offensive to a drunkard;

your serious conversation is equally intolerable to a gay impertinent: and, in general, that “you are grown so precise and singular, so monstrously strict, beyond all sense and reason, that you scruple so many harmless things, and fancy you are obliged to do so many others which you need not,” cannot but be an offense to abundance of people, your friends and relations in particular. Either, therefore, you must consent to give up your principles, or your fond hope of pleasing men.

What makes even your principles more offensive is, this uniting of yourselves together: Because this union renders you more conspicuous placing you more in the eye of men; more suspicious, — I mean, liable to be suspected of carrying on some sinister design (especially by those who do not, or will not, know your inviolable attachment to His present Majesty); more dreadful, to those of a fearful temper, who imagine you have any such design; and more odious to men of zeal, if their zeal be any other than fervent love to God and man.

This offense will sink the deeper, because you are gathered out of so many other congregations: For the warm men in each will not easily be convinced, that you do not despise either them or their teachers; nay, will probably imagine, that you utterly condemn them, as though they could not be saved. And this occasion of offense is now at the height, because you are just gathered, or gathering rather, so that they know not where it will end; but the tear of losing (so they account it) more of their members, gives an edge to their zeal, and keeps all their anger and resentment in its strength.

Add to this, that you do not leave them quite, you still rank yourselves among their members; which, to those who know not that you do it for conscience’ sake, is also a provoking circumstance. “If you would but get out of their sight!” But you are a continual thorn in their side, as long as you remain with them. And (which cannot but anger them the more) you have neither power, nor riches, nor learning; yet, with all their power, and money, and wisdom, they can gain no ground against you.

You cannot but expect, that the offense continually arising from such a variety of provocations will gradually ripen into hatred, malice, and all other unkind tempers. And as they who are thus affected will not fail to represent you to others in the same light as you appear to them, —

sometimes as madmen and fools, sometimes as wicked men, fellows not fit to live upon the earth; the consequence, humanly speaking, must be, that, together with your reputation, you will lose, first, the love of your friends, relations, and acquaintance, even those who once loved you the most tenderly; then your business, for many will employ you no longer, nor “buy of such an one as you are;” and, in due time, (unless He who governs the world interpose,) your health, liberty, and life.

What further advice can be given to persons in such a situation? I cannot but advise you, Thirdly, “Consider deeply with yourself, Is the God whom I serve able to deliver me? I am not able to deliver myself out of these difficulties; much less am I able to bear them. I know not how to give up my reputation, my friends, my substance, my liberty, my life. Can God give me to rejoice in doing this and may I depend upon him that he will? Are the hairs of my head all numbered; and does He never fail them that trust in him?” Weigh this thoroughly; and if you can trust God with your all, then go on in the power of his might.

Go on, I would earnestly advise you, Fourthly: “Keep in the very path wherein you now tread. Be true to your principles.” Never rest again in the dead formality of religion. Pursue with your might inward and outward holiness; a steady imitation of Him you worship; a still increasing resemblance of his imitable perfections, — his justice, mercy, and truth.

Let this be your manly, noble, generous religion, equally remote from the meanness of superstition, which places religion in doing what God hath not enjoined, or abstaining from what he hath not forbidden; and from the unkindness of bigotry, which confines our affection to our own party, sect, or opinion. Above all, stand fast in obedient faith, faith in the God of pardoning mercy, in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath loved you, and given himself for you. Ascribe to Him all the good you find in yourself; all your peace, and joy, and love; all your power to do and suffer his will, through the Spirit of the living God. Yet, in the mean time, carefully avoid enthusiasm: Impute not the dreams of men to the all-wise God; and expect neither light nor power from him, but in the serious use of all the means he hath ordained.

Be true also to your principles touching opinions and the externals of religion. Use every ordinance which you believe is of God; but beware of

narrowness of spirit towards those who use them not. Conform yourself to those modes of worship which you approve; yet love as brethren those who cannot conform. Lay so much stress on opinions, that all your own, if it be possible, may agree with truth and reason; but have a care of anger, dislike, or contempt towards those whose opinions differ from yours. You are daily accused of this; (and, indeed, what is it whereof you are not accused?) but beware of giving any ground for such an accusation.

Condemn no man for not thinking as you think: Let every one enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself: Let every man use his own judgment, since every man must give an account of himself to God. Whom every approach, in any kind or degree, to the spirit of persecution. If you cannot reason or persuade a man into the truth, never attempt to force him into it. If love will not compel him to come in, leave him to God, the Judge of all.

Yet expect not that others will deal thus with you. No: Some will endeavor to fright you out of your principles; some to shame you into a more popular religion, to laugh and rally you out of your singularity: but from none of these will you be in so great danger, as from those who assault you with quite different weapons; with softness, good-nature, and earnest professions of (perhaps real) goodwill. Here you are equally concerned to avoid the very appearance of anger, contempt, or unkindness, and to hold fast the whole truth of God, both in principle and in practice.

This indeed will be interpreted as unkindness. Your former acquaintance will look upon this, — that you will not sin or trifle with them, — as a plain proof of your coldness towards them; and this burden you must be content to bear: But labor to avoid all real unkindness, all disobliging words, or harshness of speech, all shyness, or strangeness of behavior. Speak to them with all the tenderness and love, and behave with all the sweetness and courtesy, you can; taking care not to give any needless offense to neighbor or stranger, friend or enemy.

Perhaps on this very account I might advise you, Fifthly, “not to talk much of what you suffer; of the persecution you endured at such a time, and the wickedness of your persecutors.” Nothing more tends to exasperate them than this; and therefore (although there is a time when these things must be mentioned, yet) it might be a general rule, to do it as

seldom as you can with a safe conscience. For, besides its tendency to inflame them, it has the appearance of evil, of ostentation, of magnifying yourselves. It also tends to puff you up with pride, and to make you think yourselves some great ones, as it certainly does to excite or increase in your heart ill-will, anger, and all unkind tempers. It is, at best, loss of time; for, instead of the wickedness of men, you might be talking of the goodness of God. Nay, it is, in truth, an open, wilful sin: It is tale-bearing, back-biting, evil-speaking, — a sin you can never be sufficiently watchful against, seeing it steals upon you in a thousand shapes. Would it not be far more profitable for your souls, instead of speaking against them, to pray for them? to confirm your love towards those unhappy men, whom you believe to be fighting against God, by crying mightily to him in their behalf, that he may open their eyes and change their hearts?

I have now only to commend you to the care of Him who hath all power in heaven and in earth; beseeching Him, that, in every circumstance of life, you may stand “firm as the beaten anvil to the stroke;” desiring nothing on earth; accounting all things but dung and dross, that you may win Christ; and always remembering, “It is the part of a good champion, to be flayed alive, and to conquer!”

***October 10, 1745***

## THE

## PRINCIPLES OF A METHODIST.

WRITTEN IN 1740.

*Occasioned by a late Pamphlet, entitled,*“A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PRINCIPLES OF  
METHODISM.”

TO THE READER.

**1.** I HAVE often wrote on controverted points before; but not with an eye to any particular person. So that this is the first time I have appeared in controversy, properly so called. Indeed I have not wanted occasion to do it before; particularly when, after many stabs in the dark, I was publicly attacked, not by an open enemy, but by my own familiar friend. But I could not answer him. I could only cover my face and say, **Και συ εις εκεινων Και συ τεκνον;** “Art thou also among them? Art thou, my son?”

**2.** I now tread an untried path “with fear and trembling;” fear, not of my adversary, but of myself. I fear my own spirit, lest I “fall where many mightier have been slain.” I never knew one man (or but one) write controversy, with what I thought a right spirit. Every disputant seems to think (as every soldier) that he may hurt his opponent as much as he can; nay, that he ought to do his worst to him, or he cannot make the best of his own cause; that so he do not belie or wilfully misrepresent him, he must expose him as far as he is able. It is enough, we suppose, if we do not show heat or passion against our adversary. But, not to despise him, or endeavor to make others do so, is quite a work of supererogation.

**3.** But ought these things to be so? (I speak on the Christian scheme.) Ought we not to love our neighbor as ourselves? And does a man cease to be our neighbor, because he is of a different opinion; nay, and declares himself so to be? Ought we not, for all this, to do to him as we would he should do to us? But do we ourselves love to be exposed, or set in the worst light? Would we willingly be treated with contempt? If not, why do we treat others thus? And yet who scruples it? Who does not hit every blow he can, however foreign to the merits of the cause: Who, in controversy, casts the mantle of love over the nakedness of his brother? Who keeps steadily and uniformly to the question, without ever striking at the person? Who shows, in every sentence, that he loves his brother only less than the truth?

**4.** I have made a little faint essay towards this. I have a brother who is as my own soul. My desire is, in every word I say, to look upon Mr. Tucker as in his place; and to speak no tittle concerning the one in any other spirit than I would speak concerning the other. But whether I have attained this or no, I know not; for my heart is “deceitful and desperately wicked.” If I have spoken anything in another spirit, I pray God it may not be laid to my charge; and that it may not condemn me in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest! Meanwhile, my heart’s desire and prayer to God is, that both I, and all who think it their duty to oppose me, may “put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven us.”

## THE

## PRINCIPLES OF A METHODIST.

**1.** THERE has lately appeared in the world a tract, entitled, “A Brief History of the Principles of Methodism.” I doubt not but the writer’s design was good, and believe he has a real desire to know the truth. And the manner wherein he pursues that design is generally calm and dispassionate. He is, indeed, in several mistakes; but as many of these are either of small consequence in themselves, or do not immediately relate to me, it is not my concern to mention them. All of any consequence which relates to me, I think, falls under three heads:

**First.** That I believe justification by faith alone.

**Secondly.** That I believe sinless perfection. And,

**Thirdly.** That I believe inconsistencies.

Of each of these I will speak as plainly as I can.

**2.** First. That I believe justification by faith alone. This I allow. For I am firmly persuaded, that every man of the offspring of Adam is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil; that this corruption of our nature, in every person born into the world, deserves God’s wrath and damnation; that therefore, if ever we receive the remission of our sins, and are accounted righteous before God, it must be only for the merit of Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings of any kind. Nay, I am persuaded, that all works done before justification, have in them the nature of sin; and that, consequently, till he is justified, a man has no power to do any work which is pleasing and acceptable to God.

**3.** To express my meaning a little more at large: I believe, three things must go together in our justification: Upon God’s part, his great mercy and grace; upon Christ’s part, the satisfaction of God’s justice, by the offering his body, and shedding his blood; and upon our part, true and living faith

in the merits of Jesus Christ. So that in our justification there is not only God's mercy and grace, but his justice also. And so the grace of God does not shut out the righteousness of God in our justification; but only shuts out the righteousness of man, that is, the righteousness of our works.

**4.** And therefore St. Paul requires nothing on the part of man, but only a true and living faith. Yet this faith does not shut out repentance, hope, and love, which are joined with faith in every man that is justified. But it shuts them out from the office of justifying. So that although they are all present together in him that is justified, yet they justify not all together.

**5.** Neither does faith shut out good works, necessarily to be done afterwards. But we may not do them to this intent, — to be justified by doing them. Our justification comes freely, of the mere mercy of God; for whereas all the world was not able to pay any part towards their ransom, it pleased him, without any of our deserving, to prepare for us Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom might be paid, and his justice satisfied. Christ, therefore, is now the righteousness of all them that truly believe in him.

**6.** But let it be observed, the true sense of those words, "We are justified by faith in Christ only," is not, that this our own act, "to believe in Christ," or this our faith which is within us, justifies us; for that were to account ourselves to be justified by some act or virtue that is within us; but that although we have faith, hope, and love within us, and do never so many good works, yet we must renounce the merit of all, of faith, hope, love, and all other virtues and good works, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as far too weak to deserve our justification; for which, therefore, we must trust only in God's mercy, and the merits of Christ. For it is he alone that taketh away our sins. To him alone are we to go for this; forsaking all our virtues, good words, thoughts, and works, and putting our trust in Christ only.

**7.** In strictness, therefore, neither our faith nor our works justify us, that is, deserve the remission of our sins. But God himself justifies us, of his own mercy, through the merits of his Son only. Nevertheless, because by faith we embrace the promise of God's mercy and of the remission of our sins, therefore the Scripture says, that faith does justify, yea, faith without works. And it is all one to say, "Faith without works," and "Faith

alone, justifies us,” Therefore the ancient Fathers from time to time speak thus: “Faith alone justifies us.” And because we receive faith through the only merits of Christ, and not through the merit and virtue we have, or work we do; therefore in that respect we renounce, as it were, again, faith, works, and all other virtues. For our corruption through original sin is so great, that all our faith, charity, words, and works, cannot merit or deserve any part of our justification for us. And therefore we thus speak, humbling ourselves before God, and giving Christ all the glory of our justification.

**8.** But it should also be observed, what that faith is whereby we are justified. Now, that faith which brings not forth good works, is not a living faith, but a dead and devilish one. For even the devils believe that Christ was born of a virgin; that he wrought all kinds of miracles, declaring himself to be very God; that for our sakes he died and rose again, and ascended into heaven; and at the end of the world shall come again, to judge the quick and the dead. This the devils believe; and so they believe all that is written in the Old and New Testament. And yet still, for all this faith, they are but devils; they remain still in their damnable estate, lacking the true Christian faith.

**9.** The true Christian faith is, not only to believe the Holy Scriptures and the articles of our faith are true; but also, to have “a sure trust and confidence to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ,” whereof doth follow a loving heart, to obey his commandments. And this faith neither any devil hath, nor any wicked man. No ungodly man hath or can have this “sure trust and confidence in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God.”

**10.** This is what I believe (and have believed for some years) concerning justification by faith alone. I have chose to express it in the words of a little treatise, published several years ago; as being the most authentic proof, both of my past and present sentiments. If I err herein, let those who are better informed calmly point out my error to me; and I trust, I shall not shut my eyes against the light, from whatsoever side it comes.

**11.** The Second thing laid to my charge is, that I believe sinless perfection. I will simply declare what I do believe concerning this also, and leave unprejudiced men to judge.

**12.** My last and most deliberate thoughts on this head were published but a few months since, in these words: —

**(1.)** “Perhaps the general prejudice against Christian perfection may chiefly arise from a misapprehension of the nature of it. We willingly allow, and continually declare, there is no such perfection in this life, as implies either a dispensation from doing good and attending all the ordinances of God; or a freedom from ignorance, mistake, temptation, and a thousand infirmities necessarily connected with flesh and blood.

**(2.)** “First. We not only allow, but earnestly contend, that there is no perfection in this life, which implies any dispensation from attending all the ordinances of God, or from ‘doing good unto all men, while we have time,’ though ‘specially unto the household of faith.’ We believe, that not only the babes in Christ, who have newly found redemption in his blood, but those also who are ‘grown up into perfect men,’ are indispensably obliged, as often as they have opportunity, ‘to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him,’ and to ‘search the Scriptures;’ by fasting, as well as temperance, to ‘keep their bodies under, and bring them into subjection;’ and, above all, to pour out their souls in prayer, both secretly and in the great congregation.

**(3.)** “We, Secondly, believe, that there is no such perfection in his life as implies an entire deliverance, either from ignorance or mistake, in things not essential to salvation, or from manifold temptations, or from numberless infirmities wherewith the corruptible body more or less presses down the soul. We cannot find any ground in Scripture to suppose, that any inhabitant of a house of clay is wholly exempt, either from bodily infirmities, or from ignorance of many things; or to imagine any is incapable of mistake, or falling into divers temptations.

**(4.)** “‘But whom then do you mean by *one that is perfect*?’ We mean one in whom ‘is the mind which was in Christ,’ and who so ‘walketh as Christ walked;’ a ‘man that hath clean hands and a pure heart,’ or that is ‘cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit;’ one in whom ‘is no occasion of stumbling,’ and who accordingly ‘doth not commit sin.’ To declare this a little more particularly: We understand by that scriptural expression, ‘a perfect man,’ one in whom God hath fulfilled his faithful word, ‘From all your filthiness and from all your idols will

I cleanse you: I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.’ We understand hereby one whom God hath ‘sanctified throughout, in body, soul, and spirit;’ one who ‘walketh in the light as he is in the light, in whom is no darkness at all; the blood of Jesus Christ his Son having cleansed him from all sin.’

(5.) “This man can now testify to all mankind, ‘I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.’ He is ‘holy, as God who called him is holy,’ both in heart and ‘in all manner of conversation.’ He ‘loveth the Lord his God with all his heart,’ and serveth him ‘with all his strength.’ He ‘loveth his neighbor,’ every man, ‘as himself;’ yea, ‘as Christ loved us;’ them, in particular, that ‘despitefully use him and persecute him, because they know not the Son, neither the Father.’ Indeed his soul is all love, filled with ‘bowels of mercies, kindness, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering.’ And his life agreeth thereto, full of ‘the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love. And whatsoever he doeth either in word or deed, he doeth it all in the name,’ in the love and power, ‘of the Lord Jesus.’ In a word, he doeth ‘he will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven.’

(6.) “This it is to be ‘a perfect man,’ to be sanctified through out: Even ‘to have a heart so all-flaming with the love of God,’ to use Archbishop Usher’s words, ‘as continually to offer up every thought, word, and work, as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ.’ In every thought of our hearts, in every word of our tongues, in every work of our hands, to ‘show forth his praise, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.’ O that both we, and all who seek the Lord Jesus in sincerity, may thus be made perfect in one!”

**13.** If there be anything unscriptural in these words, anything wild or extravagant, anything contrary to the analogy of faith, or the experience of adult Christians, let them “smite me friendly and reprove me;” let them impart to me of the clearer light God has given them. How knowest thou, O man, “but thou mayest gain thy brother;” but he may at length come to the knowledge of the truth; and thy labor of love, shown forth with meekness of wisdom, may not be in vain?

**14.** There remains yet another charge against me, that I believe inconsistencies; that my tenets, particularly concerning justification, are contradictory to themselves; that Mr. Wesley, “since his return from Germany, has improved in the spirit of inconsistency.” “For then he published two treatises of Dr. Barnes, the Calvinist, or Dominican rather, who suffered in 1541” (let us spare the ashes of the dead. Were I such a Dominican as he was, I should rejoice too to die in the flames;) “the first on ‘Justification by faith only;’ the other on ‘the sinfulness of man’s natural will, and his utter inability to do works acceptable to God, until he be justified.’ Which principles, if added to his former tenets,” (nay, they need not be *added* to them, for they are the very same,) “will give the whole a new vein of inconsistency, and make the contradictions more gross and glaring than before.”

**15.** It will be necessary to speak more largely on this head, than on either of the preceding. And in order to speak as distinctly as I can, I propose taking the paragraphs one by one, as they lie before me.

**16.** (1.) It is “asserted that Mr. Law’s system was the creed of the Methodists.” But it is not proved. I had been eight years at Oxford before I read any of Mr. Law’s writings; and when I did, I was so far from making them my creed, that I had objections to almost every page. But all this time my manner was, to spend several hours a day in reading the Scripture in the original tongues. And hence my system, so termed, was wholly drawn, according to the light I then had.

**17.** It was in my passage to Georgia, I met with those Teachers who would have taught me the way of God more perfectly. But I understood them not. Neither, on my arrival there, did they infuse any particularities into me, either about justification or anything else. For I came back with the same notions I went. And this I have explicitly acknowledged in my second Journal, where some of my words are these: “When Peter Bohler, as soon as I came to London, affirmed of true faith in Christ, (which is but one,) that it had these two fruits inseparably attending it, ‘dominion over sin, and constant peace from sense a of forgiveness,’ I was quite amazed, and looked upon it as a new gospel. If this was so, it was clear I had no faith. But I was not willing to be convinced of this. Therefore I disputed with all my might, and labored to prove that faith might be where these

were not; especially, where that sense of forgiveness was not; for, all the scriptures relating to this I had been long since taught to construe away, and to call all Presbyterians who spoke otherwise. Besides, I well saw, no one could (in the nature of things) have such a sense of forgiveness, and not feel it. But I felt it not. If then there was no faith without this, all my pretensions to faith dropped at once.” (Vol. I. p. 101.)

**18.** (2.) Yet it was not Peter Bohler who convinced me that conversion (I mean justification) was an instantaneous work. On the contrary, when I was convinced of the nature and fruits of justifying faith, still “I could not comprehend what he spoke of an instantaneous work. I could not understand how this faith should be given in a moment; how a man could at once be thus turned from darkness to light, from sin and misery to righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost. I searched the Scriptures again, touching this very thing, particularly the Acts of the Apostles. But to my utter astonishment, I found scarce any instances there of other than instantaneous conversions; scarce any others so slow as that of St. Paul, who was three days in the pangs of the new birth. I had but one retreat left, viz., ‘Thus, I grant, God wrought in the first ages of Christianity; but the times are changed. What reason have I to believe he works in the same manner now?’

“But on Sunday, 23, I was beat out of this retreat too, by the concurring evidence of several living witnesses, who testified God had thus wrought in themselves; giving them, *in a moment*, such a faith in the blood of his Son, as translated them out of darkness into light, out of sin and fear into holiness and happiness. Here ended my disputing. I could now only cry out, ‘Lord, help thou my unbelief!’” (Vol. I. p. 91.) The remaining part of this section, with the third and fourth, contain my own words, to which I still subscribe.

And if there is a mistake in the fifth, it is not material.

**20.** (3.) It is true, that “on Wednesday, July 12, the Count spoke to this effect: —

(1.) “Justification is the forgiveness of sins.

(2.) “The moment a man flies to Christ, he is justified.

- (3.) “And has peace with God, but not always joy.
- (4.) “Nor perhaps may he know he is justified till long after.
- (5.) “For the assurance of it is distinct from justification itself.
- (6.) “But others may know he is justified, by his power over sin, by his seriousness, his love of the brethren, and his hunger and thirst after righteousness; which alone proves the spiritual life to be begun.
- (7.) “To be justified is the same thing as to be born of God: When a man is awakened, he is begotten of God, and his fear, and sorrow, and sense of the wrath of God, are the pangs of the new birth.”

It is true also, that I then recollected what P. Bohler had often said on this head, which was to this effect: —

- (1.) “When a man has living faith in Christ, then he is justified.
- (2.) “This is always given in a moment.
- (3.) “And in that moment he has peace with God.
- (4.) “Which he cannot have without knowing that he has it.
- (5.) “And being ‘born of God, he sinneth not.’
- (6.) “Which deliverance from sin he cannot have without knowing that he has it.”

**21.** I did not apprehend it possible for any man living to have imagined, that I believed both these accounts; the words whereof I had purposely so ranged, and divided into short sentences, that the gross, irreconcilable difference between them might be plain to the meanest reader. I cannot therefore but be a little surprised at the strength of that prejudice which could prevent any one’s seeing, that, in opposition to the Count’s opinion, (which in many respects I wholly disapproved of,) I quoted the words of one of his own Church, which, if true overturn it altogether.

**22.** I have nothing to object to the quotations made in the seventh, eighth, and ninth sections. In the tenth are these words: “Now, since Mr. Wesley went so far to gather such materials together, let us see what was the

system (or rather the medley) of principles he had to return with to England.”

### **“OF THE ASSURANCE OF JUSTIFICATION.**

“I BELIEVE that conversion is an instantaneous work; and that the moment a man is converted, or has living faith in Christ, he is justified: Which faith a man cannot have, without knowing that he hath it.

“Yet I believe he may not know that he is justified (that is, that he has living faith) till a long time after.

“I believe, also, that the moment a man is justified he has peace with God.

“Which he cannot have without knowing that he has it.

“Yet I believe he may not know that he is justified (that is, that he has peace with God) till a long time after.

“I believe, when a man is justified he is born of God.

“And being born of God, he sinneth not.

“Which deliverance from sin he cannot have without knowing it.

“Yet I believe he may not know that he is justified (that is, delivered from sin) till a long time after.

“Though I believe that others may know that he is justified by his power over sin, his seriousness, and love of the brethren.”

### **23. “THE CONDITIONS OF JUSTIFICATION.**

“I BELIEVE that Christ ‘formed in us,’ subordinately to Christ ‘given for us,’ (that is, our own inherent righteousness subordinate to Christ’s merits,) ought to be insisted upon, as necessary to our justification.

“And it is just and right that a man should be humble and penitent, and have a broken and contrite heart, (that is, should have Christ formed in him,) before he can expect to be justified.

“And that this penitence and contrition is the work of the Holy Ghost.

“Yet I believe that all this is nothing towards, and has no influence on, our justification.

“Again, I believe that, in order to justification, I must go straight to Christ, with all my ungodliness, and plead nothing else.

“Yet I believe that we should not insist upon anything we do or feel, as if it were necessary *previous* to justification.”

## **24. “OF THE EFFECTS OF JUSTIFICATION.**

“I BELIEVE that justification is the same thing as to be born of God. Yet a man may have a strong assurance that he is justified, and not be able to affirm that he is born of God.

“A man may be fully assured that his sins are forgiven, yet may not be able to tell the hour or day when he received this full assurance, because it may grow up in him by degrees. — Though he can remember that, from the time this full assurance was confirmed in him, he never lost it, no, not for a moment.

“A man may have a weak faith at the same time that he hath peace with God, not one uneasy thought, and freedom from sin, not one unholy desire.

“A man may be justified, that is, born of God, who has not a clean heart, that is, is not sanctified.

“He may be justified, that is, born of God, and not have the indwelling of the Spirit.”

**25.** I entirely agree, “that the foregoing creed is a very extraordinary and odd composition.” But it is not mine: I neither composed it, nor believe it;

as, I doubt not, every impartial reader will be fully convinced, when we shall have gone over it, once more, step by step.

The parts of it which I do believe I shall barely repeat: On the others it will be needful to add a few words.

### **“OF THE ASSURANCE OF JUSTIFICATION.**

“**I BELIEVE** that conversion,” meaning thereby justification, “is an instantaneous work; and that the moment a man has living faith in Christ, he is converted or justified.” (So the proposition must be expressed to make it sense.) “Which faith he cannot have, without knowing that he has it.”

“Yet I believe he may not know that he has it till long after.” This I deny: I believe no such thing.

“I believe the moment a man is justified he has peace with God:

“Which he cannot have without knowing that he has it.”

“Yet I believe he may not know he has it till long after.” This again I deny. I believe it not; nor Michael Linner neither; to clear whom entirely, one need only read his own words: —

“About fourteen years ago, I was more than ever convinced that I was wholly different from what God required me to be. I consulted his word again and again; but it spoke nothing but condemnation; till at last I could not read, nor indeed do any thing else, having no hope and no spirit left in me. I had been in this state for several days, when, being musing by myself, those words came strongly into my mind, ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ I thought, ‘*All!* Then I am one. Then He is given for me. But I am a sinner: And he came to save sinners.’ Immediately my burden dropped off, and my heart was at rest.

“But the full assurance of faith I had not yet, nor for the two years I continued in Moravia. When I was driven out thence by the

Jesuits, I retired hither, and was soon after received into the Church. And here, after some time, it pleased our Lord to manifest himself more clearly to my soul; and give me that full sense of acceptance in him, which excludes all doubt and fear.

“Indeed, the leading of the Spirit is different in different souls. His more usual method, I believe, is, to give, in one and the same moment, forgiveness of sins, and a full assurance of that forgiveness. Yet in many he works as he did in me; giving first the remission of sins, and after some weeks, or months, or years, the full assurance of it.” (Vol. I. p. 128.)

All I need observe is, that the first sense of forgiveness is often mixed with doubt or fear. But the full assurance of faith excludes all doubt and fear, as the very term implies.

Therefore, instead of, “He may not know that he has peace with God till long after,” it should be, (to agree with Michael Linner’s words,) “He may not have, till long after, the full assurance of faith, which excludes all doubt and fear.”

“I believe a man is justified at the same time that he is born of God.

“And he that is born of God sinneth not.

“Which deliverance from sin he cannot have, without knowing that he has it.”

“Yet I believe he may not know it till long after.” This also I utterly deny.

## **26. “OF CONDITIONS OF JUSTIFICATION.**

“I believe, that Christ ‘formed in us’ ought to be insisted on, as necessary to our justification.”

I no more believe this than Christian David does, whose words concerning it are these: —

“It pleased God to show me, that Christ in us, and Christ for us, ought to be both insisted on.

“But I clearly saw we ought not to insist on any thing we feel, any more than any thing we do, as if it were necessary previous to our justification.

“And before a man can expect to be justified, he should be humble and penitent, and have a broken and contrite heart, that is, should have Christ formed in him.” No; that is quite another thing. I believe every man is penitent before he is justified; he repents before he believes the gospel. But it is never before he is justified, that Christ is formed in him.

“And that this penitence and contrition is the work of the Holy Ghost.

“Yet I believe that all this is nothing,, towards, and has no influence on, our justification.”

Christian David’s words are, “Observe, this is not the foundation. It is not this by which (for the sake of which) you are justified. This is not the righteousness, this is no part of the righteousness, by which you are reconciled to God. You grieve for your sins; you are deeply humbled; your heart is broken. Well; but all this is nothing to your justification.” The words immediately following fix the sense of this otherwise exceptionable sentence. “The remission of your sins is not owing to this cause, either in whole or in part. Your humiliation has no influence on that.” Not as a cause; so the very last words explain it.

“Again, I believe that in order to obtain justification, I must go straight to Christ, with all my ungodliness, and plead nothing else.”

“Yet I believe we should not insist on anything we do or feel, as if it were necessary previous to justification.” No, nor on anything else. So the whole tenor of Christian David’s words implies.

## **OF THE EFFECTS OF JUSTIFICATION.**

**27.** “I believe a man may have a strong assurance he is justified, and not be able to affirm he is a child of God.”

Feder’s words are these: “I found my heart at rest, in good hope that my sins were forgiven; of which I had a stronger assurance six weeks after.”

(True, comparatively stronger, though still mixed with doubt and fear.) “But I dare not affirm, I am a child of God.” I see no inconsistency in all this. Many such instances I know at this day. I myself was one for some time.

“A man may be fully assured that his sins are forgiven, yet may not be able to tell the day when he received this full assurance; because it grew up in him by degrees.” (Of this also I know a few other instances.) “But from the time this full assurance was confirmed in him, he never lost it.” Very true, and, I think, consistent.

Neuser’s own words are, “In him I found true rest to my soul, being fully assured that all my sins were forgiven. Yet I cannot tell the hour or day when I first received that full assurance. For it was not given me at first, neither at once;” (not in its fullness;) “but grew up in me by degrees. And from the time it was confirmed in me, I have never lost it, having ever since doubted, no, not for a moment.”

“A man may have a weak faith, at the same time that he has peace with God, and no unholy desires.”

A man may be justified, who has not a clean heart.

**28.** (11.) Not in the full sense of the word. This I do verily believe is sound divinity, agreeable both to Scripture and experience. And I believe it is consistent with itself. As to the “hundred other absurdities which might be fully and fairly made out” it will be time enough to consider them, when they are produced.

**29.** (12, 13.) But whether I have succeeded in attempting to reconcile these things or no, I verily think Mr. Tucker has. I desire not a more consistent account of my principles, than he has himself given in the following words: —

“Our spiritual state should be considered distinctly under each of these views.

**1.** Before justification; in which state we may be said to be unable to do any thing acceptable to God; because then we can do nothing but come to Christ; which ought not to be considered as doing any thing,

but as supplicating (or waiting) to receive a power of doing for the time to come.

“For the preventing grace of God, which is common to all, is sufficient to bring us to Christ, though it is not sufficient to carry us any further till we are justified.

**“2.** After justification. The moment a man comes to Christ (by faith) he is justified, and born again; that is, he is born again in the imperfect sense, (for there are two (if not more) degrees of regeneration,) and he has power over all the stirrings and motions of sin, but not a total freedom from them. Therefore he hath not yet, in the full and proper sense, a new and clean heart. But being exposed to various temptations, he may and will fall again from this condition, if he doth not attain to a more excellent gift.” <sup>f35</sup>

**3.** Sanctification, the last and highest state of perfection is this life. For then are the faithful born again in the full and perfect sense. Then is there given unto them a new and clean heart, and the struggle between the old and new man is over. <sup>f36</sup>

**30.** (14.) That I may say many things which have been said before, and perhaps by Calvin or Arminius, by Montanus or Barclay, or the Archbishop of Cambray, is highly probable. But it cannot thence be interred that I hold “a medley of all their principles; — Calvinism, Arminianism, Montanism, Quakerism, Quietism, all thrown together.” There might as well have been added, Judaism, Mahometanism, Paganism. It would have made the period rounder, and been full as easily proved; I mean asserted. For no other proof is yet produced.

**31.** I pass over the smaller mistakes which occur in the fifteenth and sixteenth paragraphs, together with the prophecy or prognostication concerning the approaching divisions and downfall of the Methodists. What follows to the end, concerning the ground of our hope, is indeed of greater importance. But we have not as yet the strength of the cause; the dissertation promised, is still behind. Therefore, as my work is great, and my time short, I wave that dispute for the present. And perhaps, When I shall have received farther light, I may be convinced, that “gospel holiness,” as Mr. Tucker believes, “is a necessary qualification, antecedent

to justification.” This appears to me now to be directly opposite to the gospel of Christ. But I will endeavor impartially to consider what shall be advanced in defence of it. And may He who knoweth my simpleness, teach me his way, and give me a right judgment in all things!

# AN ANSWER

## TO

### THE REV. MR. CHURCH'S REMARKS

**ON THE REV. MR. JOHN WESLEY'S LAST JOURNAL.  
IN A LETTER TO THAT GENTLEMAN.**

*“Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself  
as he that putteth it off.” (~~2~~<sup>1</sup> Kings 20:11.)*

Reverend Sir,

**1.** MY first desire and prayer to God is, that I may live peaceably with all men: My next, that if I must dispute at all, it may be with a man of understanding. Thus far, therefore, I rejoice on the present occasion. I rejoice also in that I have confidence of your sincerity, of your real desire to promote the glory of God, by peace and goodwill among men. I am likewise thankful to God for your calm manner of writing; (a few paragraphs excepted;) and yet more for this, — that such an opponent should, by writing in such a manner, give me an opportunity of explaining myself on those very heads whereon I wanted an occasion so to do.

**2.** I do not want, indeed, (though perhaps you think I do,) to widen the breach between us, or to represent the difference of the doctrines we severally teach as greater than it really is. So far from it, that I earnestly wish there were none at all; or, if there must be some, that it may be as small as possible; being fully persuaded, that, could we once agree in doctrines, other differences would soon fall to the ground.

**3.** In order to contribute, as I am able, to this, it will be my endeavor to acknowledge what I think you have spoken right, and to answer what I cannot think right as yet, with what brevity and clearness I can. I desire to do this in as inoffensive a manner as the nature of the thing will bear, and

consistently with that brotherly love which I cannot deny you without wronging my own soul.

**4.** You sum up your charge thus: “You have now, Sir, my sentiments. — It is impossible for you to put an entire stop to the enormities of the Moravians, while you still,

**I.** Too much commend these men:

**II.** Hold principles in common with them, from which these enormities naturally follow: And,

**III.** Maintain other errors more than theirs, and are guilty of enthusiasm to the highest degree.” (*Remarks*, pp. 73, 74.)

## I.

**1.** You, First, charge me with too much commending the Moravians. That the case may be fully understood, I will transcribe the passages which you cite from the Journal concerning them, and then give a general answer: —

“She told me Mr. Molther had advised her, till she received faith, to be still, ceasing from outward works. In the evening, Mr. Bray also was highly commending the being still: He likewise spoke largely of the great danger that attended the doing of outward works, and of the folly of people that keep running about to church and sacrament.” (Vol. I.)

“Sunday, November 4. Our society met, and continued silent till eight.” (*Ibid.*)

“Sunday, June 22. I spoke thus: Eight or nine months ago, certain men arose, who affirmed that there is no such thing as any means of grace, and that we ought to leave off these works of the law.” (*Ibid.*)

“You, Mr. Molther, believe that the way to attain faith, is, not to go to church, not to communicate, not to fast, not to use so much private prayer, not to read the Scripture, not to do temporal good, or attempt to do spiritual good.” (*Ibid.*)

You undervalue good works, especially works of outward mercy, never publicly insisting on the necessity of them.” (*Ibid.*)

“Some of our brethren asserted,

(1.) That till they had true faith, they ought to be still; that is, (as they explained themselves,) to abstain from the means of grace, as they are called, the Lord’s supper in particular.

(2.) That the ordinances are not means of grace, there being no other means than Christ.” (*Ibid.*)

“I could not agree, either that none has any faith, so long as he is liable to any doubt or fear; or that, till we have it, we ought to abstain from the ordinances of God.” (*Ibid.*)

“Mr. Br — d speaks so slightly of the means of grace, that many are much grieved to hear him; but others are greatly delighted with him. Ten or fourteen of them meet at our brother Clarke’s, with Mr. Molther, and make a mere jest of going to the church or to the sacrament.” (*Ibid.*)

“You, Mr. Molther, believe it is impossible for a man to use these means, without trusting in them.” (*Ibid.*)

“‘Believers,’ said Mr. Simpson, ‘are not subject to ordinances, and unbelievers have nothing to do with them.’” (*Ibid.*)

“‘Believers need not, and unbelievers may not, use them. These do not sin when they abstain from them; but those do sin when they do not abstain.’” (*Ibid.*)

“‘For one who is not born of God to read the Scriptures, or to pray, or to communicate, or to do any outward work, is deadly poison. If he does any of these things, he destroys himself.’ Mr. Bell earnestly defended this.” (*Ibid.*)

“At eight, the society at Nottingham met: I could not but observe that not one who came in used any prayer at all. I looked for one of our Hymn-books; but both that and the Bible were vanished away, and in the room thereof lay the Moravian Hymns and the Count’s Sermons.” (*Ibid.*)

“One of our English brethren, joined with you, said in his public expounding, ‘As many go to hell by praying as by thieving.’ Another, ‘I knew one who, leaning over the back of a chair, received a great gift. But he must kneel down to give God thanks: So he lost it immediately; and I know not whether he will ever have it again.’ And yet another: ‘You have lost your first joy. Therefore, you pray: That is the devil. You read the Bible: That is the devil. You communicate: That is the devil.’” (*Ibid.*)

“They affirmed that there is no commandment in the New Testament but to believe; that no other duty lies upon us; and that, when a man does believe, he is not bound or obliged to do anything which is commanded there.” (*Ibid.*)

“Mr. St — told me, ‘No one has any degree of faith till he is perfect as God is perfect.’” (*Ibid.*)

“You believe there are no degrees in faith.” (*Ibid.*)

“I have heard Mr. Molther affirm, that there is no justifying faith where there is ever any doubt.” (*Ibid.*)

“The moment a man is justified, he is sanctified wholly. Thenceforth, till death, he is neither more nor less holy.” (*Ibid.*)

“We are to grow in grace, but not in holiness.” (*Ibid.*)

**2.** I have frequently observed that I wholly disapprove of a these positions: “That there are no degrees in faith; that in order to attain faith we must abstain from all the ordinances of God; that a believer does not grow in holiness; and that he is not obliged to keep the commandments of God.” But I must also observe,

**(1.)** That you ought not to charge the Moravian Church with the first of these; since in the very page from which you quote those words, “There is no justifying faith where there is ever any doubt,” that note occurs: “In the preface to the Second Journal, the Moravian Church is cleared from this mistake.”

**(2.)** That with respect to the ordinances of God, their practice is better than their principle. They do use them themselves, I am a witness; and

that with reverence and godly fear. Those expressions, however, of our own countrymen are utterly indefensible; as I think are Mr. Molther's also; who was quickly after recalled into Germany. The great fault of the Moravian Church seems to lie in not openly disclaiming all he had said; which in all probability they would have done, had they not leaned to the same opinion. I must,

**(3.)** Observe that I never knew one of the Moravian Church, but that single person, affirm that a believer does not grow in holiness. And perhaps he would not affirm it on reflection. But I am still afraid their whole Church is tainted with Quietism, Universal Salvation, and Antinomianism: I speak, as I said elsewhere, of Antinomian opinions, abstracted from practice, good or bad.

**3.** But I should rejoice if there lay no other objection against them, than that of erroneous opinions. I know in some measure how to have compassion on the ignorant: I know the incredible force of prepossession. And God only knows, what ignorance or error (all things considered) is invincible; and what allowance his mercy will make, in such cases, to those who desire to be led into all truth. But how far what follows may be imputed to invincible ignorance or prepossession, I cannot tell.

Many of "you greatly, yea, above measure, exalt yourselves, (as a Church,) and despise others. I have scarce heard one Moravian brother own his Church to be wrong in anything. Many of you I have heard speak of it, as if it were infallible, Some of you have set it up as the judge of all the earth, of all persons as well as doctrines. Some of you have said, that there is no true Church but yours; yea, that there are no true Christians out of it. And your own members you require to have implicit faith in her decisions, and to pay implicit obedience to her directions." (Vol. I.)

I can in no degree justify these things. And yet neither can I look upon them in the same light that you do, as "some of the very worst things which are objected to the Church of Rome." (*Remarks*, p. 7.) They are exceeding great mistakes: Yet in as great mistakes have holy men both lived and died; — Thomas a' Kempis, for instance, and Francis Sales. And yet I doubt not they are now in Abraham's bosom.

**4.** I am more concerned for their “despising and decrying self-denial;” for their “extending Christian liberty beyond all warrant of holy writ;” for their “want of zeal for good works;” and, above all, for their supposing, that “we may, on some accounts, use guile;” in consequence of which they do “use guile or dissimulation in many cases.” “Nay, in many of them I have found” (not in all, nor in most) “much subtlety, much evasion and disguise; so ‘becoming all things to all men,’ as to take the color and shape of any that were near them.” (*Ibid.*)

I can neither defend nor excuse those among the Moravians whom I have found guilty of this. But neither can I condemn all for the sake of some. Every man shall give an account of himself to God.

But you say, “Your protesting against some of their opinions is not sufficient to discharge you. Have you not prepared the way for these Moravians, by countenancing and commending them; and by still speaking of them as if they were in the main the best Christians in the world, and only deluded or mistaken in a few points?” (*Remarks*, pp. 11, 12.)

I cannot speak of them otherwise than I think. And I still think,

**(1.)** That God has some thousands in our own Church who have the faith and love which is among them, without those errors either of judgment or practice.

**(2.)** That, next to these, the body of the Moravian Church, however mistaken some of them are, are in the main, of all whom I have seen, the best Christians in the world.

**5.** Because I am continually charged with inconsistency herein, even by the Moravians themselves, it may be “needful to give a short account of what has occurred between us from the beginning.

“My first acquaintance with the Moravian brethren began in my voyage to Georgia. Being then with many of them in the same ship, I narrowly observed their whole behavior. And I greatly approved of all I saw.” (The particulars are related in the First Journal.)

“From February 14, 1735, to December 2, 1737, being with them (except when I went to Frederica or Carolina) twice or thrice every day, I loved and esteemed them more and more. Yet a few

things I could not approve of. These I mentioned to them from time to time, and then commended the cause to God.

“In February following I met with Peter Bohler. My heart clave to him as soon as he spoke. And the more we conversed, so much the more did I esteem both him and the Moravian Church. So that I had no rest in my spirit till I executed the design which I had formed long before; till, after a short stay in Holland, I hastened forward, first to Marienborne, and then to Hernhuth.” <sup>f37</sup>

It may be observed, that I had before seen a few things in the Moravians which I could not approve of. In this journey I saw a few more, in the midst of many excellent things; in consequence whereof, “in September, 1738, soon after my return to England, I began the following letter to the Moravian Church. But being fearful of trusting my own judgment, I determined to wait yet a little longer, and so laid it by unfinished: —

“My Dear Brethren,

“I CANNOT but rejoice in your steadfast faith, in your love to our blessed Redeemer, your deadness to the world, your meekness, temperance, chastity, and love of one another. I greatly approve of your Conferences and Bands, <sup>f38</sup> of your methods of instructing children; and, in general, of your great care of the souls committed to your charge.

“But of some other things I stand in doubt, which I will mention in love and meekness. And I wish that, in order to remove those doubts, you would, on each of those heads, First, plainly answer whether the fact be as I suppose; and if so, Secondly, consider whether it be right.

“Is not the Count all in all among you?

“Do you not magnify your own Church too much?

“Do you not use guile and dissimulation in many cases?

“Are you not of a close, dark, reserved temper and behavior?”

“It may easily be seen, that my objections then were nearly the same as now.” Only with this difference, — I was not then assured that the facts were as I supposed. “Yet I cannot say my affection was lessened at all: (For I did not dare to determine anything:) But from November 1, I could not but see more and more things which I could not reconcile with the gospel.”

“These I have set down with all simplicity. Yet do I this, because I love them not? God knoweth: Yea, and in part, I esteem them still; because I verily believe they have a sincere desire to serve God; because many of them have tasted of his love, and some retain it in simplicity; because they love one another; because they have so much of the truth of the gospel, and so far abstain from outward sin. And lastly, because their discipline is, in most respects, so truly excellent; notwithstanding that visible blemish, the paying too much regard to their great patron and benefactor, Count Zinzendorf.”

**6.** I believe, if you coolly consider this account, you will not find, either that it is inconsistent with itself, or that it lays you under any necessity of speaking in the following manner: “What charms there may be in a demure look and a sour behavior, I know not. But sure they must be in your eye very extraordinary, as they can be sufficient to cover such a multitude of errors and crimes, and keep up the same regard and affection for the authors and abettors of them. I doubt your regard for them was not lessened, till they began to interfere with what you thought your province. You was influenced, not by a just resentment to see the honor of religion and virtue so injuriously and scandalously trampled upon, but by a fear of losing your own authority.” (*Remarks*, pp. 18, 19.)

I doubt, there is scarce one line of all these which is consistent either with truth or love. But I will transcribe a few more, before I answer: “How could you so long and so intimately converse with, so much commend, and give such countenance to, such desperately wicked people as the Moravians, according to your own account, were known by you to be? And you still speak of them, as if they were, in the main, the best Christians in the world. In one place you say, ‘A few things I could not approve of;’ but in God’s name, Sir, is the contempt of almost the whole

of our duty, of every Christian ordinance, to be so gently touched? Can detestation in such a case be too strongly expressed? Either they are some of the vilest wretches in the world, or you are the falsest accuser in the world. Christian charity has scarce an allowance to make for them as you have described them. If you have done this truly, they ought to be discouraged by all means that can be imagined.”

**7.** Let us now weigh these assertions. “They” (that is, “the charms of their *sour* behavior”) “must be in your eye very extraordinary.” Do not you stumble at the threshold? The Moravians excel in sweetness of behavior. “As they can be sufficient to cover such a multitude of errors and crimes.” *Such a multitude of errors and crimes!* I believe, as to errors, they hold universal salvation, and are partly Antinomians, (in opinion,) and partly Quietists; and for this cause I cannot join with them. But where is the multitude of errors? Whosoever knows two or three hundred more, let him please to mention them. *Such a multitude of crimes* too! That some of them have used guile, and are of a close reserved behavior, I know. And I excuse them not. But to this multitude of crimes I am an utter stranger. Let him prove this charge upon them who can. For me, I declare I cannot.

“To keep up the same regard and affection.” Not so. I say, my affection was not lessened, till after September, 1739, till I had proof of what I had feared before. But I had not the same degree of regard for them when I saw the dark as well as the bright side of their character. “I doubt your regard for them was not lessened till they began to interfere with what you thought your province.” If this were only a doubt, it were not much amiss; but it presently shoots up into an assertion, equally groundless: For my regard for them lessened, even while I was in Georgia; but it increased again after my return from thence, especially while I was at Hernhuth; and it gradually lessened again for some years, as I saw more and more which I approved not. How then does it appear that “I was influenced herein by a tear of losing my own authority; not by a just resentment to see the honor of religion and virtue so scandalously trampled upon?” — *Trampled upon!* By whom? Not by the Moravians: I never saw any such thing among them.

But what do you mean by “a just resentment?” I hope you do not mean what is commonly called *zeal*; a flame which often “sets on fire the whole

course of nature, and is itself set on fire of hell!" "Rivers of water run from my eyes, because men keep not thy law." This resentment on such an occasion I understand. From all other may God deliver me!

**8.** You go on: "How could you so long and so intimately converse with — such desperately wicked people as the Moravians, according to your own account, were known by you to be?" O Sir, what; another assertion is this! "The Moravians, according to your *own account*, were known by you to be desperately wicked people, while you intimately conversed with them!" Utterly false and injurious. I never gave any such account. I conversed intimately with them, both at Savannah and Hernhuth. But neither then, nor at any other time, did I know, or think, or say, they were "desperately wicked people." I think and say, nay, you blame me for saying, just the reverse, viz., that though I soon "found among them a few things which I could not approve;" yet I believe they are "in the main some of the best Christians in the world."

You surprise me yet more in going on thus: "In God's name, Sir, is the contempt of almost the whole of our duty, of every Christian ordinance, to be so very gently touched?" Sir, this is not the case. This charge no more belongs to the Moravians, than that of murder. Some of our countrymen spoke very wicked things. The Moravians did not sufficiently disavow them. These are the premises. By what art can you extort so dreadful a conclusion from them?

"Can detestation, in such a case, be too strongly expressed?" Indeed it can; even were the case as you suppose. "Either they are some of the vilest wretches in the world, or you are the falsest accuser in the world." Neither one nor the other: Though I prove what I allege, yet they may be, in the main, good men. "Charity has scarce an allowance to make for them, as you have described them." I have described them as of a mixed character, with much evil among them, but more good. Is it not a strange kind of charity, which cannot find an allowance to make in such a case? "If you have described them truly, they ought to be discouraged by all means that can be imagined." *By all means!* I hope not by fire and faggot; though the *house of mercy* imagines these to be, of all means, most effectual.

**9.** You proceed: "How can you justify the many good things you say of the Moravians, notwithstanding this character? You say they love God:

But how can this be, when they even plead against keeping most of his commandments? You say, you believe they have a sincere desire to serve God. How, then, can they despise his service in so many instances? You declare some of them much holier than any people you had yet known. Strange! if they fail in so many prime points of Christian duty, and this not only habitually and presumptuously, but even to the denying their use and necessity. You praise them for trampling under foot ‘the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:’ And yet you make them a close, reserved, insincere, deceitful people.

“How you will explain those things, I know not.” (*Remarks*. pp 20, 21.) By nakedly declaring each thing as it is. They are, I believe, the most self-inconsistent people now under the sun: And I describe them just as I find them; neither better nor worse, but leaving the good and bad together. Upon this ground I can very easily justify the saying many good things of them, as well as bad. For instance: I am still persuaded that they (many of them) love God; although many others of them ignorantly “plead against the keeping,” not “most,” but some, “of his commandments.” I believe “they have a sincere desire to serve God:” And yet, in several instances, some of them, I think, despise that manner of serving him which I know God hath ordained. I believe some of them are much holier than any people I had known in August, 1740: Yet sure I am that others among them fail, not indeed in the “prime points of Christian duty,” (for these are faith, and the love of God and man,) but in several points of no small importance. Not that they herein sin presumptuously, neither; for they are fully, though erroneously, persuaded in their own minds. From the same persuasion they act, when they, in some sense, deny the use or necessity of those ordinances. How far that persuasion will justify or excuse them, I leave to Him who knoweth their hearts. Lastly. I believe they trample under foot, in a good degree, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:” And yet many of them use reserve, yea, guile. Therefore, my soul mourns for them in secret places.

**10.** “But I must observe,” you say, “that you fall not only into inconsistencies, but into direct contradictions. You commend them for ‘loving one another in a manner the world knoweth not of;’ and yet you charge them with being ‘in the utmost confusion, biting and devouring one

another.' You say, 'They caution us against natural love of one another; and had well-nigh destroyed brotherly love from among us.'

"You praise them for 'using no diversions, but such as become saints;' and for 'not regarding outward adorning:' Yet you say they 'conform to the world in wearing gold and costly apparel; and by joining in worldly diversions, in order to do good.'

"You call their discipline, 'in most respects, truly excellent.' I wish you had more fully explained yourself. I am sure it is no sign of good discipline, to permit such abominations. And you tell them yourself, 'I can show you such a subordination as answers all Christian purposes, and yet is as distant from that among, you as the heavens are from the earth.'

"You mention it as a good effect of their discipline, that 'every one knows and keeps his proper rank.' Soon after, as if it were with a design to confute yourself, you say, 'Our brethren have neither wisdom enough to guide, nor prudence enough to let it alone.'

"And now, Sir, how can you reconcile these opposite descriptions?" (*Ibid.* pp. 21, 22.) Just as easily as those before, by simply declaring the thing as it is. "You commend them" (the Moravians) "for loving one another; and yet charge them with biting and devouring one another." (Vol. I.) *Them!* Whom? Not the Moravians; but the English brethren of Fetter-Lane, before their union with the Moravians. Here, then, is no shadow of contradiction. For the two sentences do not relate to the same persons.

"You say, 'They had well-nigh destroyed brotherly love from among us;' partly by 'cautions against natural love.'" (*Ibid.*) It is a melancholy truth; so they had. But we had then no connection with them. Neither, therefore, does this contradict their "loving one another in a manner the world knoweth not of."

"You praise them for using no diversions but such as become saints;" (*Ibid.*) "and yet say," (I recite the whole sentence,) "I have heard some of you affirm, that 'Christian salvation implies liberty to conform to the world, by joining in worldly diversions in order to do good.'" (*Ibid.*) And both these are true. The Moravians, in general, "use no diversions but such as become saints;" and yet I have heard some of them affirm, in

contradiction to their own practice, that “one then mentioned did well, when he joined in playing at tennis in order to do good.”

**11.** “You praise them for not ‘regarding outward adorning.’” (*Ibid.*) So I do, the bulk of the congregation. “And yet you say,” (I again recite the whole sentence,) “I have heard some of you affirm, that ‘Christian salvation implies liberty to conform to the world, by putting on of gold and costly apparel.’” (*Ibid.*) I have so. And I blame them the more, because they are condemned by the general practice of their own Church.

“You call their discipline ‘in most respects truly excellent.’” (*Ibid.*) I could wish you had more fully explained yourself.” I have, in the Second Journal. (*Ibid.*) “It is no sign of good discipline to permit such abominations;” that is, error in opinion, and guile in practice. True, it is not; nor is it any demonstration against it. For there may be good discipline even in a College of Jesuits. Another fault is, too great a deference to the Count. And yet, “in most respects, their discipline is truly excellent.”

“You mention it as a good effect of their discipline, that ‘every one knows and keeps his proper rank.’” (*Ibid.*) Soon after, as it were with a design to confute yourself, you say, ‘Our brethren have neither wisdom enough to guide, nor prudence enough to let it alone.’” (*Ibid.*) Pardon me, Sir. I have no design either to confute or to contradict myself in these words. The former sentence is spoken of the Moravian brethren; the latter, of the English brethren of Fetter-Lane.

**12.** You need not therefore “imagine, that either the strong pretenses or warm professions of the Moravians,” or their “agreeing with me on some favorite topics,” (for my love to them was antecedent to any such agreement,) “induce me to overlook their iniquity, and to forgive their other crimes.” (*Remarks*, p. 23.) No. I love them upon quite different grounds; even because I believe, notwithstanding all their faults, they “love the Lord Jesus in sincerity,” and have a measure of “the mind that was in him.” And I am in great earnest when I declare once more, that I have a deep, abiding conviction, by how many degrees the good which is among them overbalances the evil; that I cannot speak of them but with tender affection, were it only for the benefits I have received from them; and that, at this hour, I desire union with them (were those stumbling-blocks once

put away, which have hitherto made that desire ineffectual) above all things under heaven.

## II.

**1.** Your second charge is, “That I hold, in common with them, principles from which their errors naturally follow.” You mean justification by faith alone. To set things in the clearest light I can, I will first observe what I hold, and what you object; and then inquire what the consequences have been.

**First.** As to what I hold. My latest thoughts upon justification are expressed in the following words: —

“Justification sometimes means our acquittal at the last day. But this is out of the present question; that justification whereof our Articles and Homilies speak, meaning present pardon and acceptance with God; who therein declares his righteousness and mercy, by or for the remission of the sins that are past.

“I believe, the condition of this is faith: I mean, not only, that without faith we cannot be justified; but also, that, as soon as any one has true faith, in that moment he is justified.

“Good works follow this faith, but cannot go before it. Much less can sanctification, which implies a continued course of good works, springing from holiness of heart. But — entire sanctification goes before our justification at the last day.

“It is allowed, that repentance, and ‘fruits meet for repentance,’ go before faith. Repentance absolutely must go before faith; fruits meet for it, if there be opportunity. By repentance I mean, conviction of sin, producing real desires and sincere resolutions of amendment; and by ‘fruits meet for repentance,’ forgiving our brother, ceasing from evil, doing good, using the ordinances of God, and, in general, obeying him according to the measure of grace which we have received. But these I cannot, as yet, term good

works, because they do not spring from faith and the love of God.”  
*(Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,)*

**2.** “Faith, in general, is a divine, supernatural ελεγχος (evidence or conviction) of things not seen, not discoverable by our bodily senses, as being either past, future, or spiritual. Justifying faith implies, not only a divine ελεγχος that God ‘was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,’ but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for my sins, that he loved me, and gave himself for me. And the moment a penitent sinner thus believes, God pardons and absolves him.” *(Ibid.)*

Now, it being allowed, that both inward and outward holiness are the stated conditions of final justification, what more can you desire, who have hitherto opposed justification by faith alone merely upon a principle of conscience, because you was zealous for holiness and good works? Do I not effectually secure these from contempt, at the same time that I defend the doctrines of the Church? I not only allow, but vehemently contend, that none shall ever enter into glory, who is not holy on earth, as well in heart as “in all manner of conversation.” I cry aloud, “Let all that have believed, be careful to maintain good works;” and, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from all iniquity.” I exhort even those who are conscious they do not believe, “Cease to do evil, learn to do well. The kingdom of heaven is at hand;” therefore, “repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.” Are not these directions the very same, in substance, which you yourself would give to persons so circumstanced?

**3.** “Many of those who are perhaps as zealous of good works as you, think I have allowed you too much. Nay, my brethren, but how can we help allowing it, if we allow the Scriptures to be from God? For is it not written, and do not you yourselves believe, ‘Without holiness no man shall see the Lord?’ And know then, without fighting about words, can we deny, that holiness is a condition of final acceptance? And as to the first acceptance or pardon, does not all experience as well as Scripture prove, that no man ever yet truly believed the gospel who did not first repent? Repentance therefore we cannot deny to be necessarily previous to faith. Is it not equally undeniable, that the running back into wilful, known sin (suppose it were drunkenness or uncleanness) stifles that repentance or conviction? And can that repentance come to any good issue in his soul,

who resolves not to forgive his brother? or who obstinately refrains from what God convinces him is right, whether it be prayer or hearing his word? Would you scruple yourself to tell one of these, ‘Unto him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not,’ that is, uses it not, ‘shall be taken even that which he hath?’ Would you scruple to say this? But in saying this, you allow all which I have said, viz., that previous to justifying faith, there must be repentance, and, if opportunity permit, ‘fruits meet for repentance.’

“And yet I allow you this, that although both repentance and the fruits thereof are in some sense necessary before justification, yet neither the one nor the other is necessary in the same sense, or in the same degree, with faith. Not in the same degree. For in whatever moment a man believes, (in the Christian sense of the word,) he is justified, his sins are blotted out, ‘his faith is counted to him for righteousness.’ But it is not so, at whatever moment he repents, or brings forth any or all the fruits of repentance. Faith alone therefore justifies; which repentance alone does not; much less any outward work. And consequently, none of these are necessary to justification, in the same degree with faith.

“No in the same sense. For none of these has so direct, immediate a relation to justification as faith. This is proximately necessary thereto; repentance remotely, as it is necessary to the increase or continuance of repentance.<sup>f39</sup> And even in this sense, these are only necessary on supposition, — if there be time and opportunity for them; for in many instances there is not; but God cuts short his work, and faith prevents the fruits of repentance: So that the general proposition is not overthrown, but clearly established, by these concessions; and we conclude still, that faith alone is the proximate condition of justification.”

**4.** This is what I hold concerning justification. I am next briefly to observe what you object. “If faith,” say you, “is the sole condition of justification, then it is our sole duty.” (*Remarks*, p. 25.) I deny the consequence. Faith may be, in the sense above described, the sole condition of justification; and yet not only repentance be our duty before, but all obedience after, we believe.

You go on: “If good works are not conditions of our justification, they are not conditions of our (final) salvation.” (Page 25.) I deny the consequence

again. Good works, properly so called, cannot be the conditions of justification; because it is impossible to do any good work before we are justified. And yet, notwithstanding, good works may be, and are, conditions of final salvation. For who will say it is impossible to do any good work before we are finally saved?

You proceed: "Can we be saved in the contemptuous neglect of repentance, prayer," etc.? (Page 26.) No, nor justified neither; but while they are previous to faith, these are not allowed to be good works.

You afterwards argue from my own concessions, thus: "Your notion of true stillness is, 'a patient waiting, upon God, by lowliness, meekness, and resignation, in all the ways of his holy law, and the works of his commandments.' But how is it possible to reconcile to this, the position, that these duties are not conditions of our justification? If we are justified without them, we may be saved without them. This consequence cannot be too often repeated." (Page 26.)

Let it be repeated ever so often, it is good for nothing. For, far other qualifications are required in order to our standing before God in glory, than were required in order to his giving us faith and pardon. In order to this, nothing is indispensably required, but repentance, or conviction of sin. But in order to the other it is indispensably required, that we be fully "cleansed from all sin;" that the "very God of peace sanctify us wholly," even to **το ολοκληρον ημων**, "our entire body, soul, and spirit." It is not necessary, therefore, (nor indeed possible,) that we should, before justification, "patiently wait upon God, by lowliness, meekness, and resignation, in all the ways of his holy law." And yet it is necessary, in the highest degree, that we should thus wait upon him after justification: Otherwise, how shall we be "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?"

**5.** Soon after, you add: "In the passages last cited, you plead for the necessity of a good life: But in others, the force of your principles shows itself. An answer approved by you, is, 'My heart is desperately wicked; but I have no doubt or fear; I know my Savior loves me, and I love him.' Both these particulars are impossible, if the Scripture be true." (Page 29.)

You amaze me! Is it possible you should be ignorant that your own heart is desperately wicked? Yet I dare not say, either that God does not love you, or that you do not love him.

“Again: You say, you described the state of those who have forgiveness of sins, but not a clean heart;” (page 30;) not in the full, proper sense. Very true; but even then they had power over both inward and outward corruptions; far from being, as you suppose, “still wedded to their vices, and resolved to continue in them.”

“In another place, after having observed that ‘sin does remain in one that is justified, though it has not dominion over him,’ you go on: ‘But fear not, though you have an evil heart; yet a little while, and you shall be endued with power from on high, whereby ye may purify yourselves, even as he is pure.’ Sinners, if they believe this, may be quite secure, and imagine they have nothing to fear, though they continue in their iniquities. For God’s sake, Sir, speak out. If they that have an evil heart have not, who has reason to fear?” (Page 31.) All who have not dominion over sin; all who continue in their iniquities. You, for one, if any sin has dominion over you. If so, I testify against you this day, (and you will not be quite secure, if you believe me,) “The wrath of God abideth on you!”

“What do you mean by, ‘sin remains in one that is justified?’ that he is guilty of any known, wilful, habitual sin?” (Page 32.) Judge by what is gone before: — I mean the same as our Church means by, “sin remains in the regenerate.”

**6.** You proceed to another passage, which in the Journal stands thus: —

“After we had wandered many years in the new path of salvation by faith and works, about two years ago it pleased God to show us the old way of salvation by faith only. And many soon tasted of this salvation, being justified freely, having peace with God, ‘rejoicing in hope of the glory of God,’ and having ‘his love shed abroad in their hearts.’” (Vol. I.) Thus I define what I mean by this salvation, viz., “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

But you object, “Here you deny the necessity of good works in order to salvation.” (*Remarks*, p. 33.) I deny the necessity, nay, possibility, of good works, as previous to this salvation; as previous to faith or those

fruits of faith, “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” This is my real sentiment, not a slip of my pen, neither any proof of my want of accuracy.

**7.** “I shall now,” you say, “consider the account you give, in this Journal, of the doctrine of justification.” (*Remarks*, p.30.)

I will recite the whole, just as it stands, together with the occasion of it: —

“In the afternoon I was informed how many who cannot, in terms, deny it, — explain justification by faith. They say,

**(1.)** Justification is two-fold; the first in this life, the second at the last day.

**(2.)** Both these are by faith alone, that is, by objective faith, or by the merits of Christ, which are the object; of our faith.’ And this, they say, is all that St. Paul and the Church mean by, ‘we are justified by faith only.’ But they add,

**(3.)** ‘We are not justified by subjective faith alone, that is, by the faith which is in us. But good works also must be added to this faith, as a joint condition both of the first and second justification.’

“In flat opposition to this, I cannot but maintain, (at least, till I have clearer light,)

**(1.)** That the Justification which is spoken of by St. Paul to the Romans, and in our Articles, is not two-fold. It is one, and no more. It is the present remission of our sins, or our first acceptance with God.

**(2.)** It is true, that the merits of Christ are the sole cause of this our justification. But it is not true, that this is all which St. Paul and our Church mean by our being justified by faith only; neither is it true, that either St. Paul or the Church mean, by faith, the merits of Christ. But,

**(3.)** By our being justified by faith only, both St. Paul and the Church mean that the condition of our justification is faith alone, and not good works; inasmuch as all works done before justification have in them the nature of sin.

Lastly. That faith which is the sole condition of justification, is the faith which is wrought in us by the grace of God. It is a sure trust which a man hath, that Christ hath loved him and died for him.” (Vol. I.)

**8.** To the first of these propositions you object, “that justification is not only two-fold, but manifold. For a man may possibly sin many times, and as many times be justified or forgiven.” (*Remarks*, pp. 37-39.)

I grant it. I grant also, that justification sometimes means a state of acceptance with God. But all this does not in the least affect my assertion, that “that justification which is spoken of by St. Paul to the Romans, and by our Church in the Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Articles, is not our acquittal at the last day, but the present remission of our sins.”

You add, “You write in other places so variously about this matter, that I despair to find any consistency. Once you holden ‘a degree of justifying faith short of the full assurance of faith, the abiding witness of the Spirit, or the clear perception that Christ abideth in him;’ and yet you afterwards ‘warned all not to think they were justified before they had a clear assurance, that God had forgiven their sins.’ What difference there is between this clear assurance, and the former full assurance and clear perception, I know not.” (Page 40.)

Let us go on step by step, and you will know. “Once you holden ‘a degree of justifying faith, short of the full assurance of faith, the abiding witness of the Spirit, or the clear perception that Christ abideth in him.’” And so I hold still, and have done for some years. “And yet you afterwards warned all not to think they were justified before they had a clear assurance that God had forgiven their sins.” I did so. “What difference there is between this clear assurance, and that full assurance and clear perception, I know not.” Sir, I will tell you. The one is an assurance that my sins are forgiven, clear at first, but soon clouded with doubt or fear. The other is such a plerophory or full assurance that I am forgiven, and so clear a perception that Christ abideth in me, as utterly excludes all doubt and fear, and leaves them no place, no, not for an hour. So that the difference between them is as great as the difference between the light of the morning and that of the mid-day sun.

**9.** On the second proposition you remark,

(1.) That I “ought to have said, the merits of Christ are (not the sole cause, but) the *sole meritorious* cause of this our justification.” (Page 41.)

(2.) That “St. Paul and the Church, by justifying faith, mean, faith in the gospel and merits of Christ.” The very thing; so I contend, in flat opposition to those who say they mean only the object of this faith.

Upon the third proposition, “By our being justified by faith only, both St. Paul and the Church mean, that the condition of our justification is faith alone, and not good works;” you say, “Neither of them mean any such thing. You greatly wrong them, in ascribing so mischievous a sentiment to them.” (*Ibid.*) Let me beg you, Sir, to have patience, and calmly to consider,

(1.) What I mean by this proposition. Why should you any longer run as uncertainly, and fight as one that beateth the air?

(2.) What is advanced touching the sentiments of the (Church, in the tract referred to above. Till you have done this, it would be mere loss of time to dispute with you on this head.

I wave, therefore, for the present, the consideration of some of your following pages. Only I cannot quite pass over that (I believe, new) assertion, “that the Thirteenth Article, entitled, ‘Of Works done before Justification,’ does not speak of works done before justification, but of works before grace, which is a very different thing!” (Page 45.) I beseech you, Sir, to consider the Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Articles, just as they lie, in one view: And you cannot but see that it is as absolutely impossible to maintain that proposition, as it is to prove that the Eleventh and Twelfth Articles speak not of justification, but of some very different thing.

**10.** Against that part of the fourth proposition, “Faith is a sure trust which a man hath, that Christ loved him and died for him,” you object, “This definition is absurd; as it supposes that such a sure trust can be in one who does not repent of his sins.” (Page 48.) I suppose quite the contrary, as I have declared over and over; nor, therefore, is there any such danger as you apprehend.

But you say, “There is nothing distinguishing enough in this to point out the true justifying faith.” (*Ibid.*) I grant it; supposing a man were to write a book, and say this of it, and no more. But did you ever see any treatise of mine, wherein I said this of faith, and no more? nothing whereby to distinguish true faith from false? Touching this Journal, your own quotations prove the contrary. Yea, and I everywhere insist, that we are to distinguish them by their fruits, by inward and outward righteousness, by the peace of God filling and ruling the heart, and by patient, active joy in the Holy Ghost.

You conclude this point: “I have now, Sir, examined at large your account of justification; and, I hope, fully refuted the several articles in which you have comprised it.” (Page 49.) We differ in our judgment. I do not apprehend you have refuted any one proposition of the four. You have, indeed, amended the second, by adding the word *meritorious*; for which I give you thanks.

**11.** You next give what you style, “the Christian scheme of justification;” (page 50;) and afterwards point out the consequences which you apprehend to have attended the preaching justification by faith; the Third point into which I was to inquire.

You open the cause thus: “The denying the necessity of good works, as the condition of justification, directly draws after it, or rather includes in it, all manner of impiety and vice. It has often perplexed and disturbed the minds of men, and in the last century occasioned great confessions in this nation. These are points which are ever liable to misconstructions, and have ever yet been more or less attended with them. And it appears from what you have lately published, that since you have preached the doctrine, it has had its old consequences, or rather worse ones; it has been more misunderstood, more perverted and abused, than ever.” (Pages 1, 2.)

“The denying the necessity of good works, as the condition of justification, draws after it, or rather includes in it, all manner of impiety and vice.” Here stands the proposition; but where is the proof? Till that appears, I simply say, It does not.

“It has often perplexed and disturbed the minds of men.” And so have many other points in St. Paul’s Epistles.

“But these are points which are ever liable to misconstructions; and have ever yet, more or less, been attended with them.” And what points of revealed religion are those which are not ever liable to misconstructions? Or of what material point can we say, that it has not ever yet, more or less, been attended with them?

“In the last century it occasioned great confessions in this nation.” *It occasioned!* No; in no wise. It is demonstrable, the occasions of those confessions were quite of another kind.

“And it appears, that since you have preached the doctrine, it has had its old consequences, or rather worse. It has been more misunderstood, more perverted and abused, than ever.” What! worse consequences than regicide, (which, you say, was the old one,) and making our whole land a field of blood? Or has it been more perverted and abused than when (in your account) it overturned the whole frame both of Church and State?

**12.** You go on: “The terms of the gospel are, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. But when we undervalue either of these terms, we involve the consciences of the weak in fatal perplexities; we give a handle to others to justify their impieties; we confirm the enemies of religion in their prejudices.” (*Remarks*, p. 2.)

All this I grant. But it affects not me. For I do not undervalue either faith or repentance.

“Was not irreligion and vice already prevailing enough in the nation, but we must — throw snares in people’s way, and root out the remains of piety and devotion, in the weak and well-meaning? That this has been the case, your own confessions put beyond all doubt. And you even now hold and teach the principles from which these dangerous consequences do plainly and directly follow.” (Page 3.)

“Was not irreligion and vice already prevailing enough,” (whether I have increased them, we will consider by and by,) “but we must throw snares in people’s way?” God forbid! My whole life is employed in taking those snares out of people’s way, which the world and the devil had thrown there. “And root out the remains of piety and devotion in the weak and well-meaning?” Of whom speaketh the Prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? “Your own confessions put this beyond all doubt.”

What! that “I root out the remains of piety and devotion?” Not so. The sum of them all recited above amounts to this and no more: “That while my brother and I were absent from London, many weak men were tainted with wrong opinions, most of whom we recovered at our return; but even those who continued therein did, notwithstanding, continue to live a holier life than ever they did before they heard us preach.” “And you even now hold the principles from which these dangerous consequences do plainly and directly follow.” But I know not where to find these consequences, unless it be in your title-page. There indeed I read of the very fatal tendency of justification by faith only: “The divisions and perplexities of the Methodists, and the many errors relating both to faith and practice, which,” as you conceive, “have already risen among these deluded people.”

However, you “charitably believe, I was not aware of these consequences at first.” (*Remarks*, p. 4.) No, nor am I yet; though it is strange I should not, if they so naturally succeed that doctrine. I will go a step farther. I do not know, neither believe, that they ever did succeed that doctrine, unless perhaps accidentally, as they might have succeeded any doctrine whatsoever. And till the contrary is proved, those consequences cannot show that these principles are not true.

**13.** Another consequence which you charge on my preaching justification by faith, is, the introducing the errors of the Moravians. “Had the people,” say you, “gone on in a quiet and regular practice of their duty, as most of them did before you deluded them, it would have been impossible for the Moravian tenets to have prevailed among them. But when they had been long and often used to hear good works undervalued, I cannot wonder that they should plunge into new errors, and wax worse and worse.” (Page 12.)

This is one string of mistakes. “Had the people gone on in a quiet and regular practice of their duty, as most of them did before you deluded them.” *Deluded them!* Into what? Into the love of God and all mankind, and a zealous care to keep his commandments. I would to God this delusion (if such it is accounted) may spread to the four corners of the earth! But how did most of them go on before they were thus deluded? Four in five, by a moderate computation, even as other baptized Heathens, in the works of the devil, in all the “wretchlessness of most unclean

living.” “In a quiet and regular practice of their duty!” What duty? the duty of cursing and swearing; the duty of gluttony and drunkenness; the duty of whoredom and adultery; or of beating one another, and any that came in their way? In this (not very “quiet or regular”) practice did most of those go on before they heard us, who have now “put off the old man with his deeds,” and are “holy in all manner of conversation.”

Have these, think you, “been long and often used to hear good works undervalued?” Or are they prepared for receiving the Moravian errors, by the knowledge and love of God? O Sir, the Moravians know, if you do not, that there is no such barrier under heaven against their tenets as those very people whom you suppose just prepared for receiving them.

But “complaints,” you say, “of their errors, come very ill from you, because you have occasioned them.” Nay, if it were so, for that very cause they ought to come from me. If I had occasioned an evil, surely I am the very person who ought to remove it as far as I can; to recover, if possible, those who are hurt already, and to caution others against it.

**14.** On some of those complaints, as you term them, you remark as follows: — “Many of those who once knew in whom they had believed” (these are my words) “were thrown into idle reasonings, and thereby filled with doubts and fears.” (Page 13.) “This,” you add, “it is to be feared, has been too much the case of the Methodists in general. — Accordingly we find, in this Journal, several instances, not barely of doubts and fears, but of the most desperate despair. This is the consequence of resting so much on sensible impressions. — Bad men may be led into presumption thereby; an instance of which you give, Vol. I. p. 295.”

That instance will come in our way again: “Many of those who once knew in whom they had believed were thrown,” by the Antinomians, “into idle reasonings, and thereby filled with doubts and fears. This,” you fear, “has been the case with the Methodists in general.” You must mean, (to make it a parallel case,) that the generality of the people now termed Methodists were true believers till they heard us preach, but were thereby thrown into idle reasonings, and filled with needless doubts and fears. Exactly contrary to truth in every particular. For,

(1.) They lived in open sins till they heard us preach, and, consequently, were no better believers than their father the devil.

(2.) They were not then thrown into idle reasonings, but into serious thought how to flee from the wrath to come. Nor,

(3.) Were they filled with needless doubts and fears, but with such as were needful in the highest degree, such as actually issued in repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Accordingly, we find in this Journal several instances of the most desperate despair. (*Ibid.*)”

Then I am greatly mistaken. But I will set down at length the several instances you refer to: —

“I was a little surprised, in going out of the room, at one who caught hold of me, and said abruptly, ‘I must speak with you, and will. I have sinned against light and against love.’ (N. B. She was soon after, if not at that very time, a common prostitute.) ‘I have sinned beyond forgiveness. I have been cursing you in my heart, and blaspheming God, ever since I came here. I am damned: I know it: I feel it: I am in hell: I have hell in my heart.’ I desired two or three who had confidence in God, to join in crying to him on her behalf. Immediately that horrible dread was taken away, and she began to see some dawns of hope.” (*Ibid.*)

“The attention of all was soon fixed on poor L—— S——. One so violently and variously torn of the evil one did I never see before. Sometimes she laughed till almost strangled; and then broke out into cursing and blaspheming; then stamped, and struggled with incredible strength, so that four or five could scarce hold her; then cried out, ‘O eternity, eternity! O that I had no soul! O that I had never been born!’ At last she faintly called on Christ to help her; and the violence of her pangs ceased.” (*Ibid.*)

It should be remembered, that from that time to this, her conversation has been as becometh the gospel.

“Thursday, December 25, I met with such a case as I do not remember either to have known or heard of before: L—— S——,

(the same person,) after many years' mourning, (long before she heard of us,) was filled with peace and joy in believing. In the midst of this, without any discernible cause, such a cloud suddenly overwhelmed her, that she could not believe her sins were ever forgiven at all, nor that there was any such thing as forgiveness of sins. She could not believe that the Scriptures were true; that there was any heaven, or hell, or angel, or spirit, or any God. One more I have since found in the same state: But observe, neither of these continued therein; nor did I ever know one that did. So sure it is that all faith is the gift of God, which the moment he withdraws, the evil heart of unbelief will poison the whole soul." (*Ibid.*)

Which of these is an "instance of the most desperate despair?" Surely the most desperate of any, yea, the only one which is properly said to be desperate at all, is that which produces instant self-murder; which causes a poor wretch, by a sin which he cannot repent of, to rush straight through death into hell. But that was not the case in any of these instances; in all which we have already seen the end of the Lord.

**15.** That I "raise separate societies against the Church," (*Remarks*, p. 14,) is a charge which I need not examine till the evidence is produced. You next cite a Moravian's words to me: (an Englishman joined with the Moravians:) "You have eyes full of adultery, and cannot cease from sin; you take upon you to guide unstable souls, and lead them in the way of damnation" and remark, "This is only returning some of your own treatment upon yourself. Here also you set the pattern." At what time and place, when and where, were "such abuses as these thrown out by me against our Universities, and against our regular Clergy, not the highest or the worthiest excepted?" I am altogether clear in this matter, as often as it has been objected: Neither do I desire to receive any other treatment from the Clergy, than they have received from me to this day.

You have a note at the bottom of this page which runs thus: "See pages 71, 77, and 73, <sup>f40</sup> where some Methodists said they had heard both your brother and you many times preach Popery."

I am afraid you advance here a wilful untruth, purely *ad movendam invidiam*. <sup>f41</sup> or you cannot but know,

(1.) That there is not one word of preaching Popery, either in page 71 or 77. And

(2.) That when Mr. C. and two other Predestinarians (as is related page 73) affirmed they had heard both my brother and me many times preach Popery, they meant neither more nor less thereby than the doctrine of universal redemption.

**16.** You proceed: “Kingswood you call *your own house*: And when one Mr. C. opposed you there, you reply to him, ‘You should not have supplanted me in my own house, stealing the hearts of the people.’ The parochial Clergy may call their several districts their own houses, with much more propriety than you could call Kingswood yours. And yet how have you supplanted them therein, and labored to steal the hearts of the people! You have suffered by the same ways you took to discharge your spleen and malice against your brethren.

“Your brother’s words to Mr. C. are, — ‘Whether his doctrine is true or false, is not the question. But you ought first to have fairly told him, *I preach contrary to you. Are you willing, notwithstanding, that I should continue in your house, gainsaying you? Shall I stay here opposing you, or shall I depart?*’ Think you hear this spoken to you by us. What can you justly reply? — Again, if Mr. C. had said thus to you, and you had refused him leave to stay; I ask you, whether in such a case he would have had reason to resent such a refusal? I think you cannot say he would. And yet how loudly have you objected our refusing our pulpits to you!”  
(*Remarks*, page 15.)

So you judge these to be exactly parallel cases. It lies therefore upon me to show that they are not parallel at all; that there is, in many respects, an essential difference between them.

(1.) “Kingswood you call your own house.” So I do, that is, the school-house there. For I bought the ground where it stands, and paid for the building it, partly from the contribution of my friends, (one of whom contributed fifty pounds,) partly from the income of my own Fellowship. No Clergyman therefore can call his parish his own house with more propriety than I can call this house mine.

(2.) “Mr. C. opposed you there.” True; but who was Mr. C.? One I had sent for to assist me there; a friend that was as my own soul; that, even while he opposed me, lay in my bosom. What resemblance then does Mr. C., thus opposing me, bear to me opposing (if I really did) a parochial Minister?

(3.) “You said to Mr. C., ‘You should not have supplanted me in my own house, stealing the hearts of the people.’ Yet you have supplanted the Clergy in their own houses.” What, in the same manner as Mr. C. did me? Have I done to any of them as he has done to me? You may as justly say I have cut their throats! *Stealing the hearts of their people*. Nor are these their people in the same sense wherein those were mine, viz., servants of the devil brought, through my ministry, to be servants and children of God. “You have suffered by the same ways you took to discharge your spleen and malice against your brethren.” *To discharge your spleen and malice!* Say, your muskets and blunderbusses: I have just as much to do with one as the other.

(4.) “Your brother said to Mr. C., ‘You ought to have told my brother fairly, *I preach contrary to you. Are you willing I should continue in your house, gainsaying you? Shall I stay here opposing you, or shall I depart?*’ Think you hear this spoken to you by us. What can you justly reply?” I can justly reply, Sir, Mr. C.’s case totally differs from yours. Therefore it makes absolutely nothing to your purpose.

**17.** A farther consequence (you think) of my preaching this doctrine, is, “the introducing that of absolute predestination. And whenever these errors,” say you, “gain ground, there can be no wonder, that confusion, presumption, and despair, many very shocking instances of all which you give us among your followers, should be the consequences.” (*Remarks*, p. 52.) You should by all means have specified a few of those instances, or, at least, the pages where they occur. Till this is done, I can look upon this assertion as no other than a flourish of your pen.

To conclude this head: You roundly affirm, once for all, “The grossest corruptions have ever followed the spreading of this tenet. The greatest heats and animosities have been raised thereby. The wildest errors have been thus occasioned. And in proportion to its getting ground, it has never

failed to perplex the weak, to harden the wicked, and to please the profane. Your Journal is a proof that these terrible consequences have of late prevailed, perhaps more than ever.” (Page 51.) Suppose that Journal gives a true account of facts, (which you seem not to deny,) could you find there no other fruits of my preaching, than these terrible ones you here mention?

O who so blind, as he that will not see!

**18.** But that we may not still talk at large, let us bring this question into as narrow a compass as possible. Let us go no farther as to time, than seven years last past; as to place, than London and the parts adjoining; as to persons, than you and me, Thomas Church preaching one doctrine, John Wesley the other. Now then, let us consider with meekness and fear, what have been the consequences of each doctrine.

You have preached justification by faith and works, at Battersea, and St. Ann’s, Westminster; while I preached justification by faith alone, near Moorfields, and at Short’s Gardens. I beseech you then to consider, in the secret of your heart, how many sinners have you converted to God? By their fruits we shall know them. This is a plain rule. By this test let them be tried. How many outwardly and habitually wicked men have you brought to uniform habits of outward holiness? It is an awful thought! Can you instance in a hundred? in fifty? in twenty? in ten? If not, take heed unto yourself and to your doctrine. It cannot be that both are right before God.

Consider now (I would not speak, but I dare not refrain) what have been the consequences of even my preaching the other doctrine. By the fruits shall we know those of whom I speak; even the cloud of witnesses, who at this hour experience the gospel I preach to be the power of God unto salvation. The habitual drunkard, that was, is now temperate in all things. The whoremonger now flees fornication. He that stole, steals no more, but works with his hands. He that cursed or swore, perhaps at every sentence, has now learned to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with reverence. Those formerly enslaved to various habits of sin, are now brought to uniform habits of holiness. These are demonstrable facts. I can name the men, with their several places of abode. One of them was an avowed Atheist for many years; some were Jews; a considerable number

Papists; the greatest part of them as much strangers to the form, as to the power, of godliness.

When you have weighed these things touching the consequences of my preaching, on the one hand, (somewhat different from those set down in your *Remarks*,) and of your preaching, on the other, I would earnestly recommend the following words to your deepest consideration: —

“Beware of false prophets; ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree” (every true Prophet or Teacher) “bringeth forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.”

(~~and~~ Matthew 6:15, etc.)

### III.

**1.** Having spoken more largely than I designed on the principle I hold in common with the Moravians, I shall touch very briefly on those errors (so called) which you say I hold more than theirs. (*Remarks*, page 55.)

You name, as the first, my holding that “a man may have a degree of justifying faith before he has, in the full, proper sense, a new, a clean heart.” (*Ibid.*)

I have so often explained this, that I cannot throw away time in adding any more now; only this, — that the moment a sinner is justified, his heart is cleansed in a low degree. But yet he has not a clean heart, in the full, proper sense, till he is made perfect in love.

**2.** Another error you mention is this doctrine of perfection. (Page 60.) To save you from a continual *ignoratio elenchi*, I wave disputing on this point also, till you are better acquainted with my real sentiments. I have declared them on that head again and again; particularly in the sermon on “Christian Perfection.”

**3.** Into this fallacy you plunge from the beginning to the end of what you speak on my third error, (so you term it,) relating to the Lord’s supper; confuting, as mine, notions which I know not. (Pages 56, 57.) I cannot

think any farther answer is needful here, than the bare recital of my own words: —

“Friday, June 27. I preached on, ‘Do this in remembrance of me.’

“It has been diligently taught among us, that none but those who are converted, who ‘have received the Holy Ghost,’ who are believers in the full sense, ought to communicate.

“But experience shows the gross falsehood of that assertion, that the Lord’s supper is not a converting ordinance. Ye are witnesses: For many now present know, the very beginning of your conversion to God (perhaps in some the first deep conviction) was wrought at the Lord’s supper. Now, one single instance of this kind overthrows that whole assertion.

“The falsehood of the other assertion appears both from Scripture precept and example. Our Lord commanded those very men who were then unconverted, who had not yet ‘received the Holy Ghost,’ who, in the full sense of the word, were not believers, to do this in remembrance of him. Here the precept is clear. And to these he delivered the elements with his own hands. Here is example equally indisputable.

“Sat. 28. — I showed at large,

**(1.)** That the Lord’s supper was ordained by God to be a means of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace, according to their several necessities.

**(2.)** That the persons for whom it was ordained, are all those who know and feel that they want the grace of God, either to restrain them from sin, or to show their sins forgiven, or to renew their souls in the image of God.

**(3.)** That, inasmuch as we come to his table, not to give him anything, but to receive whatsoever he sees best for us, there is no previous preparation indispensably necessary, but a desire to receive whatsoever he pleases to give. And,

(4.) That no fitness is required at the time of communicating, but a sense of our state, of our utter sinfulness and helplessness; every one who knows he is fit for hell, being just fit to come to Christ, in this as well as all other ways of his appointment.” (Vol. I.)

4. “A stoical insensibility,” you add, “is the next error I have to charge you with. You say, ‘The servants of God suffer nothing;’ and suppose that we ought to be here so free as, in the strongest pain, not once to desire to have a moment’s ease.

“At the end of one of your hymns, you seem to carry this notion to the very height of extravagancy and presumption. You say, —

*‘Doom, if thou canst, to endless pains,  
And drive me from thy face.’”<sup>f42</sup>*

“A stoical insensibility is the next error I have to charge you with.” And how do you support the charge? Why thus: “You say, ‘The servants of God suffer nothing.’” (Vol. I.) And can you possibly misunderstand these words, if you read those that immediately follow? — “His body was well-nigh torn asunder with pain: But God made all his bed in his sickness; so that he was continually giving thanks to God, and making his boast of his praise.”

“You suppose we ought to be so free, as in the strongest pain not once to desire to have a moment’s ease.” O Sir, with what eyes did you read those words? —

“I dined with one who told me, in all simplicity, ‘Sir, I thought last week, there could be no such rest as you describe; none in this world, wherein we should be so free as not to desire ease in pain. But God has taught me better; for on Friday and Saturday, when I was in the strongest pain, I never once had one moment’s desire of ease, but only that the will of God might be done.’” (*Ibid.* p. 283.) Do I say here, that “we ought not in the strongest pain once to desire to have a moment’s ease?” What a frightful distortion of my words is this! What I say is, “A serious person affirmed to me, that God kept her for two days in such a state.” And why not? Where is the absurdity?

“At the end of one of your hymns, you seem to carry this notion to the very height of extravagancy and presumption. You say,

*‘Doom, if thou canst, to endless pains,  
And drive me from thy face.’”*

*If thou canst*, that is, if thou canst deny thyself, if thou canst forget to be gracious, if thou canst cease to be truth and love. So the lines both preceding and following fix the sense. I see nothing of stoical insensibility, neither of extravagancy or presumption, in this.

**5.** Your last charge is, that I am guilty of enthusiasm to the highest degree. “Enthusiasm,” you say, “is a false persuasion of an extraordinary divine assistance, which leads men on to such conduct as is only to be justified by the supposition of such assistance. An enthusiast is, then, sincere, but mistaken. His intentions are good, but his actions most abominable. Instead of making the word of God the rule of his actions, he follows only that secret impulse which is owing to a warm imagination. Instead of judging of his spiritual estate by the improvement of his heart, he rests only on ecstasies, etc. He is very liable to err, as not considering things coolly and carefully. He is very difficult to be convinced by reason and argument, as he acts upon a supposed principle superior to it, the directions of God’s Spirit. Whoever opposes him is charged with resisting the Spirit. His own dreams must be regarded as oracles. Whatever he does is to be accounted the work of God. Hence he talks in the style of inspired persons; and applies Scripture phrases to himself, without attending to their original meaning, or once considering the difference of times and circumstances.” (*Remarks*, pp. 60, 61.)

You have drawn, Sir, (in the main,) a true picture of an enthusiast. But it is no more like me, than I am like a centaur. Yet you say, “They are these very things which have been charged upon you, and which you could never yet disprove.” I will try for once; and, to that end, will go over these articles one by one.

“Enthusiasm is a false persuasion of an extraordinary divine assistance, which leads men on to such conduct as is only to be justified by the supposition of such assistance.” Before this touches me, you are to prove, (which, I conceive, you have not done yet,) that my conduct is such as is only to be justified by the supposition of an extraordinary divine

assistance. “An enthusiast is, then, sincere, but mistaken.” That I am mistaken, remains also to be proved. “His intentions are good; but his actions most abominable.” Sometimes they are; yet not always. For there may be innocent madmen. But, what actions of mine are most abominable? I wait to learn. “Instead of making the word of God the rule of his actions, he follows only his secret impulse.” In the whole compass of language, there is not a proposition which less belongs to me than this. I have declared again and again, that I make the word of God the rule of all my actions; and that I no more follow any secret impulse instead thereof, than I follow Mahomet or Confucius.

*Not even a word or look  
Do I approve or own,  
But by the model of thy book,  
Thy sacred book alone.*

“Instead of judging of his spiritual estate by the improvement of his heart, he rests only on ecstasies.” Neither is this my case. I rest not on them at all. Nor did I ever experience any. I do judge of my spiritual estate by the improvement of my heart and the tenor of my life conjointly. “He is very liable to err.” So indeed I am. I find it everyday more and more. But I do not yet find, that this is owing to my want of “considering things coolly and carefully.” Perhaps you do not know many persons (excuse my simplicity in speaking it) who more carefully consider every step they take. Yet I know I am not cool or careful enough. May God supply this and all my wants! “He is very difficult to be convinced by reason and argument, as he acts upon a supposed principle superior to it, the direction of God’s Spirit.” I am very difficult to be convinced by dry blows or hard names, (both of which I have not wanted,) but not by reason and argument. At least that difficulty cannot spring from the cause you mention; for I claim no other direction of God’s Spirit, than is common to all believers. “Whoever opposes him is charged with resisting or rejecting the Spirit.” What! whoever opposes me, John Wesley? Do I charge every such person with rejecting the Spirit? No more than I charge him with robbing on the highway. I cite you yourself, to confute your own words. For, do I charge you with rejecting the Spirit? “His own dreams must be regarded as oracles.” Whose? I desire neither my dreams nor my waking thoughts may be regarded at all, unless just so far as they agree with the oracles of God. “Whatever he does, is to be accounted the work

of God.” You strike quite wide of me still. I never said so of what I do. I never thought so. Yet I trust what I do is pleasing to God. “Hence he talks in the style of inspired persons.” No otherwise inspired than you are, if you love God. “And applies Scripture phrases to himself, without attending to their original meaning, or once considering the difference of times and circumstances.” I am not conscious of any thing like this. I apply no Scripture phrase either to myself or any other, without carefully considering both the original meaning, and the secondary sense, wherein (allowing for different times and circumstances) it may be applied to ordinary Christians.

**6.** So much for the bulk of your charge. But it concerns me, likewise, to gather up the fragments of it. You say, “We desire no more than to try your sentiments and proceedings by the written word.” (Page 63.) Agreed. Begin when and where you please. “We find there good works as strongly insisted on as faith.” I do as strongly insist on them as on faith. But each in its own order. “We find all railing, etc., condemned therein.” True; and so you may in all I write or preach. “We are assured, that the doing what God commands is the sure way of knowing that we have received his Spirit.” We have doubtless received it, if we love God (as he commands) with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. “And not by any sensible impulses or feelings whatsoever.” *Any sensible impulses whatsoever!* Do you then exclude all sensible impulses? Do you reject inward feelings *toto genere*? Then you reject both the love of God and of our neighbor. For, if these cannot be inwardly felt, nothing can. You reject all joy in the Holy Ghost; for if we cannot be sensible of this, it is no joy at all. You reject the peace of God, which, if it be not felt in the inmost soul, is a dream, a notion, an empty name. You therefore reject the whole inward kingdom of God; that is, in effect, the whole gospel of Jesus Christ.

You have therefore yourself abundantly shown (what I do not insinuate, but proclaim on the house-top) that I am charged with enthusiasm for asserting the power as well as the form of godliness.

**7.** You go on: “The character of the enthusiast above drawn will fit, I believe, all such of the Methodists as can be thought sincere.” (Page 63.) I believe not. I have tried it on one, and it fitted him just as Saul’s armour

did David. However, a few instances of enthusiasm you undertake to show in this very Journal.

And first, “You give us one” (these are your words) “of a private revelation, which you seem to pay great credit to.” You partly relate this, and then remark, “What enthusiasm is here! To represent the conjectures of a woman, whose brain appears to have been too much heated, as if they had been owing to a particular and miraculous spirit of prophecy!”

Descant, Sir, as you please on this enthusiasm; on the credit I paid to this private revelation; and my representing the conjectures of this brain-sick woman as owing to the miraculous power of the Spirit of God: And when you have done, I will desire you to read that passage once more, where you will find my express words are, introducing this account: “Sunday, 11. I met with a surprising instance of the power of the devil.” (Vol. I.) Such was the credit I paid to this revelation! All which I ascribe to the Spirit of God is, the enabling her to strive against the power of the devil and at length restoring peace to her soul.

**8.** As a second instance of enthusiasm, you cite those words: “expounded out of the fulness which was given me.” (*Ibid.*) The whole sentence is, “Out of the fulness that was given me, I expounded those words of St. Paul, (indeed of every true believer,) ‘To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.’” I mean, I had then a fuller, deeper sense of that great truth, than I ordinarily have. And I still think it right to ascribe this, not to myself, but to the “Giver of every good and perfect gift.”

You relate what follows as a third “very extraordinary instance of enthusiasm:” (*Remarks*, p. 65:) “Tuesday, Feb. 17. I left London. In the afternoon, I reached Oxford; and leaving my horse there, (for he was tired, and the horse-road exceeding bad, and my business admitted of no delay,) set out on foot for Stanton-Harcourt. The night overtook me in about an hour, accompanied with heavy rain. Being wet and weary, and not well knowing my way, I could not help saying in my heart, (though ashamed of my want of resignation to God’s will,) ‘O that thou wouldest stay the bottles of heaven! or at least give me light, or an honest guide, or some help in the manner thou knowest.’ Presently the rain ceased, the moon broke out, and a friendly man overtook me, who set me on his own horse, and walked by my side, till we came to Mr. Gambold’s door.” (*Ibid.*)

Here you remark, "If you would not have us look on this as miraculous, there is nothing in it worthy of being related." It may be so; let it pass then as a trifle not worth relating: But still it is no proof of enthusiasm. For I would not have you look on it as miraculous. I do not myself look upon it as such; but as a signal instance of God's particular providence over all those who call upon him.

**9.** "In the same spirit of enthusiasm," (you go on, citing this as a fourth instance,) "you describe Heaven as executing judgments, immediate punishments, on those who oppose you. You say, 'Mr. Molther was taken ill this day. I believe it was the hand of God that was upon him.'" (*Remarks*, p 66.) I do; but I do not say, as a judgment from God for opposing me: That you say for me. "Again, you tell us of 'one who was exceeding angry at those who pretended to be in fits; and was just going to kick one of them out of the way, when she dropped down herself, and was in violent agonies for an hour.' And you say you 'left her under a deep sense of the just judgment of God.'" So she termed it; and so I believe it was. But observe, not for opposing me. "Again, you mention, 'as an awful providence, the case of a poor wretch, who was last week cursing and blaspheming, and had boasted to many that he would come again on Sunday, and no man should stop his mouth then.'" His mouth was stopped before, in the midst of the most horrid blasphemies, by asking him, *if he was stronger than God*. "But on Friday, God laid his hand upon him, and on Sunday he was buried." I do look on this as a manifest judgment of God on a hardened sinner, for his complicated wickedness. "Again, 'one being just going to beat his wife, (which he frequently did,) God smote him in a moment; so that his hand dropped, and he fell down upon the ground, having no more strength than a new-born child.'" (Page 67.) And can you, Sir, consider this as one of the common dispensations of Providence? Have you known a parallel one in your life? But it was never cited by me, as it is by you, as an immediate punishment on a man for opposing me. You have no authority, from any sentence or word of mine, for putting such a construction upon it; no more than you have for that strange intimation, (how remote both from justice and charity!) that "In parallel these cases with those of Ananias and Sapphira, or of Elymas the sorcerer!"

**10.** You proceed to what you account a fifth instance of enthusiasm: “With regard to people’s falling in fits, it is plain, you look upon both the disorders and removals of them to be supernatural.” (*Remarks*, pp. 68, 69.) It is not quite plain. I look upon some of these cases as wholly natural; on the rest as mixed, both the disorder and the removal being partly natural and partly not. Six of these you pick out from, it may be, two hundred; and add, “From all which, you leave no room to doubt, that you would have these cases considered as those of the demoniacs in the New Testament; in order, I suppose, to parallel your supposed cures of them with the highest miracles of Christ and his disciples.” I should once have wondered at your making such a supposition; but I now wonder at nothing of this kind. Only be pleased to remember, till this supposition is made good, it is no confirmation at all of my enthusiasm.

You then attempt to account for those fits by “obstructions or irregularities of the blood and spirits, hysterical disorder, watchings, fastings, closeness of rooms, great crowds, violent heat.” And, lastly, by “terrors, perplexities, and doubts, in weak and well-meaning men;” which, you think, in many of the cases before us, have “quite upset their understandings.”

As to each of the rest, let it go as far as it can go. But I require proof of the last way whereby you would account for these disorders. Why, “The instances,” you say, “of religious madness have much increased since you began to disturb the world.” (*Remarks*, pp. 68, 69.) I doubt the fact. Although, if these instances had increased lately, it is easy to account for them another way. “Most have heard of, or known, several of the Methodists thus driven to distraction.” You may have heard of five hundred; but how many have you known? Be pleased to name eight or ten of them. I cannot find them, no, not one of them to this day, either man, woman, or child. I find some indeed, whom you told, they would be distracted if they “continued to follow these men,” and whom, at that time, you threw into much doubt, and terror, and perplexity. But though they did continue to hear them ever since, they are not distracted yet.

As for the “abilities, learning, and experience” of Dr. M——, (page 70,) if you are personally acquainted with him, you do well to testify them. But if not, permit me to remind you of the old advice: —

*Qualem commendes, etiam atque etiam aspice, ne mox  
Incutiant aliena tibi peccata pudorem.*<sup>f43</sup>

In endeavoring to account for the people's recovery from those disorders, you say, "I shall not dispute how far prayer may have naturally a good effect." Nay, I am persuaded you will not dispute but it may have supernatural good effects also. "However, there is no need of supposing these recoveries miraculous." (Page 71.) Who affirms there is? I have set down the facts just as they were, passing no judgment upon them myself; (consequently, here is no foundation for the charge of enthusiasm;) and leaving every man else to judge as he pleases.

**11.** The next passage you quote as a proof of my enthusiasm, taking the whole together, runs thus: "After communicating at St. James's, our parish church, I visited several of the sick. Most of them were ill of the spotted fever, which, they informed me, had been extremely mortal, few persons recovering from it. But God had said, 'Hitherto shalt thou come.' I believe there was not one with whom we were, but recovered." (Vol. I.) On which you comment thus: "Here is indeed no intimation of any thing miraculous." No! not so much as an intimation! Then why is this cited as an instance of my enthusiasm? Why? "You seem to desire to have it believed, that an extraordinary blessing attended your prayers; whereas, I believe they would not have failed of an equal blessing and success, had they had the prayers of their own parish Ministers." I believe this argument will have extraordinary success, if it convince any one that I am an enthusiast.

**12.** You add, "I shall give but one account more, and this is what you give of yourself." (*Remarks*, p. 72.) The sum whereof is, "At two several times, being ill and in violent pain, I prayed to God, and found immediate ease." I did so. I assert the fact still. "Now, if these," you say, "are not miraculous cures, all this is rank enthusiasm."

I will put your argument in form: —

He that believes those are miraculous cures which are not so is a rank enthusiast:

But you believe those to be miraculous cures which are not so:

Therefore, you are a rank enthusiast.

Before I answer, I must know what you mean by miraculous. If you term everything so, which is not strictly accountable for by the ordinary course of natural causes, then I deny the latter part of the minor proposition. And unless you can make this good, unless you can prove the effects in question are strictly accountable for by the ordinary course of natural causes, your argument is nothing worth.

You conclude this head with, “Can you work miracles? All your present pretenses to the Spirit, till they are proved by miracles, cannot be excused, or acquitted from enthusiasm.” (Page 73.)

My short answer is this: I pretend to the Spirit just so far as is essential to a state of salvation. And cannot I be acquitted from enthusiasm till I prove by miracles that I am in a state of salvation?

**13.** We now draw to a period: “The consequences of Methodism,” you say, that is, of our preaching this doctrine, “which have hitherto appeared, are bad enough to induce you to leave it. It has, in fact, introduced many disorders; enthusiasm, Antinomianism, Calvinism, a neglect and contempt of God’s ordinances, and almost all other duties.” (Page 75.)

That, whenever God revives his work upon earth, many tares will spring up with the wheat, both the word of God gives us ground to expect, and the experience of all ages. But where, Sir, have you been, that you have heard of the tares only; and that you rank among the consequences of my preaching, “a neglect and contempt of God’s ordinances, and almost of all duties?” Does not the very reverse appear at London, at Bristol, at Kingswood, at Newcastle? In every one of which places, multitudes of those (I am able to name the persons) who before lived in a thorough neglect and contempt of God’s ordinances and all duties, do now zealously discharge their duties to God and man, and walk in all his ordinances blameless.

And as to those drunkards, whoremongers and other servants to the devil, as they were before, who heard us a while and then fell to the Calvinists or Moravians, are they not even now in a far better state than they were before they heard us? Admit they are in error, yea, and die therein, yet, who dares affirm they will perish everlastingly? But had they died in those

sins, we are sure they had fallen into “the fire that never shall be quenched.”

I hope, Sir, you will rejoice in considering this, how much their gain still outweighs their loss; as well as in finding the sentiments you could not reconcile together clearly and consistently explained. I am very willing to consider whatever farther you have to offer. May God give us both a right judgment in all things! I am persuaded you will readily join in this prayer with,

Reverend Sir,

Your servant for Christ’s sake,

*JOHN WESLEY.*

**BRISTOL**, February 2, 1744-5.

# THE PRINCIPLES OF A METHODIST

FARTHER EXPLAINED:

OCCASIONED BY

THE REV. MR. CHURCH'S SECOND LETTER

TO MR. WESLEY.  
IN A SECOND LETTER TO THAT GENTLEMAN.

Reverend Sir,

**1.** AT the time that I was reading your former letter, I expected to hear from you again. And I was not displeased with the expectation; believing it would give me a fresh opportunity of weighing the sentiments I might have too lightly espoused, and the actions which perhaps I had not enough considered. Viewing things in this light, I cannot but esteem you, not an enemy, but a friend; and one, in some respects, better qualified to do me real service than those whom the world accounts so; who may be hindered by their prejudice in my favor, either from observing what is reprobable, or from using that freedom or plainness of speech which are requisite to convince me of it.

**2.** It is, at least, as much with a view to learn myself, as to show others (what I think) the truth, that I intend to set down a few reflections on some parts of the tract you have lately published. I say some parts; for it is not my design to answer every sentence in this, any more than in the former. Many things I pass over, because I think them true; many more, because I think them not material; and some, because I am determined not to engage in a useless, if not hurtful, controversy.

**3.** Fear, indeed, is one cause of my declining this; fear, as I said elsewhere,<sup>f44</sup> not of my adversary, but of myself. I fear my own spirit, lest “I fall where many mightier have been slain.” I never knew one (or but one) man write controversy with what I thought a right spirit. Every disputant seems to think, as every soldier, that he may hurt his opponent as much as he can; nay, that he ought to do his worst to him, or he cannot make the best of his own cause; that so he do not belie, or wilfully misrepresent, him, he must expose him as much as he is able. It is enough, we suppose, if we do not show heat or passion against our adversary. But not to despise him, or endeavor to make others do so, is quite a work of supererogation.

**4.** But ought these things to be so? (I speak on the Christian scheme.) Ought we not to love our neighbor as ourselves? And does a man cease to be our neighbor, because he is of a different opinion? nay, and declares himself so to be? Ought we not, for all this, to do to him as we would he should do to us? But do we ourselves love to be exposed, or set in the worst light? Would we willingly be treated with contempt? If not, why do we treat others thus? And yet, who scruples it? Who does not hit every blot he can, however foreign to the merits of the cause? Who, in controversy, casts the mantle of love over the nakedness of his brother? Who keeps steadily and uniformly to the question, without ever striking at the person? Who shows in every sentence that he loves his brother only less than the truth?

**5.** I fear neither you nor I have attained to this. I believe brotherly love might have found a better construction than that of unfairness, art, or disingenuity, to have put either on my not answering every part of your book, (a thing which never once entered my thoughts,) or on my not reciting all the words of those parts which I did answer. I cannot yet perceive any blame herein. I still account it fair and ingenuous to pass over both what I believe is right, and what I believe is not dangerously wrong. Neither can I see any disingenuity at all in quoting only that part of any sentence, against which I conceive the objection lies; nor in abridging any part of any treatise to which I reply, whether in the author’s or in my own words.

**6.** If, indeed, it were so abridged as to alter the sense, this would be unfair. And if this were designedly done, it would be artful and disingenuous. But I am not conscious of having done this at all; although you speak as if I had done it a thousand times. And yet I cannot undertake now either to transcribe your whole book, or every page or paragraph which I answer. But I must generally abridge before I reply; and that not only to save time, (of which I have none to spare,) but often to make the argument clearer, which is best understood when couched in few words.

**7** You complain also of my mentioning all at once sentences which you placed at a distance from each other. I do so; and I think it quite fair and ingenuous to lay together what was before scattered abroad. For instance: You now speak of the conditions of justification, in the eighteenth and following pages; again, from the eighty-ninth to the hundred and second; and yet again, in the hundred and twenty-seventh page. Now, I have not leisure to follow you to and fro. Therefore, what I say on one head, I set in one place.

## I.

**1.** This premised, I come to the letter itself. I begin, as before, with the case of the Moravians; of whom you say, “I collected together the character which you had given of these men; the errors and vices which you had charged upon them, and the mischiefs — they had done among your followers. And I proved that, in several respects, you had been the occasion of this mischief; and are therefore, in some measure, accountable for it. Let us see what answer you give to all this.

“With regard to the denying degrees in faith, you mentioned, that the Moravian Church was cleared from this mistake.’ But did you not mention this as one of the tenets of the Moravians? Do you not say, that you ‘could not agree with Mr. Spangenberg, that none has any faith so long as he is liable to any doubt or fear?’ Do you not represent Mr. Molther, and other Moravians in England, as teaching the same? In short, I have not charged the Moravian Church with anything; but only repeat after you. And if you have accused them when you knew them to be guiltless, you must bear the blame.

“‘They do use the ordinances of God with reverence and godly fear.’ You have charged Mr. Spangenberg and Mr. Molther with teaching that we ought to abstain from them. And the same you say in general of the Moravian brethren, in your letter to them. ‘But Mr. Molther was quickly after recalled into Germany.’ This might be on other accounts. You do not say it was out of any dislike of his doctrines or proceedings. Nor indeed can you, consistently with your next words: ‘The great fault of the Moravian Church seems to lie, in not openly disclaiming all he had said; which, in all probability they would have done, had they not leaned to the same opinion.’

“You ‘never knew but one of the Moravian Church affirm, that a believer does not grow in holiness.’ But who was this? No less a person than Count Zinzendorf, their great Bishop and patron, whose authority is very high, all in all with them, and to whom you think they pay too much regard.” (*Second Letter*, page 79.)

**2.** This is the whole of your reply to this part of my answer. I will now consider it, part by part.

First. “With regard to the denying degrees in faith, you mentioned, ‘that the Moravian Church was cleared from this mistake.’ But did you not mention this as one of the tenets of the Moravians?” No; not of the Moravians in general. “Do you not say, that you ‘could not agree with Mr. Spangenberg, that none has any faith, so long as he is liable to any doubt or fear?’” I do say so still. But Spangenberg is not the Moravian Church. “Do you not represent Mr. Molther, and other Moravians in England, as teaching the same?” I do; three or four in all. But neither are these the Moravian Church. “In short, I have not charged the Moravian Church with anything; but only repeat after you.” Indeed you have, in the very case before us. You charge them with denying degrees in faith. I do not charge them herewith. I openly cleared them from any such charge near six years ago. “If, therefore, you have accused them when you knew them to be guiltless, you must bear the blame.” In this case I must entreat you to bear it in my stead: For I have not accused them, — the Moravian Church. It is you that have accused them. I have again and again declared they are not guilty.

Secondly. “‘They do use the ordinances of God with reverence and godly fear.’ You have charged Mr. Spangenberg and Mr. Molther with teaching, that we ought to abstain from them.” That *we*? No. That unbelievers ought. The assertion relates to them only. “And the same you say in general of the Moravian brethren, in your Letter.” I say, they hold that unbelievers ought to abstain from them. But yet I know and hear witness, they use them themselves, and that “with reverence and godly fear.” “‘Mr. Molther was quickly after recalled to Germany.’ This might be on other accounts. You do not say it was, out of any dislike of his doctrines or proceedings.” I do not say so; because I am not sure; but I believe it was out of a dislike to some of his proceedings, if not of his doctrines too. “Nor indeed can you, consistently with your next words: ‘The great fault of the Moravian Church seems to lie, in not openly disclaiming all he had said’” relating to this head. They did privately disclaim what he had said of degrees in faith. But I think that was not enough. And I still believe they would have done more, “had they not leaned themselves to the same opinion,” touching the ordinances.

Thirdly. “You ‘never knew but one of the Moravian Church affirm, that a believer does not grow in holiness.’ But who was this? No less a person than Count Zinzendorf, their great Bishop and patron, whose authority is very high, all in all with them, and to whom you think they pay ‘too much regard.’” Do you apprehend where the stress of the argument lies? I never heard one Moravian affirm this, but the Count alone; and him only once; and that once was in the heat of dispute. And hence I inferred, it is not a doctrine of the Moravian Church; nay, I doubt whether it be the Count’s own settled judgment.

**3.** But I may not dismiss this passage yet. It is now my turn to complain of unfair usage; of the exceeding lame, broken, imperfect manner wherein you cite my words. For instance, your citation runs thus: You “never knew but one of the Moravian Church affirm, that a believer does not grow in holiness.” Whereas my words are these: “I never knew one of the Moravian Church, but that single person, affirm, that a believer does not grow in holiness; and perhaps he would not affirm it on reflection.” Now, why was the former part of the sentence changed, and the latter quite left out? Had the whole stood in your tract just as it does in mine, it must have appeared I do not here charge the Moravian Church.

I complain also of your manner of replying to the first article of this very paragraph. For you do not cite so much as one line of that answer to which you profess to reply. My words are, “You ought not to charge the Moravian Church with the first of these” errors, “since in the very page from which you quote those words, ‘There is no justifying faith where there ever is any doubt,’ that note occurs, (viz., Vol. I. p. 328,) ‘In the preface to the Second Journal, the Moravian Church is cleared from this mistake.’” If you had cited these words, could you possibly have subjoined, “I have not charged the Moravian Church with anything; but only repeat after you?”

**4.** I have now considered one page of your reply, in the manner you seem to require. But sure you cannot expect I should follow you thus, step by step, through a hundred and forty pages! If you should then think it worth while to make a second reply, and to follow me in the same manner, we might write indeed, but who would read? I return therefore to what I proposed at first, viz., to touch only on what seems of the most importance, and leave the rest just as it lies.

**5.** You say, “With regard to subtlety, evasion, and disguise, you now would have it thought, that you only found this ‘in many of them; not in all, nor in most.’” (Page 80.) “You now would have it thought!” Yes, and always, as well as now. For my original charge was, “I have found this in many of you; that is, much subtlety, much evasion and disguise.” (Vol. I.) But you add, “Let the reader judge from the following passages, whether you did not charge the Moravians in general with these crimes: ‘I had a long conference with those whom I esteem very highly in love; but I could not yet understand them in one point, Christian openness and plainness of speech. They pleaded for such a reservedness and closeness of conversation. Yet I scarce know what to think, considering they had the practice of the whole Moravian Church on their side.’” True, in pleading for such a reservedness of conversation as I could not in any wise approve of; but not in using much subtlety, much evasion and disguise: This I dare not charge on the whole Moravian Church. Those words also, “There is darkness and closeness in all their behavior, and guile in almost all their words,” I spoke, not of all the Moravians, nor of most; but of those who were then in England. I could not speak it of them all; for I never found any guile in Christian David, Michael Linner, and many others.

**6.** “We are next to see how you get over the objection I made good, in three several particulars, that you have prepared the way for spreading of these tenets. The first you say nothing to here; the Second you quote very partially thus: ‘By countenancing and commending them.’ And why would you not add ‘And being the occasion of so many of them coming over among us?’” Because I was not the occasion. I was indeed the first Englishman that ever was at Hernhuth. But before I was at Hernhuth, (I find on later inquiry,) the Count himself had been in England.

“You ‘still think, that next to some thousands in our own Church, the body of the Moravian Church, however mistaken some of them are, are, in the main, the best Christians in the world.’” (Page 81.) I do, “of all whom I have seen” — you should not omit these words. “Those dreadful errors and crimes are here softened into mistakes.” I term them “errors of judgment and practice.” “I have proved, that you have charged the body with such.” At present, the proof does not amount to demonstration. There needs a little farther proof, that I charge any “dreadful crimes” on the body of the Moravians.

I see no manner of inconsistency still, in those accounts of my intercourse with the Moravians, which you suppose irreconcilable with each other. Let any one read them in the Journal, and judge.

**7.** “You had said, your ‘objections then were nearly the same as now.’ You now add, ‘only with this difference: I was not then assured that the facts were as I supposed; I did not dare to determine anything.’ No! Not when by conversing among them you saw these things? As indeed the facts are of such a nature, that you could not but be assured of them, if they were true. Nor do the questions in your Letter really imply any doubt of their truth; but are so many appeals to their consciences, and equivalent to strong assertions. And if you had not been assured, if you did not dare to determine anything concerning what you saw, your writing bare suspicions to a body of men in such a manner was inexcusable. This excuse, therefore, will not serve you.” (Page 83.)

I apprehend it will. “I was not then,” in September, 1738, “assured that the facts were as I supposed.” Therefore, “I did not” then “dare to determine anything.” Be pleased to add the immediately following words:

“But from November 1,” 1739, “I saw more and more things which I could not reconcile with the Gospel.”

If you had not omitted these words, you could have had no color to remark, on my saying, “I did not dare to determine anything:” “No! Not when by conversing among them you saw these things?” No, I did not “dare to determine,” in September, 1738, from what I saw in November, 1739. “But the facts are of such a nature, that you could not but be assured of them, if they were true.” I cannot think so. “Is not the Count all in all among you? Do not you magnify your own Church too much? Do you not use guile and dissimulation in many cases?” These facts are by no means of such a nature, as that whoever converses (even intimately) among the Moravians cannot but be assured of them. “Nor do the questions in your Letter really imply any doubt of their truth.” No! Are not my very words prefixed to those questions? — “Of some other things I stand in doubt. And I wish that, in order to remove those doubts, you would plainly answer, whether the fact be as I suppose.” “But” these questions “are so many appeals to their consciences.” True. “And equivalent to strong assertions.” Utterly false. “If you had not been assured, if you did not dare to determine anything concerning what you saw,” (fifteen months after,) “your writing bare suspicions to a body of men, in such a manner, was inexcusable.” They were strong presumptions then; which yet I did not write to a body of men, whom I so highly esteemed; no, not even in the tenderest manner, till I was assured they were not groundless.

**8.** “In a note at the bottom of page 8, you observe, ‘The Band-Society in London began May 1, some time before I set out for Germany.’ Would you insinuate here, that you did not set it up in imitation of the Moravians?” Sir, I will tell you the naked truth. You had remarked thus: “You took the trouble of a journey to Germany to them; and were so much in love with their methods, that at your return hither, you set up their Bands among your disciples.” (Page 17.) This was an entire mistake; for that society was set up, not only before I returned, but before I set out. And I designed that note to insinuate this to you, without telling your mistake to all the world.

“I imagined, that, supposing your account of the Moravians true, it would be impossible for any serious Christian to doubt of their being very wicked people.” I know many serious Christians who suppose it true, and yet believe they are, in the main, good men. “A much worse character, take the whole body together, cannot be given of a body of men.” Let us try: “Here is a body of men who have not one spark either of justice, mercy, or truth among them; who are lost to all sense of right and wrong; who have neither sobriety, temperance, nor chastity; who are, in general, liars, drunkards, gluttons, thieves, adulterers, murderers.” I cannot but think, that this is a much worse character than that of the Moravians, take it how you will. “Let the reader judge how far you are now able to defend them.” Just as far as I did at first. Still I dare not condemn what is good among them; and I will not excuse what is evil.

9. “‘The Moravians excel in sweetness of behavior.’ What, though they use guile and dissimulation?” Yes. “‘Where is their multitude of errors?’ In your own Journal. I have taken the pains to place them in one view in my *Remarks*; the justness of which, with all your art, you cannot disprove.” You have taken the pains to transcribe many words; all which together amount to this, that they, generally, hold universal salvation, and are partly Antinomians, (in opinion,) partly Quietists. The justness of some of your remarks, if I mistake not, has been pretty fully disproved. As to what you speak of my art, subtlety, and so on, in this and many other places, I look upon it as neither better nor worse than a civil way of calling names.

“‘To this multitude of crimes I am also an utter stranger.’ Then you have charged them wrongfully. What do you account guile?” etc. (*Second Letter*, p. 84.) I account guile, despising self-denial even in the smallest points, and teaching that those who have not the assurance of faith may not use the ordinances of God, the Lord’s Supper in particular, (this is the real, unaggravated charge,) to be faults which cannot be excused. But I do not account them all together “a multitude of crimes.” I conceive this is a vehement hyperbole.

“The honor of religion,” said you, “and virtue trampled upon:” I answered, “By whom? Not by the Moravians.” You reply, “And yet you have accused some of these as decrying all the means of grace.” No. What I

accused them of, was, teaching that an unbeliever (in their sense) ought to abstain from them. “‘Neither did I know, or think, or say, they were desperately wicked people.’ Your Journal is before the world; to whom I appeal whether this has not so represented them.” But how do you here represent your remark, and my answer? My paragraph runs thus: —

“You go on, ‘How could you so long, and so intimately converse with such desperately wicked people as the Moravians, according to your own account, were known by you to be?’ O Sir, what another assertion is this! ‘The Moravians, according to your own account, were known by you to be desperately wicked people, while you intimately conversed with them!’ Utterly false and injurious! I never gave any such account. I conversed with them intimately both at Savannah and Hernhuth. But neither then, nor at any other time, did I know, or think, or say, they were desperately wicked people: I think and say just the reverse; viz., that though I soon ‘found among them a few things which I could not approve, yet I believe they are, in the main, some of the best Christians in the world.’ After this, are you the person who complains of me for imperfect and partial quotations?” (Page 10.)

I added, “‘You surprise me yet more in going on thus: In God’s name, Sir, is the contempt of almost the whole of our duty, of every Christian ordinance, to be so very gently touched?’ Sir, this is not the case. This charge no more belongs to the Moravians than that of murder.” (Page 11.)

You reply, “Mr. Sp — and Mr. Molther are accused by name. If falsely, I am sorry both for them and you.” *Accused?* True. But of what? of the contempt of every Christian ordinance, of almost the whole of our duty? By no means. The plain case is, I accuse them of one thing, viz., teaching that an unbeliever should abstain from the ordinances. You accuse them of another, — contemning every Christian ordinance, and almost the whole of our duty. And this you would father upon me. I desire to be excused.

**10.** As to what I said in my letter to the Moravian Church, “You can hinder this if you will; therefore, if you do not prevent their speaking thus, you do, in effect, speak thus yourselves,” it may be observed,

**(1.)** That this letter is dated August 8, 1741.

**(2.)** That from that time the Moravian Church did in great measure prevent any of their members speaking thus.

You proceed: “You distinguish between the English brethren and the Moravians. These English brethren, I presume, were your followers. Afterwards you represent them as perverted by the Moravians: ‘Before they had spoke these wicked things,’ you say, ‘they had joined these men, and acted under their direction.’ If they did not learn them from these new teachers, from whom did they learn them? Not, sure, from yourself, or any other Methodists. You cannot, therefore, bring off the Moravians without condemning your own people. Here, therefore, you have certainly overshot yourself.” (Page 85.) Perhaps not. “These English brethren were, I presume, your followers.” No; this is your first mistake. I was but a single, private member of that society. “Afterwards you represent them as perverted by the Moravians.” I do; but not yet connected with them. “Before they spoke these wicked things, they had joined these men, and acted under their direction.” This is another mistake. They did not join these men, nor act by their direction, till long after. “If they did not learn them from these new teachers, from whom did they learn them? You cannot bring off the Moravians without condemning your own people.” They learned them from Mr. Molther chiefly; whom I am not at all concerned to bring off. Now let all men judge which of us two has overshot himself.

**11.** “In answer to my objections against the inconsistent accounts you have given of the Moravians, you say, ‘They are, I believe, the most self-inconsistent people under the sun.’ Would not one imagine that you here speak of the same persons, or of the whole body of them in general?” I do, thus far: I ascribe the good to the body of them in general; the evil to part only of that body, to some of those same persons.

“Your method of getting over the contradictions I had charged upon you is much the same, — to distinguish either between the Moravians and the English brethren, though these had been their disciples,” this has been abundantly answered, — “or between some of the Moravians and others.” (Page 86.) I think a very good method; for propositions are not contradictory unless they both speak of the same persons.

However, since you persist to affirm that I am guilty of the contradictions you charged upon me, (page 87,) I think there cannot be a sufficient reply without reciting the several instances.

## 12.

(1.) “You commend them (the Moravians) for loving one another; and yet charge them with biting and devouring one another.” I answered, “*Them!* Whom? Not the Moravians, but the English brethren of Fetter-Lane, before their union with the Moravians. Herein, then, is no shadow of contradiction; for the two sentences do not relate to the same persons.”

You reply, “Would you then have us to think that so much anger and contradiction reigned among your Methodists?” I “would have you think” this is nothing to the purpose. Prove the contradiction, and you speak to the point. “It is plain they had before this been perverted by the Moravians; and that they were unwilling to be taught by any others.” *They*; that is, nearly half of the society. But here is no proof of the contradiction still.

(2.) “You say, ‘They had well-nigh destroyed brotherly love from among us, partly by cautions against natural love, partly by occasioning almost continual disputes.’” So they had; but we had then no connection with them. Neither, therefore, does this contradict their loving one another. You reply, “As if they can truly love each other, who teach you not to do it, and stir up divisions and disturbances among you.” You should say, if you would repeat after me, “Who caution you against natural love, and occasion many disputes among you.” Well; allowing they do this, (which is utterly wrong,) yet where is the contradiction? Yet they may love one another.

(3.) “You praise them for using no diversions, but such as become saints; and yet say,” (I recite the whole sentence,) “I have heard some of you affirm that Christian salvation implies liberty to conform to the world, by joining in worldly diversions in order to do good.” And both these are true. The Moravians, in general, use no diversions but such as become saints. And yet I have heard some of them affirm, in contradiction to their own practice, that “one then mentioned did well

when he joined in playing at tennis in order to do good.” To this you make no reply. Silence then consents, that there is no contradiction here.

(4.) “You ‘praise them for not regarding outward adorning.’” So I do, the bulk of the congregation. “And yet you say,” (I again recite the whole sentence,) “‘I have heard some of you affirm that Christian salvation implies liberty to conform to the world, by putting on gold and costly apparel.’” I have so; and I blame them the more, because “they are condemned by the general practice of their own Church.” To this also you reply not. So I must count this the fourth contradiction which you have charged upon me, but have not proved.

(5.) “You call their discipline, in most respects, truly excellent. I could wish you had more fully explained yourself. ‘I have, in the Second Journal,’ Vol. I. pp. 115-147. It is no sign of good discipline to permit such abominations; that is, error in opinion, and guile in practice. ‘True; it is not; nor is it any demonstration against it: For there may be good discipline even in a college of Jesuits. Another fault is, too great a deference to the Count. And yet, in most respects, their discipline is truly excellent.’”

You reply, “Such excellent discipline, for all that I know, they may have;” (that is, as the Jesuits;) “but I cannot agree that this is scarce inferior to that of the apostolical age.” It may be, for anything you advance to the contrary. “Here I cited some words of yours, condemning their subordination, (page 88,) which you prudently take no notice of.” Yes; I had just before taken notice of their too great deference to the Count. But, the contradiction! Where is the contradiction?

(6.) “You mention it as a good effect of their discipline, that ‘every one knows and keeps his proper rank.’ Soon after, as it were with a design to confute yourself, you say, ‘Our brethren have neither wisdom enough to guide, nor prudence enough to let it alone.’” I answered, “Pardon me, Sir, I have no design either to confute or contradict myself in these words. The former sentence is spoken of the Moravian brethren; the latter, of the English brethren of Fetter-Lane, not then united with the Moravians, neither acting by their direction.” To this

likewise you do not reply. Here is then a sixth contradiction, alleged against me, but not proved.

**13.** However, you add, “Had you shown me mistaken in any point you have attempted to reply to, still you confess errors and wickedness enough among the Moravians, to render your account of them very inconsistent. But you have not succeeded in any one answer. You have not shown that I have, in any one instance, misquoted you, or misunderstood the character you had given of them, or argued falsely from what you had said of them. And truly, Sir, all you have done has been cavilling at a few particulars. But the argument I was urging all this while you quite forgot.”

Sir, if it be so, you do me too much honor, in setting pen to paper again. But is it so? Have I all this while quite forgot the argument you was urging? I hope not. I seem to remember you was urging some argument to prove, that I “fall not only into inconsistencies, but direct contradictions;” (*Remarks*, p. 21;) and that I showed you mistaken, not only in *one*, but in *every* point which you advanced as such; that I did not confess any such errors or wickedness of the Moravians, as rendered my account of them self-inconsistent; that I “succeeded” in more than “one answer” to the objections you had urged against it; and that I showed, you had “misquoted or misunderstood the character I had given of them,” or “argued falsely from it,” not properly “in one instance,” but from the beginning to the end.

Yet this I think it incumbent upon me to say, that whereinsoever I have contributed, directly or indirectly, to the spreading of anything evil, which is or has been among the Moravians, I am sorry for it, and hereby ask pardon both of God and all the world.

## II.

**1.** I think it appears, by what you have yourself observed, that, on the Second head, Justification by Faith, I allow, in the beginning of the “Farther Appeal,” almost as much as you contend for.

I desire leave to cite part of that passage again, that we may come as near each other as possible. I would just subjoin a few words on each head, which I hope may remove more difficulties out of the way: —

“That justification, whereof our Articles and Homilies speak, means present pardon, and acceptance with God; who therein ‘declares his righteousness,’ or mercy, ‘by’ or ‘for the remission of sins that are past.’”

I say, *past*: For I cannot find anything in the Bible of the remission of sins, past, present, and to come.

“I believe the condition of this is faith; I mean, not only that without faith we cannot be justified, but also, that, as soon as any one has true faith, in that moment he is justified.”

You take the word *condition* in the former sense only, as that without which we cannot be justified. In this sense of the word, I think we may allow, that there are several conditions of justification.

“Good works follow this faith, but cannot go before it. Much less can sanctification; which implies a continued course of good works, springing from holiness of heart.”

Yet such a course is, without doubt, absolutely necessary to our continuance in a state of justification.

“It is allowed, that repentance and ‘fruits meet for repentance’ go before faith. Repentance absolutely must go before faith; fruits meet for it, if there be opportunity. By repentance I mean conviction of sin, producing real desires and sincere resolutions of amendment; and by ‘fruits meet for repentance,’ forgiving our brother, ceasing from evil, doing good, using the ordinances of God, and, in general, obeying him according to the measure of grace which we have received. But these I cannot as yet term good works, because they do not spring from faith and the love of God.” Although the same works are then good, when they are performed by “those who have believed.”

“Faith, in general, is a divine supernatural ελεγχος (evidence or conviction) of things not seen, not discoverable by our bodily senses, as being either past, future, or spiritual. Justifying faith implies not only a

divine **ελεγχος**, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for my sins, that he loved me, and gave himself for me. And the moment a penitent sinner thus believes, God pardons and absolves him.”

I say, *a penitent sinner*; because justifying faith cannot exist without previous repentance.

“Yet, although both repentance, and the fruits thereof, are in some sense necessary before justification, neither the one nor the other is necessary in the same sense, or in the same degree, with faith. Not in the same degree. For in whatever moment a man believes, (in the Christian sense of the word,) he is justified. But it is not so at whatever moment he repents, or brings forth any, or all, the fruits of repentance. Consequently, none of these are necessary to justification, in the same degree with faith.

“Nor in the same sense. For none of these has so direct, immediate a relation to justification as faith. This is proximately necessary thereto; repentance remotely, as it is necessary to faith.” (So the error of the press is to be corrected.) “And the fruits of repentance still more remotely, as they are necessary to the increase or continuance of repentance. And even in this sense, they are only necessary on supposition, — if there be time and opportunity for them. For in many instances there is not; but God cuts short his work, and faith prevents the fruits of repentance.”

**2.** Thus far I believe we are nearly agreed. But on those words, “Far other qualifications are required, in order to our standing before God in glory, than were required in order to his giving us faith and pardon; in order to this, nothing is indispensably required, but repentance, or conviction of sin; but in order to the other, it is indispensably required, that we be fully cleansed from all sin;” you remark, “Here, I apprehend, are two great mistakes:

**(1.)** You make too little necessary before pardon.

**(2.)** Too much afterward. You confine repentance within too narrow limits, and extend holiness beyond its just bounds.

“First. By repentance you mean only conviction of sin. But this is a very partial account of it. Every child that has learned his Catechism can tell, that forsaking of sin is included in it; living in obedience to God’s will, when there is opportunity; and even when there is not, a sincere desire and purpose to do so, and a faith in God’s mercies through Christ Jesus.” (Page 92.)

I had said, “In order to God’s giving us faith and pardon, nothing is indispensably required but repentance,” that is, “conviction of sin, producing real desires and sincere resolutions of amendment.” But you “apprehend that I am here in a great mistake;” that I give a “very partial account of repentance;” that I ought to “include therein a sincere desire and purpose” to obey God. I do: I have said so expressly; — and “living in obedience to God’s will, when there is opportunity.” Very well; but I here speak of what is indispensably required, that is, whether there is opportunity of actual obedience or no; — “and a faith in God’s mercies through Christ Jesus.” A very great mistake indeed! — my not including faith in that repentance which I say is indispensably required in order to faith!

“Secondly. You make sinless perfection necessary after justification, in order to make us meet for glory.” And who does not? Indeed men do not agree in the time. Some believe it is attained before death; some, in the article of death; some, in an after-state, in the Mystic or the Popish purgatory. But all writers, whom I have ever seen till now, (the Romish themselves not excepted,) agree, that we must be “fully cleansed from all sin.” before we can enter into glory.

**3.** After what has already been allowed, I cannot think it needful to dispute farther, on the head of justification. Rather suffer me to close this part of our debate, by transcribing what I assent to, from that clear recapitulation of your sentiments which you have given in pages 45 and 46: —

**“(1.)** Justification is the act of God, pardoning our sins, and receiving us again to his favor. This was free in him, because undeserved by us; undeserved, because we had transgressed his law, and could not, nor even can now, perfectly fulfill it.

“(2.) We cannot, therefore, be justified by our works; because this would be, to be justified by some merit of our own. Much less can we be justified by an external show of religion, or by any superstitious observances.

“(3.) The life and death of our Lord is the sole meritorious cause of this mercy, which must be firmly believed and trusted in by us. Our faith therefore in him, though not more meritorious than any other of our actions, yet has a nearer relation to the promises of pardon through him, and is the mean and instrument whereby we embrace and receive them.

“(4.) True faith must be lively and productive of good works, which are its proper fruits, the marks whereby it is known.

“(5.) Works really good are such as are commanded by God, (springing from faith,) done by the aid of his Holy Spirit, with good designs, and to good ends. These may be considered as internal or external.

“(6.) The inward ones, such as hope, trust, fear, and love of God and our neighbor, (which may be more properly termed *good dispositions*, and (are branches of) sanctification,) must always be joined with faith, and consequently be conditions present in justification, though they are not the means or instruments of receiving it.

“(7.) The outward,” (which are more properly termed good works,) “though there be no immediate opportunity of practicing them, and therefore a sincere desire and resolution to perform them be sufficient for the present; yet must follow after as soon as occasion offers, and will then be necessary conditions of preserving our justification.

“(8.) There is a justification conveyed to us in our baptism, or, properly, this state is then begun. But, should we fall into sins, we cannot regain it without true faith and repentance, which implies (as its fruits) a forsaking of our sins, and amendment of our whole life.”

I have only one circumstance farther to add, namely, that I am not newly convinced of these things. For this is the doctrine which I have continually taught for eight or nine years last past; only, I abstained from the word *condition*, perhaps more scrupulously than was needful.

**4.** With regard to the consequences of my teaching this doctrine, I desire any who will not account it lost labor, to consult with his own eyes, seriously and in the fear of God, the Third and Fourth Journals. And if he pleases, he may farther read over and compare my answer; with your reply, from the one hundred and first inclusive, to the one hundred and fourth page.

Among the consequences you reckoned, (in your *Remarks*,) besides, “introducing predestination, confusion, presumption, and despair, many very shocking instances of all which” (your words are) “you give us among your followers.” (Pages 52, 55.) I answered, “You should have specified a few of those instances, at least the pages where they occur. (Suppose, only three of each sort, out of any or all the Four Journals.) Till this is done, I can look upon this assertion as no other than a flourish of your pen.”

Upon this you exclaim: (Page 111:) “I must beg the reader to observe your method of citing my words. Many instances of omissions he has had already. But here is such a one, as I believe few controversies can parallel. Would not any one imagine from the view of these words, (Predestination, confusion, presumption, and despair,) that they occurred all together in page fifty-two, of my *Remarks*, and that I observed nothing farther concerning this point? Could it be thought that any thing intervened between the page referred to, and the last sentence? And yet so it is, that near three pages intervene!” Ha! do *near three pages intervene!* Prodigious indeed! “And this is called an answer!” So it is, for want of a better.

“Your business was to show, that the Calvinistical notion have not prevailed among the Methodists, or that they were no consequences of unconditional justification.” No, Sir, it was not my business to show this. It was not my business to prove the negative; but yours, to prove the affirmative. Mr. Whitefield is himself a Calvinist. Such therefore doubtless are many of his followers. But Calvinism has not prevailed at all among any other of the Methodists, (so called,) nor is it to this day any consequence of unconditional justification, in the manner wherein I preach it.

**5.** You next “take the pains to lay before the reader an instance or two of confusion,” etc. The first I read thus: —

“While we were at the room, Mrs. J., sitting at home, took the Bible to read; but on a sudden threw it away, saying, ‘I am good enough. I will never read or pray more.’ She was in the same mind when I came; often repeating, ‘I used to think I was full of sin, and that I sinned in every thing I did. But now I know better; I am a good Christian; I never did any harm in my life; I do not desire to be any better than I am.’ She spake many things to the same effect, plainly shewing that the spirit of pride and of lies had the full dominion over her. I asked, ‘Do you desire to be healed?’ She said, ‘I am whole.’ ‘But do you desire to be saved?’ She replied, ‘I am saved, I ail nothing, I am happy.’

“This is one of the fruits of the present salvation and sinless perfection taught by you among the weak and ignorant.” (Page 11.)

I should wonder if the scarecrow of sinless perfection was not brought in some way or other. But to the point: You here repeat a relation as from me, and that “in confirmation,” you say, “of your own veracity,” and yet leave out both the beginning of that relation, part of the middle, and the end of it.

I begin thus: “Sun. 11. — I met with a surprising instance of the power of the devil.” (Vol. I.) These words, of all others, should not have been left out, being a key to all that follows. In the middle of the relation, immediately after the words, “I am happy,” I add, “Yet it was easy to discern she was in the most violent agony both of body and mind; sweating exceedingly, notwithstanding the severe frost, and not continuing in the same posture a moment:” — A plain proof that this was no instance of presumption, nor a natural fruit of any teaching whatever.

It ends thus: “About a quarter before six the next morning, after lying quiet a while, she broke out, ‘Peace be unto thee’ (her husband); ‘peace be unto this house; the peace of God is come to my soul; I know that my Redeemer liveth.’ And for several days her mouth was filled with his praise, and her talk was wholly of his wondrous works.” Had not these words been left out, neither could this have passed for an instance of despair. Though still I do not know but it might have stood for an instance of confusion, etc.

I must not forget that this was cited at first as a proof of my enthusiasm; as an instance of a private revelation, “which,” you say, “I seem to pay great credit to, — representing the conjectures of a woman, whose brain appears to have been too much heated, as if they had been owing to a particular and miraculous spirit of prophecy.” (*Remarks*, p. 64.) I answered, “Descant, Sir, as you please on this enthusiasm; on the credit I paid to this private revelation; and my representing the conjectures of this brain-sick woman as owing to a miraculous power of the Spirit of prophecy: And when you have done, I will desire you to read the passage once more; where you will find my express words are, introducing this account: ‘*Sun.* 11. I met with a surprising instance of the power of the devil.’ Such was the credit I paid to this revelation! All which I ascribe to the Spirit of God is, the enabling her to strive against the power of the devil, and at length restoring peace to her soul.”

I was in hopes you had done with this instance. But I am disappointed: For in your Second Letter I read thus: —

“The instances of enthusiasm and presumption which your last Journal had furnished me with remain now to be reviewed. The first was of a private revelation, which you appeared to pay great credit to. You had represented everything the woman had spoke in her agony as coming to pass.” But I had not represented anything she spoke then, whether it came to pass or no, as coming from the Spirit of God, but from the devil.

You say, “When I read this first, I was amazed, and impatient to look again into your Journal. But I had no sooner done this, but I was still more astonished. For you have very grievously misrepresented the case.” If I have, then I will bear the blame; but if not, it will light on your head.

“It is not *this* account which you had thus introduced; but another, and a very different one, of what happened a day or two before. Sunday, you mention her as being guilty of gross presumption, which you attribute to the power of the devil. But on Monday and Tuesday the opposite revelations happened, which you relate without the least mark of diffidence or blame.”

I am grieved that you constrain me to say any more. In the sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh pages of the last Journal, <sup>f45</sup> I gave account of Mrs. Jones,

which I term “a surprising instance of the power of the devil.” It includes the occurrences of three days. This you brought as a proof of my enthusiasm. I answer, “The very words that introduce this account” prove it is no instance of enthusiasm; meaning by *this account*, (as I suppose is plain to every reader,) the following account of Mrs. Jones. You reply, “It is not this account, which you had thus introduced, but another, and a very different one, of what happened a day or two before.” Sir, it is the whole account of Mrs. Jones which I thus introduce; and not another, not a very different one. And I attribute the agony which she (Mrs. Jones) was in, and most of the words which she spoke, both on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, not to the Spirit of God, but to the power of the devil.

**6.** The next instance which you relate as an instance of despair, is that of a young woman of Kingswood; which you break off with, (‘Take me away, etc.’) But why did you not decipher that “etc.”? Why did you not add the rest of the paragraph? Because it would have spoiled your whole argument. It would have shown what the end of the Lord was in permitting that severe visitation. The words are, “We interrupted her by calling again upon God, on which she sunk down as before, (as one asleep,) and another young woman began to roar as loud as she had done. My brother now came in, it being about nine o’clock. We continued in prayer till past eleven; when God in a moment spoke peace into the soul, first, of the first tormented, and then of the other. And they both joined in singing praises to Him who had stilled the enemy and the avenger.” (Vol. I.)

**7.** I am sorry to find you still affirm, that, with regard to the Lord’s supper also, I “advance many injudicious, false, and dangerous things. Such as,

**(1.)** That, ‘a man ought to communicate, without a sure trust in God’s mercy through Christ.’” (Page 117.) You mark these as my words; but I know them not.

**(2.)** “That there is no previous preparation indispensably necessary, but a desire to receive whatsoever God pleases to give.” But I include abundantly more in that desire than you seem to apprehend; even a willingness to know and do the whole will of God.

(3.) “That no fitness is required at the time of communicating,” (I recite the whole sentence,) “but a sense of our state, of our utter sinfulness and helplessness! Every one who knows he is fit for hell, being just fit to come to Christ, in this, as well as in all other ways of his appointment.” But neither can this sense of our utter sinfulness and helplessness subsist, without earnest desires of universal holiness.

“There was another passage,” you say, “which you chose to omit.” (Page 118.) Which this was, I do not understand. Nor do I perceive any one of these dreadful positions (as you style them) to be contrary to the word of God.

8. You will likewise, at all hazards, stand your ground, as to the charge of stoical insensibility. I answered before, “How do you support the charge? Why thus: ‘You say, *The servants of God suffer nothing.*’ And can you possibly misunderstand these words, if you read those that immediately follow? — ‘His body was well-nigh torn asunder with pain. But God made all his bed in his sickness. So that he was continually giving thanks to God, and making his boast of his praise.’” (Page 405.)

You reply, “If you meant no more than that a man under the sharpest pains may be thankful to God, why did you call this a strange truth?” (Page 118.) Because I think it is so. I think it exceeding strange, that one in such a degree of pain should be continually giving thanks to God. Not that I suppose him “insensible of his torments.” “His body,” I say, “was well-nigh torn asunder with pain.” But the love of God so abundantly overbalanced all pain, that it was as nothing to him.

“The next instance is as follows: One told you, ‘Sir, I thought last week there could be no such rest as you describe; none in this world wherein we should be so free as not to desire ease in pain. But God has taught me better. For on Friday and Saturday, when I was in the strongest pain, I never once had one moment’s desire of ease.’” Add, “But only that the will of God might be done.”

Neither has this any resemblance of “stoical insensibility.” I never supposed that this person did not feel pain; (nor indeed that there is any state on earth wherein we shall not feel it;) but that her soul was filled with the love of God, and thankfully resigned to his will.

“Another instance is taken from one of your hymns, where are these lines: — (Page 119.)

*‘Doom, if thou canst, to endless pains,  
And drive me from thy face:’”*

(Add,

*“But if thy stronger love constrains,  
Let me be saved by grace.”)*

“This I thought the height of insensibility, extravagance, and presumption. You see nothing of these in it. And yet you explain yourself thus: ‘If thou canst deny thyself, if thou canst forget to be gracious, if thou canst cease to be truth and love:’ All which, in my opinion, is fixing the charge most strongly upon you. For the supposition that Christ *can* do these things” — Are you in earnest, Sir? Are you really ignorant, that expressions of this kind do not suppose he *can*, but quite the reverse? that they are one of the strongest forms of obtestation, of adjuring God to show mercy, by all his grace, and truth, and love? So far is this also from proving the charge of “stoical insensibility.”

### III.

1. I come now to consider the point of Church communion, of which you have spoke in the beginning of your Treatise. In the entrance, you say, “We teach no other doctrine than has always been taught in our Church. Our sentiments concerning justification are reconcilable to our Articles, Homilies, and Service. This I apprehend several of the Methodists have been convinced of, and have therefore left our communion entirely. You give us more instances than one of this in your last Journal.” (Page 2.) No, not one. Nor did I ever yet know one man who “therefore left the communion of the Church,” because he was convinced that either her Articles, Homilies, or Liturgy, opposed his sentiments concerning justification. Poor Mr. St — and Mr. Simpson were induced to leave it by reasons of quite another kind.

You add, “We cannot wonder that some Methodists have withdrawn from her, while they have been used to hear doctrines which they must have

been sensible have no place in her Articles and Service.” So far from it, that all I know of them are deeply sensible, the “doctrines they have been used to hear” daily, are no other than the genuine doctrines of the Church, as expressed both in her Articles and Service.

**2.** But our present question turns not on doctrine but discipline. “My first business,” you say, “is to consider some very lax notions of Church communion which I find in your last Journal. Vol. I. p. 262, you say, ‘Our Twentieth Article defines a true Church, a congregation of faithful people, wherein the true word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered.’” (Page 3.) The use I would willingly make of this definition, (which, observe, is not mine, be it good or bad,) is to stop the boasting of ungodly men, by cutting off their pretense to call themselves of the Church. But you think they may call themselves so still. Then let them. I will not contend about it.

But you cannot infer from hence, that my notions of Church communion are either lax or otherwise. The definition which I occasionally cite shows nothing of my sentiments on that head. And for anything which occurs in this page, they may be strict or loose, right or wrong.

You add, “It will be requisite, in order to approve yourself a Minister of our Church, that you follow her rules and orders; that you constantly conform to the method of worship she has prescribed, and study to promote her peace.” (Page 5.) All this is good and fit to be done. But it properly belongs to the following question: —

“What led you into such very loose notions of Church communion, I imagine, might be, your being conscious to yourself, that, according to the strict, just account of the Church of England, you could not, with any grace, maintain your pretensions to belong still to her.” Sir, I have never told you yet what my notions of Church communion are. They may be wrong, or they may be right, for all you know. Therefore, when you are first supposing that I have told you my notions, and then assigning the reasons of them, what can be said, but that you imagine the whole matter?

**3.** How far I have acted agreeably to the rules and orders of our Church, is a farther question. You think I have acted contrary thereto, First, by using extemporary prayer in public. “The Church,” you say, “has strongly

declared her mind on this point, by appointing her excellent Liturgy, which you have solemnly promised to use, and no other.” I know not when or where. “And whoever does not worship God in the manner she prescribes must be supposed to slight and condemn her offices and rules; and therefore can be no more worthy to be called her Minister.” (*Ibid.* p. 7.)

I do not “slight or condemn the offices” of the Church; I esteem them very highly. And yet I do not, at all times, worship God, even in public, in the very terms of those offices. Nor yet do I knowingly “slight or condemn her rules:” For it is not clear to my apprehension, that she has any rule which forbids using extemporary prayer, suppose between the Morning and Evening Service. And if I am “not worthy to be called her Minister,” (which I dare by no means affirm myself to be,) yet her Minister I am, and must always be, unless I should be judicially deposed from my ministry.

Your Second argument is this: “If you suppose the Scripture enjoins you to use extemporary prayer, then you must suppose our Liturgy to be inconsistent with Scripture; and, consequently, unlawful to be used.” That does not follow; unless I supposed the Scripture to enjoin, to use extemporary prayer and no other. Then it would follow, that a form of prayer was inconsistent with Scripture. But this I never did suppose.

Your Third argument is to this effect: “You act contrary to the rule of the Church. Allow she is in the wrong; yet, while you break her rule, how do you act as her Minister?” It ought to be expressed, “How are you her Minister?” for the conclusion to be proved is, that I am not her Minister.

I answer,

- (1.) I am not convinced, as I observed before, that I do hereby break her rule.
- (2.) If I did, yet should I not cease to be her Minister, unless I were formally deprived.
- (3.) I now actually do continue in her communion, and hope that I always shall.

4. You object farther, that I “disobey the governors of the Church.” I answer, I both do, and will, obey them in all things, where I do not apprehend there is some particular law of God to the contrary. “Here,”

you say, “you confess that in some things you do not, and cannot obey your governors.” (Page 8.) Did I *confess this*? Then I spoke rashly and foolishly; for I granted more than I can make good. I do certainly apprehend that the law of God requires me, both to preach, and, sometimes, to pray extempore. Yet I do not know that I disobey the governors of the Church herein: For I do not know that they have forbidden me to do either.

But your “behavior and method of teaching is irregular. Have you any warrant from Scripture for preaching” up and down thus? I think I have; I think God hath called me to this work “by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery,” which directs me how to obey that general command, “While we have time, let us do good unto all men.”

“But we ought to do this agreeably to our respective situations, and not break in upon each other’s provinces. Every private man may take upon himself the office of a Magistrate and quote this text as justly as you have done.” (Page 9.) No; the private man is not called to the office of a Magistrates; but I am to the office of a Preacher. “You was, indeed, authorized to preach the gospel; but it was in the congregation to which you should be lawfully appointed. Whereas you have many years preached in places whereunto you was not lawfully appointed; nay, which were entrusted to others, who neither wanted nor desired your assistance.”

Many of them wanted it enough, whether they desired it or no. But I shall not now debate that point. I rather follow you to the First Part of the “Farther Appeal,” where this objection is considered.

**5.** “Our Church,” it was said, “has provided against this preaching up and down, in the ordination of a Priest, by expressly limiting the exercise of the powers then conferred upon him to the congregation where he shall be lawfully appointed thereunto.”

I answered,

**(1.)** “Your argument proves too much. If it be allowed just as you propose it, it proves that no Priest, has authority either to preach or administer the sacrament in any other than his own congregation.”  
(*Farther Appeal.*)

You reply, "Is there no difference between a thing's being done occasionally, and its being done for years together?" Yes, a great one; and more inconveniences may arise from the latter than from the former. But this is all wide: It does not touch the point. Still, if our Church does expressly limit the exercise of the sacerdotal powers to that congregation whereunto each Priest shall be appointed, this precludes him from exercising those powers at all, in any other than that congregation.

I answered,

(2.) "Had the powers conferred been so limited when I was ordained Priest, my ordination would have signified just nothing. For I was not appointed to any congregation at all; but was ordained as a member of that 'College of Divines,' (so our Statutes express it,) 'founded to overturn all heresies, and defend the catholic faith.'"

You reply, "I presume it was expected you should either continue at your College, or enter upon some regular cure." Perhaps so; but I must still insist, that if my sacerdotal powers had been then expressly limited to that congregation whereunto I should be appointed, my ordination would have signified nothing. I mean, I could never, in virtue of that ordination have exercised those powers at all; seeing I never was appointed to any single congregation, at least not till I went to Georgia.

I answered,

(3.) "For many years after I was ordained Priest, this limitation was never heard of. I heard not one syllable of it, by way of objection to my preaching up and down in Oxford or London, or the parts adjacent; in Gloucestershire or Worcestershire; in Lancashire, Yorkshire, or Lincolnshire. Nor did the strictest disciplinarian scruple suffering me to exercise those powers wherever I came."

You reply, "There is great difference between preaching occasionally, with the leave of the incumbents, and doing it constantly without their leave." I grant there is; and there are objections to the latter, which do not reach the former case. But they do not belong to this head. They do not in the least affect this consequence, — "If every Priest, when ordained, is expressly limited, touching the exercise of the power then received, to that congregation to which he shall be appointed; then is he precluded by this

express limitation from preaching, with or without the incumbent's leave, in any other congregation whatever."

I answered,

(4.) "Is it not, in fact, universally allowed, that every Priest, as such, has a power, in virtue of his ordination, to preach in any congregation, where the Curate desires his assistance?"

You reply to this by what you judge a parallel case. But it does not touch the restriction in question. Either this does, or does not, expressly limit the exercise of the powers conferred upon a Priest in his ordination to that congregation whereunto he shall be appointed. If it does not, I am not condemned by this, however faulty I may be on a thousand other accounts. If it does, then is every Priest condemned whoever preaches out of the congregation to which he is appointed.

Your parallel case is this: "Because a man does not offend against the law of the land, when I prevail upon him to teach my children;" therefore "he is empowered to seize" (read, he does not offend against the law of the land in seizing) "an apartment in my house, and against my will and approbation to continue therein, and to direct and dictate to my family!" (Page 11.)

An exact parallel indeed! When, therefore, I came to live in St. Luke's parish, was it just the same thing as if I had seized an apartment in Dr. Buckley's house? And was the continuing therein against his will and approbation (supposing it were so) precisely the same, as if I had continued in his house, whether he would or no? Is the one exactly the same offense against the law of the land as the other? Once more. Is the warning sinners in Moorfields to flee from the wrath to come, the very same with directing the Doctor's family under his own roof? I should not have answered this, but that I was afraid you would conclude it was unanswerable.

I answered the former objector,

(5.) "Before those words which you suppose to imply such a restraint, were those spoken without any restraint or limitation at all, which I apprehend to convey an indelible character, 'Receive the Holy

Ghost, for the office and work of a Priest in the church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands.”

You reply, “The question is not, whether you are in orders or not.” (*Ibid.* p. 12.) I am glad to hear it. I really thought it was. “But whether you have acted suitably to the directions or rules of the Church of England.” Not suitably to that rule, if it were strictly to be interpreted, of preaching only in a single congregation. But I have given my reasons why I think it cannot be so interpreted. And those reasons I do not see that you have invalidated.

I would only add, If I am in orders, if I am a Minister still, and yet not a Minister of the Church of England, of what Church am I a Minister? Whoever is a Minister at all is a Minister of some particular Church. Neither can he cease to be a Minister of that Church, till he is cast out of it by a judicial sentence. Till, therefore, I am so cast out, (which I trust will never be,) I must style myself a Minister of the Church of England.

**6.** Your next objection is, “You not only erect Bands, which, after the Moravians, you call the *United Society*, but also give out tickets to those that continue therein.” These Bands, you think, “have had very bad consequences, as was to be expected, when weak people are made leaders of their brethren, and are set upon expounding Scripture.” (*Ibid.*)

You are in some mistakes here. For,

- (1.) The Bands are not called the *United Society*.
- (2.) The United Society was originally so called, not after the Moravians, but because it consisted of several smaller societies united together.
- (3.) Neither the Bands nor the leaders of them, as such, are “set upon expounding Scripture.”
- (4.) The good consequences of their meeting together in Bands, I know; but the very bad consequences, I know not.

When any members of these, or of the United Society, are proved to live in known sin, we then mark and avoid them; we separate ourselves from every one that walks disorderly. Sometimes, if the case be judged

infectious, (though rarely,) this is openly declared. And this you style “excommunication;” and say, “Does not every one see a separate ecclesiastical society or communion?” (Page 13.) No. This society does not separate from the communion of the rest of the Church of England. They continue steadfastly with them, both “in the apostolical doctrine, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Which neither Mr. St — nor Mr. Simpson does, nor the gentleman who writes to you in favor of the Moravians, who also writes pressingly to me to separate myself from the Church.) A society “over which you had appointed yourself a governor.” No so far as I governed them, it was at their own entreaty. “And took upon you all the spiritual authority which the very highest Church Governor could claim.” What! at Kingswood, in *February*, 1740-1? Not so. I took upon me no other authority (then and there at least) than any Steward of a society exerts by the consent of the other members. I did neither more nor less than declare, that they who had broken our rules were no longer of our society.

“Can you pretend that you received this authority from our Church?” Not by ordination; for I did not exert it as a Priest; but as one whom that society had voluntarily chosen to be at the head of them. “Or that you exercised it in subjection or subordination to her lawful Governors?” I think so; I am sure I did not exercise it in any designed opposition to them. “Did you ever think proper to consult or advise with them, about fixing the terms of your communion?” If you mean, about fixing the rules of admitting or excluding from our society, I never did think it either needful or proper. Nor do I at this day.

“How then will you vindicate all these powers?” All these are, “declaring those are no longer of our society.” “Here is a manifest congregation. Either it belonged to the Church of England, or not. If it did not, you set up a separate communion against her. And how then are you injured, in being thought to have withdrawn from her?” I have nothing to do with this. The antecedent is false: Therefore the consequent falls of course. “If it did belong to the Church, show where the Church gave you such authority of controlling and regulating it?” Authority of putting disorderly members out of that society? The society itself gave me that authority. “What private Clergyman can plead her commission to be thus a Judge and Ordinary, even in his own parish?” Any Clergyman or layman, without

pleading her commission, may be thus a Judge and Ordinary. “Are not these powers inherent in her Governors, and committed to the higher order of her Clergy?” No; not the power of excluding members from a private society, — unless on supposition of some such rule as ours is, viz., “That if any man separate from the Church, he is no longer a member of our society.”

**7.** But you have more proof yet: “The Grand Jury in Georgia found, that you had called yourself Ordinary of Savannah. Nor was this fact contradicted even by those of the Jury who, you say, wrote in your favor: So that it appears, you have long, had an inclination to be independent and uncontrolled.” This argument ought to be good; for it is far fetched. The plain case was this: That Grand Jury did assert, that, in Mr. Causton’s hearing, I had called myself Ordinary of Savannah. The minority of the Jury, in their letter to the Trustees, refuted the other allegations particularly; but thought this so idle an one, that they did not deign to give it any farther reply, than,

“As to the eighth bill we are in doubt, as not well knowing the meaning of the word *Ordinary*.” See Vol. I.

You add, “I appeal to any reasonable man, whether you have not acted: is an Ordinary, nay, a Bishop, in Kingswood.” If you mean, in “declaring those disorderly members were no longer of that society;” I admit your appeal, whether I therein acted as a Bishop, or as any Steward of a society may. “Nay, you have gone far beyond the generality of the Dissenters themselves; who do not commit the power of excommunication, and appointing to preach,” (that is another question,) “to the hands of any private Minister.” *The power of excommunication*. True; but this was not excommunication, but a quite different thing.

How far, in what circumstances, and in what sense, I have “appointed men to preach,” I have explained at large in the Third Part of the “Farther Appeal.” But I wait for farther light; and am ready to consider, as I am able, whatever shall be replied to what is there advanced.

**8.** Your general conclusion is, “Whatever your pretenses or professions may be, you can be looked upon by serious and impartial persons, not as a member, much less a Minister, of the Church of England, but as no other

than an enemy to her constitution, worship, and doctrine, raising divisions and disturbances in her communion.” (*Ibid.* p. 76.) “And yet you say, ‘I cannot have greater regard to her rules.’ ‘I dare not renounce communion with her.’” (*Ibid.* p. 15.)

I do say so still. I cannot have a greater regard to any human rules, than to follow them in all things, unless where I apprehend there is a divine rule to the contrary. I dare not renounce communion with the Church of England. As a Minister, I teach her doctrines; I use her offices; I conform to her Rubrics; I suffer reproach for my attachment to her. As a private member, I hold her doctrines; I join in her offices, in prayer, in hearing, in communicating. I expect every reasonable man, touching these facts, to believe his own eyes and ears. But if these facts are so, how dare any man of common sense charge me with renouncing the Church of England?

9. Use ever so many exaggerations, still the whole of this matter is,

(1.) I often use extemporary prayer.

(2.) Wherever I can, I preach the gospel.

(3.) Those who desire to live the gospel, I advise how to watch over each other, and to put from them such as walk disorderly. Now, whether these things are, on other considerations, right or wrong, this single point I must; still insist on: “All this does not prove, either that I am no member, or that I am no Minister, of the Church of England: Nay, nothing can prove, I am no member of the Church, till I either am excommunicated, or renounce her communion, and no longer join in her doctrine, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayer.

Nor can anything prove, I am no Minister of the Church, till I either am deposed from my ministry, or voluntarily renounce her, and wholly cease to teach her doctrines, use her offices, and obey her Rubrics for conscience’ sake.

However, I grant, that whatsoever is “urged on this head deserves my most serious consideration.” And whensoever I am convinced, that by taking any methods, more or less different from those I now take, I may better “consult the honor of religion, and be able to do more good in the

world,” by the grace of God I shall not persist in these one hour, but instantly choose the more excellent way.

## IV.

**1.** What you urge on the head of enthusiasm also, I think, “deserves my most serious consideration.” You may add, “and presumption.” I let it drop once more; because I do not love tautology; and because I look upon presumption to be essential to enthusiasm, and, consequently, contained therein. I will therefore weigh what you advance concerning it, and explain myself something more at large.

“I am to examine,” you say, “how far you have cleared yourself of enthusiasm. My account of this you set down, making as many alterations and omissions as there are lines.” (Page 120.) Perhaps more; for I never designed to recite the whole, but only the material part of it. If you did not wholly approve of it, why would you not let me know what you disliked in it?” Because I do not love many words. Therefore when the argument stood thus, “He that does this is an enthusiast; but you do this;” was generally content with answering the second proposition, and leaving the first as I found it.

“I laid this charge against you and the Methodists in general; between you every part of the character has been verified.” I answer for one; let the rest answer for themselves, if they have not better employment.

That the question between us may be the more fully understood, I shall briefly compare together,

(1.) Your remarks.

(2.) My answer.

(3.) Your reply; though still I cannot promise to repeat your words at length.

**2.** You remark, “Though you would be thought an enemy to enthusiasm and presumption, yet in both you are far from being inferior to the

Moravians, or indeed to any others.” (Page 60.) Strong assertions! *Not inferior to any others?* not to the French Prophets, or John of Leyden!

“(1.) Enthusiasm is a false persuasion of an extraordinary divine assistance, which leads men to such conduct as is only to be justified by the supposition of such assistance.” I answer, “Before this touches me, you are to prove (which I conceive you have not done yet) that my conduct is such as is only to be justified by the supposition of such assistance.” (Page 406.) You reply, “This, I think, is proved in the preceding tract.” (Page 120.) I think not. Let men of candor judge. Yet I am persuaded, there was such an assistance at some times. You have also to prove, that this was a false persuasion.

You remark,

(2.) “An enthusiast is, then, sincere, but mistaken.” (Page 61.) I answered, “That I am mistaken remains to be proved.” You reply, “The world must judge.” Agreed, if by *the world* you mean men of reason and religion.

You remark,

(3.) “His intentions must be good; but his actions will be most abominable.” I answered, “What actions of mine are most abominable?” You reply, “The world must be judge, whether your public actions have not been, in many respects, abominable.” I am glad the charge softens. I hope by and by you will think they are only abominable in some respects.

You remark,

(4.) “Instead of making the word of God the rule of his actions, he follows only secret persuasion or impulse.” I answered: “I have declared again and again, that I make the word of God the rule of all my actions; and that I no more follow any secret impulse instead thereof, than I follow Mahomet or Confucius.” You reply: “You fall again into your strain of boasting, as if declarations could have any weight against facts; assert, that ‘you make the word of God the rule of all your actions,’ and that I ‘perhaps do not know many persons’” — (Page

121.) Stop, Sir: You are stepping over one or two points which I have not done with.

You remark,

(5.) “Instead of judging of his spiritual estate by the improvement of his heart, he rests only on ecstasies,” And I answered: “Neither is this my case. I rest not on them at all. I judge of my spiritual estate by the improvement of my heart and the tenor of my life conjointly.” To this I do not perceive you reply one word. Herein, then, I am not an enthusiast.

You remark,

(6.) “He is very liable to err, not considering things coolly and carefully.” I answered: “So indeed I am; I find it everyday more and more. But I do not yet find that this is owing to my want of ‘considering things coolly and carefully.’ Perhaps you do not know many persons (excuse my simplicity in speaking it) who more carefully consider every step they take. Yet I know I am not cool or careful enough. May God supply this and all my wants!” You reply, “Your private life I have nothing to do with;” and then enlarge on my “method of consulting Scripture,” and of using lots; — of both which by and by. But meantime, observe, this does not affect the question: For I neither cast lots, nor use that method at all, till I have considered things with all the care I can. So that, be this right or wrong, it is no manner of proof that I do not “carefully consider every step I take.”

But how little did I profit by begging your excuse, suppose I had spoken a word unguardedly! O Sir, you put me in mind of him who said, “I know not how to show mercy!” You have need never to fight but when you are sure to conquer; seeing you are resolved neither to give nor take quarter.

You remark,

(7.) “He is very difficult to be convinced by reason and argument, as he acts upon a supposed principle superior to it, — the direction of God’s Spirit.” I answered, “I am very difficult to be convinced by dry blows or hard names, but not by reason or argument. At least that

difficulty cannot spring from the cause you mention: For I claim no other direction of God's Spirit than is common to all believers."

You reply,

**(1.)** "I fear this will not be easily reconcilable to your past pretenses and behavior." (Page 124.) I believe it will; in particular, to what I speak of the light I received from God in that important affair. (Vol. I.) But as to the directions, in general, of the Spirit of God, we very probably differ in this: You apprehend those directions to be extraordinary, which I suppose to be common to all believers.

You remark,

**(8.)** "Whoever opposes him will be charged with resisting or rejecting the Spirit." I answered, "What! whoever opposes me, John Wesley? Do I charge every such person with 'rejecting the Spirit?' No more than I charge him with robbing on the highway. Do I charge you with rejecting the Spirit?" You reply, "You deny that you charge the opposers with rejecting the Spirit, and affirm, that you never said or thought that what you do is to be accounted the work of God." Here you blend different sentences together, which I must consider apart, as they were written. And, first, where do I charge you with rejecting the Spirit? If I charge whoever opposes me with this, undoubtedly I charge you. If I do not charge you, that proposition is false; I do not so charge whoever opposes me. Your next words are, "You affirm that you never said or thought that what you do is to be accounted the work of God. If it be the work of God, you need not deny the other point." Yes, Sir; whether it be or no, I must still deny that I ever charged you with rejecting the Spirit in opposing me.

You remark,

**(9.)** "His own dreams must be regarded as oracles." I answered, "Whose? I desire neither my dreams nor my waking thoughts may be regarded at all, unless just so far as they agree with the oracles of God." To this also you make no reply.

You remark,

**(10.)** “However wild his behavior may be, whatever he does is to be accounted the work of God.” It was to this I answered, “I never said so of what I do; I never thought so.” This answer was ill expressed. And I might have foreseen you would hardly fail to make your advantage of it. I must therefore explain myself upon it a little farther. You said, “An enthusiast accounts whatever he does to be the work of God.” I should have said, “But I do not account whatever I do to be the work of God.” What that is which I do account his work will he considered by and by.

You remark,

**(11.)** “He talks in the style of inspired persons.” I answered, “No otherwise inspired than you are, if you love God.” You reply, “The point was not, whether you are actually inspired, but whether you have talked in the style of those who were so.” (Page 126.) That was so much the point, that if it were allowed, it would overturn your whole argument. For if I was inspired, (in your sense,) you could not term that inspiration enthusiasm without blasphemy; but you again mistake my words. The plain meaning of them is, that I talk in the style of those persons who are “no otherwise inspired than you are, if you love God.”

You remark,

**(12.)** “He applies Scripture phrases to himself, without attending to their original meaning, or once considering the difference of times and circumstances.” (Page 62.) I answered “I am not conscious of anything like this. I apply no Scripture phrase either to myself or any other, without carefully considering both the original meaning, and the secondary sense, wherein, allowing for different times and circumstances, it may be applied to ordinary Christians.”

You reply, “This also you deny to have done; holding, however, some secondary sense, (what it is you have not told us,) in which Scripture phrases may be applied to ordinary Christians.” I have largely told you what I mean by a secondary sense, in the First Part of the “Farther Appeal.” You add: “Many things which were truly written of the preaching of Christianity at first, you have vainly applied to yourselves.”

Sir, I am to answer only for myself; as I will for that expression, “Behold the day of the Lord is come; he is again visiting and redeeming his people!”

**3.** I come now to what you expatiate upon at large, as the two grand instances of my enthusiasm. The first is plainly this: At some rare times, when I have been in great distress of soul, or in utter uncertainty how to act in an important case which required a speedy determination, after using all other means that occurred, I have cast lots, or opened the Bible. And by this means I have been relieved from that distress, or directed in that uncertainty.

Instances of this kind occur in third Journal; as also in the last Journal. <sup>f46</sup> I desire any who would understand this matter thoroughly, to read those passages as they stand at length.

As to the particular instances, I would observe,

**(1.)** That with regard to my first journey to Bristol, you should, in any wise, have set down those words that preface the scriptures there recited: “I was entreated, in the most pressing manner, to come to Bristol without delay. This I was not at all forward to do; and perhaps a little the less inclined to it, because of the remarkable scriptures which offered, as often as we inquired, touching the consequence of this removal; though whether this was permitted only for the trial of our faith, God knoweth, and the event will show.” From the scriptures afterwards recited, some inferred that the event they apprehended was yet afar off. I infer nothing at all. I still know not how to judge; but leave the whole to God. This only I know, that the continual expectation of death was then an unspeakable blessing to me; that I did not dare, knowingly, to waste a moment, neither to throw away one desire on earthly things; those words being ever uppermost in my thoughts, and indeed frequently on my tongue: —

*Ere long, when sovereign wisdom wills,  
My soul an unknown path shall tread,  
Shall strangely leave, who strangely fills  
This frame, and waft me to the dead.*

*O, what is death? 'Tis life's last shore,  
Where vanities are vain no more;  
Where all pursuits their goal obtain,  
And life is all re-touch'd again.*

I observe,

(2.) That in two other of those instances, (Vol. I.) it is particularly mentioned, that “I was troubled;” and that, by the seasonable application of those scriptures, that trouble was entirely removed. The same blessing I received (so I must term it still) from the words set down in page 231; and in a yet higher degree, from that exceeding apposite scripture mentioned in Vol. I.

I observe,

(3.) That at the times to which your other citations refer, I was utterly uncertain how to act in points of great importance, and such as required a speedy determination; and that, by this means, my uncertainty was removed, and I went on my way rejoicing. (Vol. I.)

My own experience, therefore, which you think should discourage me for the future from anything of this kind, does, on the contrary, greatly encourage me herein; since I have found much benefit, and no inconvenience; unless, perhaps, this be one, that you “cannot acquit me of enthusiasm;” add, if you please, and presumption.

But you ask, “Has God ever commanded us to do thus?” I believe he has neither commanded nor forbidden it in Scripture. But then remember, “that Scripture” (to use the words which you cite from “our learned and judicious Hooker”) “is not the only rule of all things, which, in this life, may be done by men.” All I affirm concerning this is, that it may be done; and that I have, in fact, received assistance and direction thereby.

4. I give the same answer to your assertion, that we are not ordered in Scripture to decide any points in question by lots. (*Remarks*, p. 123.) You allow, indeed, there are instances of this in Scripture; but affirm, “These were miraculous; nor can we, without presumption,” (a species of enthusiasm,) “apply this method.” I want proof of this: Bring one plain text of Scripture, and I am satisfied. “This, I apprehend, you learned from the Moravians.” I did; though, it is true, Mr. Whitefield thought I went too

far therein. “Instances of the same occur in your Journals. I will mention only one. It being debated, when you should go to Bristol, you say, ‘We at length all agreed to decide it by lot. And by this it was determined I should go.’ (Vol. I.) Is this your way of carefully considering every step you take? Can there be greater rashness and extravagance? Reason is thus, in a manner, rendered useless, prudence is set aside, and affairs of moment left to be determined by chance!” (*Remarks*, p. 124.)

So this you give as a genuine instance of my proceedings; and, I suppose, of your own fairness and candor! “We agreed, at length, to decide it by lot.” True, *at length*; after a debate of some hours; after carefully hearing and weighing coolly all the reasons which could be alleged on either side; our brethren still continuing the dispute, without any probability of their coming to one conclusion, we, at length, (the night being now far spent,) all agreed to this. “Can there be greater rashness and extravagance?” I cannot but think there can. “Reason is thus, in a manner, rendered useless.” No; we had used it as far as it could go; from Saturday, March 17, (when I received the first letter,) to Wednesday, 28, when the case was laid before the society. “Prudence is set aside.” Not so. But the arguments here were so equal, that she saw not how to determine. “And affairs of moment left to be determined by chance!” *By chance*! What a blunder, then, is that, “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposal thereof is of the Lord!”

This, I firmly believe, is truth and reason, and will be to the end of the world. And I therefore still subscribe to that declaration of the Moravian Church, laid before the whole body of Divines in the University of Wirtemberg, and not by them accounted enthusiasm: “We have a peculiar esteem for lots, and accordingly use them, both in public and private, to decide points of importance, when the reasons brought on each side appear to be of equal weight. And we believe this to be then the only way of wholly setting aside our own will, of acquitting ourselves of all blame, and clearly knowing what is the will of God.” (Vol. I.)

**5.** You next remarked several instances of my enthusiasm. The first was that of Mrs. Jones. The next ran thus: “Again, you say, ‘I expounded out of the fulness that was given me.’” (*Remarks*, p. 64.) I answered, “I mean, I had then a fuller, deeper sense of what I spoke than I ordinarily have.”

But if you still think, “it would have been more decent to have said, ‘According to the best of my power and ability, with God’s assistance, I expounded;’” I will say so another time.

With regard to the third instance of enthusiasm, you remarked, “If you would not have us look on this as miraculous, there is nothing in it worthy of being related.” (*Remarks*, p. 64.) I answered, “It may be so. Let it pass, then, as a trifle not worth relating; but still it is no proof of enthusiasm. For I would not have you look upon it as miraculous, but as a signal instance of God’s particular providence.” How friendly and generous is your reply! — “You seem ashamed of it. I am glad you give this fooling up, and hope for the future you will treat your readers better.” (*Second Letter*, p. 131.) Sir, I am not ashamed of it; nor shall I ever give this fooling up, till I give up the Bible. I still look upon this “as a signal instance of God’s particular providence.” But “how is this consistent with yielding it to be a trifle?” (*Ibid.* p. 132.) My words do not imply, that I yield it so to be. Being urged with the dilemma, “Either this is related as miraculous,” (and then it is enthusiasm,) “or it is not worth relating;” I answered, (to avoid drawing the saw of controversy,) “Let it pass, then, as a trifle not worth relating. But still” (if it be a trifle, which I suppose, not grant) “it is no proof of enthusiasm. For I would not have you look upon it as miraculous.”

And yet I believe I yielded too much, and what might too much favor your assertion, that “there is a great difference between particular providences and such extraordinary interpositions.” Pray, Sir, show me what this difference is. It is a subject that deserves your coolest thoughts. “I know no ground to hope or pray for such immediate reliefs. These things must be represented either as common accidents or as miracles.” I do not thoroughly understand your terms. What is a common accident? that a sparrow falls to the ground, or something more inconsiderable than the hairs of your head? Is there no medium between accident and miracle? If there be, what is that medium? When we are agreed with regard to these few points, I shall be glad to resume the subject.

**6.** The fourth instance of my enthusiasm was this, that I “related judgments inflicted on my opposers.” As to Mr. Molther, I must observe once more, that I do believe there was a particular providence in his

sickness. But I do not believe, (nor did I design to insinuate,) that it was a judgment for opposing me.

You go on: "Again you mention, 'as an awful providence, the ease of a poor wretch who was last week cursing and blaspheming, and had boasted to many that he would come again on Sunday, and no man should stop his mouth then. But on Friday God laid his hand upon him, and on Sunday he was buried.'" (*Remarks*, p. 66.) I answered, "I look on this as a manifest judgment of God on a hardened sinner, for his complicated wickedness." (Page 410.) You reply, "Add, if you please, 'His laboring with all his might to hinder the word of God.' Here therefore is a confessed judgment for his opposition to you." (*Second Letter*, p. 133.) There is, for his thus opposing with curses and blasphemy. This was part of his complicated wickedness. Here then you "think I plead guilty." Not of enthusiasm, till you prove this was not "an awful providence."

"Again: 'One was just going to beat his wife, (which he frequently did,) when God smote him in a moment, so that his hand dropped, and he fell down upon the ground, having no more strength than a new-born child.' Have we any warrant either from Scripture, or the common dispensations of providence, to interpret misfortunes of this nature as judgments?" (*Remarks*, p. 67.) I answered, "Can you, Sir, consider this as one of the common dispensations of providence? Have you known a parallel one in your life? But it was never cited by me, (as it is by you,) as an immediate punishment on a man for *opposing me*." You reply, "As if what is not common, or what I have not known, must be a miraculous judgment." I believe it was, whether miraculous or no, a judgment mixed with mercy.

You now add to the rest the following instance: — "One John Haydon, a man of a regular life and conversation, being informed that people fell into strange fits at the societies, came to see and judge for himself. But he was still less satisfied than before; insomuch that he went about to his acquaintance one after another, and labored above measure to convince them it was a delusion of the devil. We were going home, when one met us in the street, and informed us that J. H. was fallen raving mad. It seems he had sat down to dinner, but had a mind first to end the sermon on 'Salvation by Faith.' In reading the last page, he changed color, fell off his chair, and began screaming terribly, and beating himself against the ground.

The neighbors were alarmed, and flocked into the house. I came in, and found him upon the floor, the room being full of people, whom his wife would have kept without, but he cried aloud, ‘No; let them all come; let all the world see the just judgment of God.’ Two or three men were holding him as well as they could. He immediately fixed his eyes upon me, and cried, ‘Ay, this is he, who I said was a deceiver of the people. But God has overtaken me. I said it was all a delusion. But this is no delusion.’ He then roared out, ‘O thou devil! Thou cursed devil! Yea, thou legion of devils! Thou canst not stay! 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 against the ground again, his breast heaving at the same time, as in the pangs of death, and great drops of sweat trickling down his face. We all betook ourselves to prayer. His pangs ceased, and both his body and soul were set at liberty.” (Vol. I.)

If you had pleased, you might have added from the next paragraph, “Returning to J. H., we found his voice was lost, and his body weak as that of an infant. But his soul was in peace, full of love, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.”

You subjoin, “This you may desire, for aught I know, to pass as a trifle too.” (*Remarks*, p. 134.) No; it is so terrible an instance of the judgment of God, (though at length “mercy rejoiced over judgment,”) as ought never to be forgotten by those who fear God, so long as the sun or moon endureth.

**7.** The account of people falling down in fits you cite as a fifth instance of my enthusiasm; it being “plain,” you say, that I “look upon both the disorders, and the removals of them, to be supernatural.” (*Remarks*, p. 67.) I answered, “It is not quite plain. I look upon some of these cases as wholly natural; on the rest, as mixed; both the disorders and the removals being partly natural and partly not.” You reply, “It would have been kind to have let us know your rule, by which you distinguish these.” I will. I distinguish them by the circumstances that precede, accompany and follow. “However, some of these you here allow to be in part supernatural. Miracles, therefore are not wholly ceased.” Can you prove they are, by Scripture or reason? You then refer to two or three cases, related in Vol. I. pp. 188, 189. I believe there was a supernatural power on the minds of the persons there mentioned, which occasioned their bodies

to be so affected by the natural laws of the vital union. This point, therefore, you have to prove, or here is no enthusiasm; that there was no supernatural power in the case.

Hereon you remarked, “You leave no room to doubt that you would have these cases considered as those of the demoniacs in the New Testament, in order, I suppose, to parallel your supposed cures of them, with those highest miracles of Christ and his disciples, the casting out devils.”

(*Remarks*, p. 63.) I answered, “I should once have wondered at your making such a supposition. But now I wonder at nothing of the kind.” You reply, “Why so? What have I done lately, to take off your surprise? Have I forfeited my character for ingenuous and fair dealing with you?” (*Second Letter*, p. 135.) Since you ask me the question, I will answer it; I hope, in love, and in the spirit of meekness. I scarce know, of all who have wrote against me, a less ingenuous dealer; or one who has shown a more steady, invariable disposition to put an ill construction on whatever I say.

“But why would you not particularly explain these cases?” I will explain myself upon them once for all. For more than three hundred years after Christ, you know, demoniacs were common in the Church; and I suppose you are not unapprised, that during this period, (if not much longer,) they were continually relieved by the prayers of the faithful. Nor can I doubt, but demoniacs will remain, so long as Satan is the “God of this world.” I doubt not, but there are such at this day. And I believe John Haydon was one. But of whatever sort his disorder was, that it was removed by prayer is undeniable. Now, Sir, you have only two points to prove, and then your argument will be conclusive:

(1.) That to think or say, “There are demoniacs now, and they are now relieved by prayer,” is enthusiasm.

(2.) That to say, “Demoniacs were or are relieved, on prayer made by Cyprian, or their parish Minister,” is to parallel the actions of Cyprian or that Minister with the biggest miracles of Christ and his disciples.

**8.** You remarked, “It will be difficult to persuade any sober person, that there is anything supernatural in these disorders.” (*Remarks*, p. 69.) The remainder of that paragraph I abridged thus: You attempt to account for those fits, by “obstructions or irregularities of the blood and spirits;

hysterical disorders; watchings, fastings, closeness of rooms, great crowds, violent heat;" and lastly by "terrors, perplexities, and doubts, in weak and well-meaning men; which," you think, "in many of the cases before us, have quite upset their understandings." (*Remarks*, p. 43.)

I answered, "As to each of the rest, let it go as far as it can go." (Let it be supposed to have some influence in some cases; perhaps fully to account for one in a thousand.) "But I require proof of the last way whereby you would account for these disorders." Why, "the instances," you say, "of religious madness have much increased since you began to disturb the world." I doubt the fact. You reply, "This no way disproves it." (*Second Letter*, p. 137.) Yes, it does, till you produce some proof. For a bare negation is the proper and sufficient answer to a bare affirmation. I add, "If these instances had increased daily, it is easy to account for them another way," as is done in the First Part of the *Farther Appeal*, at the one hundred and thirty-first and following pages. You say, "Most have heard of or known several of the Methodists thus driven to distraction." I answered, "You may have heard of five hundred. But how many have you known? Be pleased to name eight or ten of them. I cannot find them, no, not one of them to this day, either man, woman, or child." You reply, "This" (the naming them) "would be very improper and unnecessary." (*Second Letter*, p. 138.) However, Sir, it is extremely necessary that you should name them to me in private. I will then, if required, excuse you to the public; which till then I cannot do.

The person I mentioned, whom you threw into much doubt and perplexity, then lived in the parish of St. Ann, Westminster. I related the case just as she related it to me. But she is, able and ready to answer for herself.

**9.** You go on: "It is the most charitable supposition we can make, that many of the cases you have mentioned in your Journals, and some of which have been represented above, are of this kind," that is, instances of madness. (*Second Letter*, p. 138.) O tender charity! But cannot your charity reach one hair's breadth farther than this? No: For "otherwise" (that is, if those persons were not mad) "the presumption and despair are terrible indeed." But what, if you were to suppose John Haydon (to instance in one) was not mad, but under a temporary possession; and that

others were deeply convinced of sin, and of the wrath of God abiding on them? I should think this supposition (be it true or false) was full as charitable as the other.

I said, "I cannot find one such instance to this day." You reply, "Yet once you could not but be under some concern with regard to one or two persons, who seemed to be indeed lunatic, as well as sore vexed." So they seemed; but it soon appeared they were not. The very next paragraph mentions, that one of these, within a few hours, was "filled with the spirit of love, and of a sound mind." (Vol. I.)

But you are resolved, come what will, to carry this point; and so add, "Toward the end of your *Farther Appeal*, (First Part, p. 131,) you say, you have seen one instance of real, lasting madness. This was one whom you took with you to Bristol, who was afterwards prejudiced against you, and began a vehement invective both against your person and doctrines. In the midst of this he was struck raving mad." Add, "And so he continued till his friends put him into Bedlam; and probably laid his madness to my charge." If they did not, it is now done to their hands.

**10.** "As to the cure of these fits, I observed," (so you, p. 139, proceed,) "that you had frequently represented them as miraculous, as the instantaneous consequences of your prayers." My former answer to this was, "I have set down the facts just as they were, passing no judgment upon them myself, and leaving every man else to judge as he pleases."

I am glad you give me an occasion of reviewing this answer; for, upon reflection, I do not like it at all. It grants you more than I can in conscience do. As it can be proved by abundance of witnesses that these cures were frequently (indeed almost always) the instantaneous consequences of prayer, your inference is just. I cannot, dare not affirm, that they were purely natural. I believe they were not. I believe many of them were wrought by the supernatural power of God; that of John Haydon in particular; (I fix on this, and will join issue with you upon it when you please;) and yet this is not barefaced enthusiasm. Nor can you prove it any enthusiasm at all, unless you can prove, that this is falsely ascribed to supernatural power.

“The next case,” you say, “relates to the spotted fever, which you represent as being extremely mortal; but you believe there was not one with whom you were but recovered. I allowed that here is no intimation of anything miraculous.” (*Remarks*, p. 72.) “You ask, ‘Why then is this cited as an instance of my enthusiasm?’ (Page 412.) You sure cannot think, that false pretenses to miracles are the whole of enthusiasm.” No; but I think they are that part of enthusiasm which you here undertook to prove upon me. You are here to prove, that I “boast of curing bodily distempers by prayer, without the use of other means.” (*Remarks*, p. 71.) But if there is no intimation in my account of anything miraculous, or that proper remedies had not been applied; how is this a proof, that I boast of curing bodily distempers, without applying any remedies at all?

“But you seem to desire to have it believed, that an extraordinary blessing attended your prayers. Whereas, if the circumstances could be particularly inquired into, most probably it would appear, that either the fury of the distemper was abated, or the persons you visited were seized with it in a more favorable degree, or were, by reason of a good constitutions more capable of going through it. Neither do I believe that they would have failed of an equal blessing and success had they had the assistance and prayers of their own parish Ministers.”

There, Sir; now I have done as you require; I have quoted our whole remark. But does all this prove, that I “boast of curing bodily distempers by prayer, without the use of any other means?” If you say, Although it does not prove this, it proves that “you seem to desire to have it believed, that an extraordinary blessing attended your prayers;” and this is another sort of enthusiasm: It is very well: So it does not prove the conclusion you designed; but it proves another which is as good!

**11.** The two last instances of my enthusiasm which you bring, (*Remarks*, pp. 72, 73,) I had summed up in two lines, thus: “At two several times, being ill and in violent pain, I prayed to God, and found immediate ease.” (*Answer*, p. 412.) But since you say, I “must not hope to escape so; these instances must once more be laid before me particularly;” (*Second Letter*, p. 140;) I must yield to necessity, and set them down from the beginning to the end: —

“Saturday, March 21. I explained in the evening the thirty-third chapter of Ezekiel; in applying which, I was seized with such a pain in my side, I could not speak. I knew my remedy, and immediately kneeled down. In a moment the pain was gone.” (Vol. I.)

“Friday, May 8. I found myself much out of order: However, I made shift to preach in the evening. But on Saturday my bodily strength failed, so that for several hours I could scarce lift up my head. Sunday, 10. I was obliged to lie down, most part of the day, being easy only in that posture. In the evening, beside the pain in my back and head, and the fever which still continued upon me, just as I began to pray I was seized with such a cough that I could hardly speak. At the same time came strongly into my mind: ‘These signs shall follow them that believe.’ I called on Jesus aloud, to ‘increase my faith,’ and to ‘confirm the word of his grace.’ While I was speaking, my pain vanished away, the fever left me, my bodily strength returned, and for many weeks I felt neither weakness nor pain. Unto thee, O Lord, do I give thanks.” (*Ibid.* p. 310.)

When you first cited these as proofs of enthusiasm, I answered, “I will put your argument into form: —

“He that believes those are miraculous cures which are not so, is a rank enthusiast; but

“You believe those are miraculous cures which are not so:  
Therefore, you are a rank enthusiast.

“What do you mean by miraculous? If you term every thing so, which is ‘not strictly accountable for by the ordinary course of natural causes,’ then I deny the latter part of the minor proposition. And unless you can make this good, unless you can prove the effects in question are ‘strictly accountable for by the ordinary course of natural causes,’ your argument; is nothing worth.”

You reply, “Your answer to the objection is very evasive, though you pretend to put my argument in form. You mistake the major proposition, which should have been:

“He that represents those cures as the immediate effects of his own prayers, and as miraculous, which are not so, is a rank enthusiast, if sincere:

“But, This you have done: *Ergo, etc.*”

To this clumsy syllogism I rejoin,

(1.) That the words, “if sincere,” are utterly impertinent: For if insincerity be supposed, enthusiasm will be out of the question.

(2.) That those words, “as the effects of his own prayers,” may likewise be pared off; for they are unnecessary and cumbersome, the argument being complete without them.

(3.) That, with or without them, the proposition is false; unless so far as it coincides with that you reject. For it is the believing those to be miracles which are not, that constitutes an enthusiast; not the representing them one way or the other; unless so far as it implies such a belief.

**12.** Upon my answer to the syllogism first proposed, you observe, “Thus” (by denying the latter part of the minor) “you clear yourself from the charge of enthusiasm, by acknowledging the cures to be supernatural and miraculous. Why then would you not speak out, and directly say, that you can work real and undoubted miracles? This would put the controversy between you and your opposers on a short foot, and be an effectual proof of the truth of your pretenses.” (*Second Letter* p. 142.)

## V.

**1.** I have in some measure explained myself on the head of miracles, in the Third Part of the *Farther Appeal*. But since you repeat the demand, (though without taking any notice of the arguments there advanced,) I will endeavor once more to give you a distinct, full, and determinate answer.

And,

(1.) I acknowledge that I have seen with my eyes, and heard with my ears, several things which, to the best of my judgment, cannot be accounted for by the ordinary course of natural causes; and which I therefore believe ought to be “ascribed to the extraordinary interposition of God.” If any man choose to style these *miracles*, I reclaim not. I have diligently inquired into the facts.

I have weighed the preceding and following circumstances. I have strove to account for them in a natural way. I could not, without doing violence to my reason. Not to go far back, I am clearly persuaded, that the sudden deliverance of John Haydon was one instance of this kind; and my own recovery, on May 10th, another. I cannot account for either of these in a natural way. Therefore I believe they were both supernatural.

I must

(2.) Observe, that the truth of these facts is supported by the same kind of proof, as that of all other facts is want to be, namely, the testimony of competent witnesses; and that the testimony here is in as high a degree as any reasonable man can desire. Those witnesses were many in number: They could not be deceived themselves; for the facts in question they saw with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears: Nor is it credible, that so many of them would combine together with a view of deceiving others; the greater part being men that feared God; as appeared by the general tenor of their lives.

Thus in the case of John Haydon, this thing was not contrived and executed in a corner, and in the presence of his own family only, or three or four persons prepared for the purpose: No, it was in an open street of the city of Bristol, at one or two in the afternoon; and, the doors being all open from the beginning, not only many of the neighbors from every side, but several others, (indeed whosoever desired it,) went in, till the house could contain no more. Nor yet does the account of my own illness and recovery depend, as you suppose, on my bare word. There were many witnesses both of my disorder on Friday and Saturday, and on my lying down most part of Sunday, a thing which they were well satisfied could not be the effect of a slight indisposition; and all who saw me that evening

plainly discerned, (what I could not wholly conceal,) that I was in pain; about two hundred of whom were present when I was seized with that cough, which cut me short, so that I could speak no more; till I cried out aloud, “Lord, increase my faith! Lord, confirm the word of thy grace!” The same persons saw and heard, that at that instant I changed my posture, and broke out into thanksgiving; that quickly after I stood upright, (which I could not before,) and showed no more sign either of sickness or pain.

Yet I must desire you well to observe, Thirdly, that my will, or choice, or desire, had no place either in this, or any case of this kind that has ever fallen under my notice. Five minutes before, I had no thought of this. I expected nothing less. I was willing to wait for a gradual recovery, in the ordinary use of outward means. I did not look for any other cure, till the moment before I found it. And it is my belief that the case was always the same with regard to the most “real and undoubted miracles.” I believe God never interposed his miraculous power, but according to his own sovereign will; not according to the will of man; neither of him by whom he wrought, nor of any other man whatsoever. The wisdom as well as the power are his: nor can I find that ever, from the beginning of the world, he lodged this power in any mere man, to be used whenever that man saw good.

Suppose, therefore, there was a man now on earth who did work “real and undoubted miracles;” I would ask, By whose power doth he work these? and at whose pleasure? his own, or God’s? Not his own; but God’s. But if so, then your demand is not on man, but on God. I cannot say it is modest, thus to challenge God; or well suiting the relation of a creature to his Creator.

**2.** However, I cannot but think, there have been already so many plain interpositions of divine power, as will shortly leave you without excuse, if you either deny or despise them. We desire no favor, but the justice that diligent inquiry may be made concerning them. We are ready to name the persons on whom that power was shown, which belongeth to none but God; (not one or two, or ten or twelve only;) to point out their places of abode; and we engage they shall answer every pertinent question, fairly and directly; and, if required, shall give all those answers upon oath, before any who are empowered so to receive them. It is our particular request that the circumstances which went before, which accompanied, and which followed after, the facts under consideration, may be thoroughly examined,

and punctually noted down. Let but this be done, (and is it not highly needful it should? at least, by those who would form an exact judgment,) and we have no fear that any reasonable man should scruple to say, "This hath God wrought!"

As there have been already so many instances of this kind, far beyond what we had dared to ask or think, I cannot take upon me to say whether or no it will please God to add to their number. I have not herein "known the mind of the Lord," neither am I "his counsellor." He may, or he may not; I cannot affirm or deny. I have no light, and I have no desire either way. "It is the Lord: Let him do what seemeth him good." I desire only to be as clay in his hand.

**3.** But what, if there were now to be wrought ever so many "real and undoubted miracles?" (I suppose you mean by undoubted such as, being sufficiently attested, ought not to be doubted of.) Why, "This," you say, "would put the controversy on a short foot, and be an effectual proof of the truth of your pretenses." By no means. As common as this assertion is, there is none upon earth more false. Suppose a teacher were now, on this very day, to work "real and undoubted miracles;" this would extremely little "shorten the controversy" between him and the greater part of his opposers: For all this would not force them to believe; but many would still stand just where they did before; seeing men may "harden their hearts" against miracles, as well as against arguments.

So men have done from the beginning of the world; even against such signal, glorious miracles, against such interpositions of the power of God, as may not be again till the consummation of all things. Permit me to remind you only of a few instances; and to observe that the argument holds *a fortiori*: For who will ever be impowered of God again to work such miracles as these were? Did Pharaoh look on all that Moses and Aaron wrought as an "effectual proof of the truth of their pretenses?" even when "the Lord made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided;" when "the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall unto them on the right hand, and on the left?" (**Exodus** 14:21, 22.) Nay,

*The wounded dragon raged in vain;  
And, fierce the utmost plague to brave,  
Madly he dared the parted main,  
And sunk beneath the o'erwhelming wave.*

Was all this “an effectual proof of the truth of their pretenses,” to the Israelites themselves? It was not. “They were” still “disobedient at the sea; even at the Red Sea!” Was the giving them day by day “bread from heaven,” “an effectual proof” to those “two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown,” who said, with Dathan and Abiram, “Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up?” (<sup>444</sup>Numbers 14:14;) nay, “when the ground clave asunder that was under them; and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up?” (Verse 32.) Neither was this an “effectual proof” to those who saw it with their eyes, and heard the cry of those that went down into the pit; but, the very next day, they “murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord!” (Verse 41.)

Was not the case generally the same with regard to the Prophets that followed? several of whom “stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire,” did many mighty works; yet their own people received them not. Yet “they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword;” they were “destitute, afflicted, tormented!” utterly contrary to the commonly received supposition, that the working real, undoubted miracles must bring all controversy to an end, and convince every gainsayer.

Let us come nearer yet. How stood the case between our Lord himself and his opposers? Did he not work “real and undoubted miracles?” And what was the effect? Still, when “he came to his own, his own received him not.” Still “he was despised and rejected of men.” Still it was a challenge not to be answered: “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?” After this, how can you imagine, that whoever works miracles must convince “all men of the truth of his pretenses?”

I would just remind you of only one instance more: “There sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother’s womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speak; who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said, with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and

walked.” Here was so undoubted a miracle, that the people “lifted up their voices, saying, The Gods are come down in the likeness of men.” But how long were even these convinced of the truth of his pretenses? Only till “there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium;” and then they stoned him (as they supposed) to death! (~~444~~ Acts 14:8, etc.) So certain it is, that no miracles whatever, which were ever yet wrought in the world, were effectual to prove the most glaring truth, to those that hardened their hearts against it.

**4.** And it will equally hold in every age and nation. “If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be” convinced of what they desire not to believe, “though one rose from the dead.” Without a miracle, without one rising from the dead, **εαν τις θελη το θελημα αυτου ποιειν**, “if any man be willing to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” But if he is not willing to do his will, he will never want an excuse, a plausible reason, for rejecting it. Yea, though ever so many miracles were wrought to confirm it. For let ever so much “light come into the world,” it will have no effect (such is the wise and just will of God) on those who “love darkness rather than light.” It will not convince those who do not simply desire to do the will of their Father which is in heaven; those who mind earthly things; who (if they do not continue in any gross outward sin, yet) love pleasure or ease; yet seek profit or power, preferment or reputation. Nothing will ever be an effectual proof to these of the holy and acceptable will of God, unless first their proud hearts be humbled, their stubborn wills bowed down, and their desires brought, at least in some degree, into obedience to the law of Christ.

Hence, although it should please God to work anew all the wonders that ever were wrought on the earth, still these men, however “wise and prudent” they may be in things relating to the present world, would fight against God and all his messengers, and that in spite of all these miracles. Meanwhile, God will reveal his truth unto babes, unto those who are meek and lowly, whose desires are in heaven, who want to “know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified.” These need no outward miracle to show them his will; they have a plain rule, — the written word. And “the anointing which they have received of him abideth in them, and teacheth them of all things.” (~~617~~ 1 John 2:27.) Through this they are enabled to bring

all doctrines “to the law and to the testimony:” And whatsoever is agreeable to this they receive, without waiting to see it attested by miracles; as, on the other hand, whatever is contrary to this they reject; nor can any miracles move them to receive it.

**5.** Yet I do not know that God hath anyway precluded himself from thus exerting his sovereign power, from working miracles in any kind or degree, in any age, to the end of the world. I do not recollect any scripture wherein we are taught, that miracles were to be confined within the limits either of the apostolic or the Cyprianic age; or of any period of time, longer or shorter, even till the restitution of all things. I have not observed, either in the Old Testament or the New, any intimation at all of this kind. St. Paul says, indeed, once, concerning two of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, (so, I think, that text is usually understood,) “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease.” But he does not say, either that these or any other miracles shall cease, till faith and hope shall cease also; till they all be swallowed up in the vision of God, and love be all in all.

I presume you will allow there is one kind of miracles (loosely speaking) which are not ceased; namely, *τερατα ψευδους*, “lying wonders,” diabolical miracles, or works beyond the virtue of natural causes, wrought by the power of evil spirits. Nor can you easily conceive that these will cease, as long as the father of lies is the prince of this world. And why should you think that the God of truth is less active than him, or that he will not have his miracles also? only, not as man wills, neither when he wills; but according to his own excellent wisdom and greatness.

**6.** But even if it were supposed that God does now work beyond the operation of merely natural causes, yet what impression would this make upon you, in the disposition your mind is now in? Suppose the trial were repeated, were made again tomorrow. One informs you the next day, “While a Clergyman was preaching yesterday, where I was, a man came who had been long ill of an incurable distemper. Prayer was made for him, and he was restored to perfect health.”

Suppose, now, that this were real fact: Perhaps you would scarce have patience to hear the account of it; but would cut it short, in the midst, with, “Do you tell this as something supernatural? Then miracles are not

ceased.” But if you should venture to ask, “Where was this, and who was the person that prayed?” and it was answered, “At the Foundry near Moorfields; the person who prayed was Mr. Wesley;” what a damp comes at once! What a weight falls on your mind, at the very first setting out! It is well if you have any heart or desire to move one step further. Or if you should, what a strong additional propensity do you now feel to deny the fact! And is there not a ready excuse for so doing? — “O, they who tell the story are doubtless his own people; most of whom, we may be sure, will say anything for him, and the rest will believe anything.” But if you at length allowed the fact, might you not find means to account for it by natural causes? “Great crowds, violent heats, with obstructions and irregularities of the blood and spirits,” will do wonders. If you could not but allow it was more than natural, might not some plausible reason be found for ranking it among the lying wonders, for ascribing it to the devil rather than God? And if, after all, you was convinced it was the finger of God, must you not still bring every doctrine advanced to the law and to the testimony, the only sure and infallible test of all? What, then, is the use of this continual demand, “Show us a sign, and we will believe?” What will you believe? I hope, no more than is written in the book of God. And thus far you might venture to believe, even without a miracle.

**7.** Let us consider this point yet a little farther. “What is it you would have us prove by miracles? the doctrines we preach?” We prove these by Scripture and reason; and, if need be, by antiquity. What else is it, then, that we are to prove by miracles? At length we have a distinct reply: “Wise and sober men will not otherwise be convinced,” (that is, unless you prove this by miracles,) “that God is, by the means of such Teachers, and such doctrines, working a great and extraordinary work in the earth.” (*Preface*, p. 6.)

So then the determinate point which you, in their name, call upon us to prove by miracles, is this, “that God is, by these Teachers, working a great and extraordinary work in the earth.”

What I mean by “a great and extraordinary work” is, the bringing multitudes of gross notorious sinners, in a short space, to the fear, and love, and service of God, to an entire change of heart and life.

Now, then, let us take a nearer view of the proposition, and see which part of it we are to prove by miracles.

“Is it,

(1.) That A. B. was, for many years, without God in the world, a common swearer, a drunkard, a Sabbath-breaker?

“Or,

(2.) That he is not so now?

“Or,

(3.) That he continued so till he heard these men preach; and from that time was another man?

“Not so. The proper way to prove these facts is, by the testimony of competent witnesses. And these witnesses are ready, whenever required, to give full evidence of them.

“Or would you have us prove by miracles,

(4.) That this was not done by our own power or holiness? that God only is able to raise the dead, to quicken those who are dead in trespasses and sins?”

Surely no. Whosoever believes the Scriptures will want no new proof of this.

Where then is the wisdom of those men who demand miracles in proof of such a proposition? one branch of which, “that such sinners were reformed by the means of these Teachers,” being a plain fact, can only be proved by testimony, as all other facts are; and the other, “That this is a work of God, and a great and more than ordinary work,” needs no proof, as carrying its own evidence to every thinking man.

**8.** To sum up this: No truly wise or sober man can possibly desire or expect miracles to prove either,

(1.) That these doctrines are true; — this must be decided by Scripture and reason; or,

**(2.)** That these facts are true; — this can only be proved by testimony; or,

**(3.)** That to change sinners from darkness to light, is the work of God alone; only using what instruments he pleases; — this is glaringly self-evident; or,

**(4.)** That such a change wrought in so many notorious sinners, within so short a time, is a great and extraordinary work of God: this also carries its own evidence. What then is it which remains to be proved by miracles? Perhaps you will say, It is this: “That God hath called or sent you to do this.” Nay, this is implied in the third of the foregoing propositions. If God has actually used us therein, if his work hath in fact prospered in our hands, then he hath called or sent us to do this.

I entreat reasonable men to weigh this thoroughly, whether the fact does not plainly prove the call; whether He who enables us thus to save souls alive, does not commission us so to do; whether, by giving us power to pluck these brands out of the burning, He does not authorize us to exert it?

O that it were possible for you to consider calmly, whether the success of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even as it is preached by us, the least of his servants, be not itself a miracle, never to be forgotten! one which cannot be denied, as being visible at this day, not in one, but a hundred places; one which cannot be accounted for by the ordinary course of any natural cause whatsoever; one which cannot be ascribed, with any color of reason, to diabolical agency; and, lastly, one which will bear the infallible test, — the trial of the written word.

## VI.

**1.** But here I am aware of abundance of objections. You object, That to speak anything of myself, of what I have done, or am doing now, is mere boasting and vanity. This charge you frequently repeat. So, p. 102: “The following page is full of boasting.” “You boast very much of the numbers you have converted;” (p. 113;) and again, “As to myself; I hope I shall never be led to imitate you in boasting.” I think therefore it is needful, once

for all, to examine this charge thoroughly; and to show distinctly what that good thing is which you disguise under this bad name.

**(1.)** From the year 1725 to 1729 I preached much, but saw no fruit of my labor. Indeed it could not be that I should; for I neither laid the foundation of repentance, nor of believing the gospel; taking it for granted, that all to whom I preached were believers, and that many of them “needed no repentance.”

**(2.)** From the year 1729 to 1734, laying a deeper foundation of repentance, I saw a little fruit. But it was only a little; and no wonder: For I did not preach faith in the blood of the covenant.

**(3.)** From 1734 to 1738, speaking more of faith in Christ, I saw more fruit of my preaching, and visiting from house to house, than ever I had done before; though I know not if any of those who were outwardly reformed were inwardly and thoroughly converted to God.

**(4.)** From 1738 to this time, speaking continually of Jesus Christ, laying Him only for the foundation of the whole building, making him all in all, the first and the last; preaching only on this plan, “The kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel;” the “word of God ran” as fire among the stubble; it was “glorified” more and more; multitudes crying out, “What must we do to be saved?” and afterwards witnessing, “By grace we are saved through faith.”

**(5.)** I considered deeply with myself what I ought to do; whether to declare the things I had seen, or not. I consulted the most serious friends I had. They all agreed, I ought to declare them; that the work itself was of such a kind, as ought in nowise to be concealed; and indeed, that the unusual circumstances now attending it, made it impossible that it should.

**(6.)** This very difficulty occurred: “Will not my speaking of this be boasting? at least, will it not be accounted so?” They replied, “If you speak of it as your own work, it will be vanity and boasting all over; but if you ascribe it wholly to God, if you give him all the praise, it will not. And if, after this, some will account it so still, you must be content, and bear the burden.”

(7.) I yielded, and transcribed my papers for the press; only laboring, as far as possible, to “render unto God the things which are God’s,” to give him the praise of his own work.

2. But this very thing you improve into a fresh objection. If I ascribe anything to God, it is *enthusiasm*. If I do not (or if I do) it is *vanity and boasting*, supposing me to mention it at all. What then can I do to escape your censure? “Why, be silent; say nothing at all.” I cannot, I dare not. Were I thus to please men, I could not be the servant of Christ.

You do not appear to have the least idea or conception of what is in the heart of one whom it pleases Him that worketh all in all to employ in a work of this kind. He is in nowise forward to be at all employed therein; he starts back, again and again; not only because he readily foresees what shame, care, sorrow, reproach, what loss of friends, and of all that the world accounts dear, will inevitably follow; but much more, because he (in some measure) knows himself. This chiefly it is which constrains him to cry out, (and that many times, in the bitterness of his soul, when no human eye seeth him,) “O Lord, send by whom thou wilt send, only send not me! What am I? A worm! A dead dog! A man unclean in heart and lips!” And when he dares no longer gainsay or resist, when he is at last “thrust out into the harvest,” he looketh on the right hand and on the left, he takes every step with fear and trembling, and with the deepest sense (such as words cannot express) of “Who is sufficient for these things?” Every gift which he has received of God for the furtherance of his word, whether of nature or grace, heightens this fear, and increases his jealousy over himself; knowing that so much the stricter must the inquiry be, when he gives an account of his stewardship. He is most of all jealous over himself when the work of the Lord prospers in his hand. He is then amazed and confounded before God. Shame covers his face. Yet when he sees that he ought “to praise the Lord for his goodness, and to declare the wonders which he doeth for the children of men,” he is in a strait between two; he knows not which way to turn; he cannot speak; he dares not be silent. It may be, for a time he “keeps his mouth with a bridle; he holds his peace even from good. But his heart is hot within him,” and constrains him at length to declare what God hath wrought. And this he then doeth in all simplicity, with “great plainness of speech,” desiring only to commend himself to Him who “searcheth the heart and trieth the reins;” and

(whether his words are the savor of life or of death to others) to have that witness in himself, “As of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.” If any man counts this boasting, he cannot help it. It is enough that a higher Judge standeth at the door.

**3.** But you may say, “Why do you talk of the success of the gospel in England, which was a Christian country before you was born?” Was it indeed? Is it so at this day? I would explain myself a little on this head also.

And,

**(1.)** None can deny, that the people of England, in general, are called Christians. They are called so, a few only excepted, by others, as well as by themselves. But I presume no man will say, that the name makes the thing; that men are Christians, barely because they are called so.

**(2.)** It must be allowed, that the people of England, generally speaking, have been christened or baptized. But neither can we infer, “These were once baptized; therefore they are Christians now.”

**(3.)** It is allowed, that many of those who were once baptized, and are called Christians to this day, hear the word of God, attend public prayers, and partake of the Lord’s Supper. But neither does this prove that they are Christians. For, notwithstanding this, some of them live in open sin; and others (though not conscious to themselves of hypocrisy, yet) are utter strangers to the religion of the heart; are full of pride, vanity, covetousness, ambition; of hatred, anger, malice, or envy; and, consequently, are no more scriptural Christians, than the open drunkard or common swearer.

Now, these being removed, where are the Christians, from whom we may properly term England a Christian country? the men who have the mind which was in Christ, and who walk as he also walked; whose inmost soul is renewed after the image of God; and who are outwardly holy, as He who hath called them is holy? There are doubtless a few such to be found. To deny this would be want of candor. But how few! how thinly scattered up and down! And as for a Christian visible Church, or a body of Christians visibly united together, where is this to be seen?

*Ye different sects, who all declare,  
Lo! here is Christ, or, Christ is there!  
Your stronger proofs divinely give,  
And show me where the Christians live!*

And what use is it of, what good end does it serve, to term England a Christian country? (Although it is true, most of the natives are called Christians, have been baptized, frequent the ordinances; and although a real Christian is here and there to be found, “as a light shining in a dark place.”) Does it do any honor to our great Master, among those who are not called by his name? Does it recommend Christianity to the Jews, the Mahometans, or the avowed Heathens? Surely no one can conceive it does. It only makes Christianity stink in their nostrils. Does it answer any good end with regard to those on whom this worthy name is called? I fear not; but rather an exceeding bad one. For, does it not keep multitudes easy in their heathen practice? Does it not make or keep still greater numbers satisfied with their heathen tempers? Does it not directly tend to make both the one and the other imagine, that they are what indeed they are not; that they are Christians, while they are utterly without Christ, and without God in the world? To close this point: If men are not Christians till they are renewed after the image of Christ, and if the people of England in general are not thus renewed, why do we term them so? The God of this world hath long blinded their hearts. Let us do nothing to increase that blindness; but rather labor to recover them from that strong delusion, that they may no longer believe a lie.

**4.** Let us labor to convince all mankind, that to be a real Christian, is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and to serve him with all our strength; to love our neighbor as ourselves; and therefore do unto every man as we would he should do unto us. Nay, you say, “Had you confined yourselves to these great points, there would have been no objection against your doctrine. But the doctrines you have distinguished yourselves by, are not the love of God and man, but many false and pernicious errors.” (Page 104.)

I have again and again, with all the plainness I could, declared what our constant doctrines are; whereby we are distinguished only from Heathens, or nominal Christians; not from any that worship God in spirit and in truth. Our main doctrines, which include all the rest, are three, — that of

repentance, of faith, and of holiness. The first of these we account, as it were, the porch of religion; the next, the door; the third, religion itself.

That repentance or conviction of sin, which is always previous to faith, (either in a higher or lower degree, as it pleases God,) we describe in words to this effect: —

“When men feel in themselves the heavy burden of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, behold with the eye of their mind the horror of hell; they tremble, they quake, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, and cannot but accuse themselves, and open their grief unto Almighty God, and call unto him for mercy. This being done seriously, their mind is so occupied, partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from this danger of hell and damnation, that all desire of meat and drink is laid apart, and loathing of all worldly things and pleasure cometh in place. So that nothing then liketh them more, than to weep, to lament, to mourn; and both with words and behavior of body to show themselves weary of life.”

Now, permit me to ask, What, if, before you had observed that these were the very words of our own Church, one of your acquaintance or parishioners had come and told you, that ever since he heard a sermon at the Foundry, he “saw damnation” before him, “and beholden with the eye of his mind the horror of hell?” What, if he had “trembled and quaked,” and been so taken up “partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from the danger of hell and damnation,” as to “weep, to lament, to mourn, and both with words and behavior to show himself weary of life?” Would you have scrupled to say, “Here is another ‘deplorable instance’ of the ‘Methodists driving men to distraction!’ See, ‘into what excessive terrors, frights, doubts, and perplexities, they throw weak and well-meaning men! quite oversetting their understandings and judgments, and making them liable to all these miseries.’”

I dare not refrain from adding one plain question, which I beseech you to answer, not to me, but to God: Have you ever experienced this repentance yourself? Did you ever “feel in yourself that heavy burden of sin?” of sin in general, more especially, inward sin; of pride, anger, lust, vanity? of (what is all sin in one) that carnal mind which is enmity, essential enmity,

against God? Do you know by experience what it is to “behold with the eye of the mind the horror of hell?” Was “your mind” ever so “taken up, partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from this danger of hell and damnation, that even all desire of meat and drink” was taken away, and you “loathed all worldly things and pleasure?” Surely if you had known what it is to have the “arrows of the Almighty” thus “sticking fast in you,” you could not so lightly have condemned those who now cry out, “The pains of hell come about me; the sorrows of death compass me, and the overflowings of ungodliness make me afraid.”

**5.** Concerning the gate of religion, — (if it may be allowed so to speak,) the true, Christian, saving faith, — we believe it implies abundantly more than an assent to the truth of the Bible. “Even the devils believe that Christ was born of a virgin; that he wrought all kind of miracles; that for our sakes he suffered a most painful death to redeem us from death everlasting. These articles of our faith the very devils believe, and so they believe all that is written in the Old and New Testament. And yet, for all this faith, they be but devils. They remain still in their damnable estate, lacking the very true Christian faith.

“The right and true Christian faith is, not only to believe that the Holy Scriptures and the articles of our faith are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence to be saved from everlasting damnation, through Christ.” Perhaps it may be expressed more clearly thus: “A sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God.”

For giving this account of Christian faith, (as well as the preceding account of repentance, both which I have here also purposely described in the very terms of the Homilies,) I have been again and again, for near these eight years past, accused of enthusiasm; sometimes by those who spoke to my face, either in conversation, or from the pulpit: but more frequently by those who chose to speak in my absence; and not seldom from the press. I wait for those who judge this to be enthusiasm, to bring forth their strong reasons. Till then, I must continue to account all these the “words of truth and soberness.”

**6.** Religion itself (I choose to use the very words wherein I described it long ago) we define, “The loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves; and in that love abstaining from all evil, and doing all possible good to all men.” The same meaning we have sometimes expressed a little more at large thus: “Religion we conceive to be no other than love; the love of God and of all mankind; the loving God ‘with all our heart, and soul, and strength,’ as having ‘first loved us,’ as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth, as our own soul.

“This love we believe to be the medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness going hand in hand. There is humbleness of mind, gentleness, longsuffering, the whole image of God, and, at the same time, a peace that passeth all understanding, and joy unspeakable and full of glory.

“This religion we long to see established in the world, a religion of love, and joy, and peace; having its seat in the heart, in the inmost soul, but ever showing itself by its fruits; continually springing forth, not only in all innocence, (for love worketh no ill to his neighbor,) but likewise in every kind of beneficence, spreading virtue and happiness all around it.”

If this can be proved by Scripture or reason to be enthusiastic or erroneous doctrine, we will then plead guilty to the indictment of “teaching error and enthusiasm.” But if this be the genuine religion of Christ, then will all who advance this charge against us be found false witnesses before God, in the day when he shall judge the earth.

**7.** However, with regard to the fruits of our teaching, you say, “It is to be feared, the numbers of serious men who have been perplexed and deluded are much greater than the numbers of notorious sinners who have been brought to repentance and good life.” (Page 113.) “Indeed, if you could prove that the Methodists were, in general, very wicked people before they followed you, and that all you have been teaching them is, the love of God and their neighbor, and a care to keep his commandments, which accordingly they have done since, you would stop the mouths of all

adversaries at once. But we have great reason to believe that the generality of the Methodists, before they became so, were serious, regular, and well-disposed people.” (Page 103.)

If the question were proposed, “Which are greater, the numbers of serious men who have been perplexed and deluded, or of notorious sinners who have been brought to repentance and good life,” by these Preachers, throughout England, within seven years? it might be difficult for you to fix the conclusion. For England is a place of wide dimensions; nor is it easy to make a satisfactory computation, unless you confine yourself within a smaller compass. Suppose then we were to contract the question, in order to make it a little less unwieldy. We will bound our inquiry, for the present, within a square of three or four miles. It may be certainly known by candid men, both what has been and what is now done within this distance; and from hence they may judge of those fruits elsewhere, which they cannot be so particularly informed of.

Inquire then, “Which are greater, the numbers of serious men, perplexed and deluded by these Teachers, or of notorious sinners brought to repentance and good life,” within the forest of Kingswood? Many indeed of the inhabitants are nearly as they were; are not much better or worse for their preaching; because the neighboring Clergy and Gentry have successfully labored to deter them from hearing it. But between three and four hundred of those who would not be deterred are now under the care of those Preachers. Now, what number of these were serious Christians before? Were fifty? Were twenty? Were ten? Peradventure there might five such be found. But it is a question whether there could or no. The remainder were gross, open sinners, common swearers, drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, whoremongers, plunderers, robbers, implacable, unmerciful, wolves and bears in the shape of men. Do you desire instances of more “notorious sinners” than these? I know not if Turkey or Japan can afford them. And what do you include in “repentance and good life?” Give the strictest definition thereof that you are able; and I will undertake, these once notorious sinners shall be weighed in that balance, and not found wanting.

**8.** Not that all the Methodists (so called) “were very wicked people before they followed us.” There are those among them, and not a few, who are

able to stop the boasting of those that despise them, and to say, “Whereinsoever any of you is bold, I am bold also:” Only they “count all these things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.” But these we found, as it were, when we sought them not. We went forth to “seek that which was lost;” (more eminently lost;) “to call” the most flagrant, hardened desperate “sinners to repentance.” To this end we preached in the Horsefair at Bristol, in Kingswood, in Newcastle; among the colliers in Staffordshire, and the tanners in Cornwall; in Southwark, Wapping, Moorfields, Drury-Lane, at London. Did any man ever pick out such places as these, in order to field “serious, regular, well-disposed people?” How many such might then be in any of them, I know not. But this I know, that four in five of those who are now with us were not of that number, but were wallowing in their blood, till God by us said unto them, “Live.”

Sir, I willingly put the whole cause on this issue: What are the general consequences of this preaching? Are there more tares or wheat? more “good men destroyed,” (that is the proper question,) or “wicked men saved?” The last place where we began constant preaching is a part of Wiltshire and Somersetshire, near Bath. Now, let any man inquire at Rhode, Bradford, Wrexall, or among the colliers at Coleford,

- (1.) What kind of people were those “before they followed these men?”
- (2.) What are the main doctrines they have been teaching for this twelvemonth?
- (3.) What effect have these doctrines upon their followers? What manner of lives do they lead now?

And if you do not find,

- (1.) That three in four of these were, two years ago, notoriously wicked men;
- (2.) That the main doctrines they have heard since, were, “Love God and your neighbor, and carefully keep his commandments;” and,
- (3.) That they have since exercised themselves herein, and continue so to do; — I say, if you, or any reasonable man, who will be at the pains

to inquire, does not find this to be an unquestionable fact, I will openly acknowledge myself an enthusiast, or whatsoever else you shall please to style me.

Only one caution I would give to such an inquirer: Let him not ask the colliers of Coleford, “Were not the generality of you, before you followed these men, serious, regular, well-disposed people?” Were you not “offended at the profaneness and debauchery of the age?” And “was it not this disposition which at first made you liable to receive these impressions?” (*Second Letter*, p. 103.) Because if he talk thus to some of those who do not yet “follow these men,” perhaps he will not live to bring back their answer.

**9.** But will this, or a thousand such instances as this, “stop the mouths of all adversaries at once?” O Sir, would one expect such a thought as this in one that had read the Bible? What, if you could convert as many sinners as St. Paul himself? Would that “stop the mouths of all your adversaries?” Yea, if you could convert three thousand at one sermon, still you would be so far from “stopping all their mouths at once,” that the greater part of them would gnash upon you with their teeth, and cry, “Away with such a fellow from the earth!”

I never, therefore, expect “to persuade the world,” the majority of mankind, that I “have been,” for some years, “advancing nothing” but what has a clear, immediate connection with “the true knowledge and love of God;” that God hath been pleased to use me, a weak, vile worm, in reforming many of my fellow-sinners, and making them, at this day, living witnesses of “inward and pure religion;” and that many of these, “from living in all sin, are quite changed, are become” so far “holy, that” though they are not “free from all sin,” yet no sin hath dominion over them. And yet I do firmly believe, “it is nothing but downright prejudice, to deny or oppose any of these particulars.” (Preface, page 5.)

“Allow Mr. Wesley,” you say, “but these few points, and he will defend his conduct beyond exception.” That is most true. If I have indeed “been advancing nothing but the true knowledge and love of God;” if God has made me an instrument in reforming many sinners, and bringing them to “inward and pure religion;” and if many of these continue holy to this day, and free from all wilful sin, then may I, even I, use those awful words, “He

that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me.” But I never expect the world to allow me one of these points. However, I must go on as God shall enable me. I must lay out whatsoever he intrusts me with, (whether others will believe I do it or no,) in advancing the true Christian knowledge of God, and the love and fear of God among men; in reforming (if so be it please him to use me still) those who are yet without God in the world; and in propagating inward and pure religion, — righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

**10.** But you believe, I only corrupt those who were good Christians before, teaching them to revile and censure their neighbors, and to abuse the Clergy, notwithstanding all their meekness and gentleness, as I do myself. “I must declare,” say you, “we have, in general, answered your pretense with all meekness and temper; the railing and reviling has been chiefly on the side of the Methodists.” (*Second Letter*, page 16.)

Your first charge ran thus: “How have such abuses as these been thrown out by you against our regular Clergy, not the highest or the worthiest excepted!” (*Remarks*, p. 15.) I answered, “I am altogether clear in this matter, as often as it has been objected: Neither do I desire to receive any other treatment from the Clergy, than they have received from me to this day.” (Page 399.)

You reply,

**(1.)** “One instance of your misrepresenting and injuring a Preacher of our Church I mentioned.” (*Second Letter*, p. 100.) *Mentioned!* Well, but did you *prove* it was an injury or misrepresentation? I know not that you once attempted it.

**(2.)** You next quote part of a letter from the Third Journal; (vol. I. p. 184;) wherein, according to your account, the “most considerable of our Clergy are abused, and at once accused in a very gross manner.” (*Second Letter*, p. 106.) Set down the whole paragraph, and I will prove that this also is naked truth, and no abuse at all. You say,

**(3.)** “You approved of Whitefield’s railing against the Clergy;” that is, I say, “Mr. Whitefield preached concerning the ‘Holy Ghost, which all who believe are to receive;’ not without a just, though severe, censure of those who preach as if there were no Holy Ghost.” (Vol. I. p. 210.)

Nor is this railing, but melancholy truth. I have myself heard several preach in this manner.

(4.) You cite my words: “Woe unto you, ye blind leaders of the blind! How long will you pervert the right ways of the Lord?” and add, “I appeal to yourself, whether you did not design this reflection against the Clergy in general who differ from you.” No more than I did against Moses and Aaron. I expressly specify whom I design: “Ye who tell the mourners in Zion, Much religion hath made you mad.” You say,

(5.) (with a N. B.,) “All the Clergy who differ from you, you style so, page 225; in which, and the foregoing page, you causelessly slander them as speaking of their own holiness as that for the sake of which, on account of which, we are justified before God.”

Let any serious person read over those pages. I therein slander no man: I speak what I know; what I have both heard and read. The men are alive, and the books are extant. And the same conclusion I now defend, touching that part of the Clergy who preach or write thus; viz., it they preach the truth as it is in Jesus, I am found a false witness before God. But if I preach the way of God in truth, then they are blind leaders of the blind.

(6.) You quote those words, “Nor can I be said to intrude into the labors of those who do not labor at all, but suffer thousands of those for whom Christ died to perish for lack of knowledge.” (Vol. I. p. 214.) I wrote that letter near Kingswood. I would to God the observation were not terribly true!

(7.) The first passage you cite from the “Earnest Appeal,” (pages 25, 26,) evidently relates to a few only among the Clergy; and if the charge be true but of one in five hundred, it abundantly supports my reasoning.

(8.) In the next, (*Ibid.* page 30,) I address all those, and those only, who affirm that I preach for gain.

You conclude: “The reader has now before him the manner in which you have been pleased to treat the Clergy; and your late sermon is too fresh an instance of the like usage of the Universities.” (*Second Letter*, p. 107.) It is an instance of speaking the truth in love. So I desire all mankind may use

me. Nor could I have said less either to the University or the Clergy without sinning against God and my own soul.

**11.** But I must explain myself a little on that practice which you so often term “abusing the Clergy.” I have many times great sorrow and heaviness in my heart on account of these my brethren. And this sometimes constrains me to speak to them, in the only way which is now in my power; and sometimes, though rarely, to speak of them; of a few, not all in general. In either case, I take an especial care,

(1.) To speak nothing but the truth.

(2.) To speak this with all plainness. And,

(3.) With love, and in the spirit of meekness. Now, if you will call this *abusing, railing, or reviling*, you must.

But still I dare not refrain from it. I must thus rail, thus abuse sinners of all sorts and degrees, unless I will perish with them.

When I first read your declaration, that our brethren “in general had treated us with all meekness and temper,” I had thoughts of spreading before you a few of the flowers which they have strewed upon us with no sparing hand. But, on reflection, I judged it better to forbear. Let them die and be forgotten!

As to those of the people called *Methodists*, whom you suppose to “rail at and abuse the Clergy,” and to “revile and censure their neighbors,” I can only say, Which are they! Show me the men. And if it appear, that any of those under my care habitually “censure” or “revile” others, whether Clergy or laity, I will make them an example, for the benefit of all the rest.

Touching you, I believe I was afraid without cause. I do not think you advanced a wilful untruth. This was a rash word. I hereby openly retract it, and ask pardon of God and you.

To draw toward a conclusion: Whosoever they are that “despise me, and make no account of my labors,” I know that they are “not in vain in the Lord;” and that I have not “fought as one that beateth the air.” I still see (and I praise “the Father of Lights, from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth”) a continual increase of pure religion and undefiled, of the love

of God and man, of the “wisdom” which is “pure and peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and of good fruits.” I see more and more of those “who before lived in a thorough contempt of God’s ordinances, and of all duties, now zealously discharging their duties to God and man, and walking in all his ordinances blameless.” A few indeed I have seen draw back to perdition, chiefly through a fear of being “righteous overmuch.” And here and there one has fallen into Calvinism, or turned aside to the Moravians. But, I doubt not, these “are in a better state” than they were before they heard us. Admit they are in error, yea, and die therein, yet who dares affirm they will perish everlastingly? But had they died in gross sin, we are sure they had fallen into “the fire that never shall be quenched.”

I have now considered, as far as my time would permit, (not everything in your letter, whether of moment or no, but,) those points which I conceived to be of the greatest weight. That God may lead us both into all truth, and that we may not drop our love in the pursuit of it, is the continual prayer of,

Reverend Sir,  
Your friend and servant for Christ’s sake,

**JOHN WESLEY.**

***June 17, 1746***

## A LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP  
OF LONDON;OCCASIONED BY HIS LORDSHIP'S  
LATE CHARGE TO HIS CLERGY

Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing, my Maker would soon take me away. <sup><8221</sup>Job 32:21, 22.

My Lord,

## I.

1. WHEN abundance of persons have for several years laid to my charge things that I knew not, I have generally thought it my duty to pass it over in silence, to be "as one that heard not." But the case is different when a person of your Lordship's character calls me forth to answer for myself. Silence now might be interpreted contempt. It might appear like a sullen disregard, a withholding honor from him to whom honor is due, were it only on account of his high office in the Church, more especially when I apprehend so eminent a person as this to be under considerable mistakes concerning me. Were I now to be silent, were I not to do what was in my power for the removal of those mistakes, I could not "have a conscience void of offense," either "towards God or towards man."

2. But I am sensible how difficult it is to speak in such a manner as I ought, and as I desire to do. When your Lordship published those queries,

under the title of “Observations,” I did not lie under the same difficulty; because, as your name was not inscribed, I had “the liberty to stand, as it were, on even ground.” But I must now always remember to whom I speak. And may the God “whom I serve in the gospel of his Son,” enable me to do it with deep seriousness of spirit, with modesty and humility; and, at the same time, with the utmost plainness of speech; seeing we must “both stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.”

**3.** In this, then, I entreat your Lordship to bear with me; and in particular, when I speak of myself, (how tender a point!) just as freely as I would of another man. Let not this be termed boasting. Is there not a cause? Can I refrain from speaking, and be guiltless? And if I speak at all, ought I not to speak (what appears to me to be) the whole truth? Does not your Lordship desire that I should do this? I will then, God being my helper. And you will bear with me in my folly, (if such it is,) with my speaking in the simplicity of my heart.

**4.** Your Lordship begins, “There is another species of enemies, who give shameful disturbance to the parochial Clergy, and use very unwarrantable methods to prejudice their people against them, and to seduce their flocks from them, the Methodists and Moravians, who agree in annoying the established ministry, and in drawing over to themselves the lowest and most ignorant of the people, by pretenses to greater sanctity.” (*Charge*, p. 4.)

But have no endeavors been used to show them their error? Yes; your Lordship remarks, “Endeavors have not been wanting. But though these endeavors have caused some abatement in the pomp and grandeur with which these people for some time acted,” (truly, one would not have expected it from them!) “yet they do not seem to have made any impression upon their leaders.” (*Ibid.*, p. 6.)

Your Lordship adds, “Their innovations in points of discipline I do not intend to enter into at present. But to inquire what the doctrines are which they spread.” (*Ibid.* p. 7.) “Doctrines big with pernicious influences upon practice.” (*Ibid.* p. 8.)

Six of these your Lordship mentions, after having premised, “It is not at all needful, to the end of guarding against them, to charge the particular

tenets upon the particular persons among them.” (*Ibid.* p. 7.) Indeed, my Lord, it is needful in the highest degree. For if the Minister who is to guard his people, either against Peter Bohler, Mr. Whitefield, or me, does not know what our particular tenets are, he must needs “run as uncertainly, and fight as one that beateth the air.”

I will fairly own which of these belong to me. The indirect practices which your Lordship charges upon me may then be considered; together with the consequences of these doctrines, and your Lordship’s instructions to the Clergy.

**5.** “The First that I shall take notice of,” says your Lordship, “is the Antinomian doctrine.” (*Ibid.* p. 8.) The Second, “that Christ has done all, and left nothing for us to do, but to believe.” (*Ibid.* p. 9.) These belong not to me. I am unconcerned therein. I have earnestly opposed, but did never teach or embrace, them.

“There is another notion,” your Lordship says, “which we find propagated throughout the writings of those people, and that is, the making inward, secret, and sudden impulses the guides of their actions, resolutions, and designs.” (*Ibid.* p. 14.)

Mr. Church urged the same objection before: “Instead of making the word of God the rule of his actions, he follows only his secret impulse.” I beg leave to return the same answer. “In the whole compass of language there is not a proposition which less belongs to me than this. I have declared again and again, that I make the word of God ‘the rule’ of all my actions; and that I no more follow any ‘secret impulse’ instead thereof, than I follow Mahomet or Confucius” (*Answer to Mr. Church.*)

**6.** Before I proceed, suffer me to observe, here are three grievous errors charged on the Moravians, Mr. Whitefield, and me, conjointly, in none of which I am any more concerned than in the doctrine of the metempsychosis! But it was “not needful to charge particular tenets on particular persons.” Just as needful, my Lord, as it is not to put a stumbling-blocks in the way of our brethren; not to lay them under an almost insuperable temptation of condemning the innocent with the guilty. I beseech your Lordship to answer in your own conscience before God, whether you did not foresee how many of your hearers would charge these

tenets upon me; nay, whether you did not design they should. If so, my Lord, is this Christianity? Is it humanity? Let me speak plain. Is it honest Heathenism?

**7.** I am not one jot more concerned in instantaneous justification, as your Lordship explains it, viz., “A sudden, instantaneous justification, by which the person receives from God a certain seal of his salvation, or an absolute assurance of being saved at last.” (*Charge*, p. 11.) “Such an instantaneous working of the Holy Spirit as finishes the business of salvation once for all.” (*Ibid.*) I neither teach nor believe it; and am therefore clear of all the consequences that may arise therefrom. I believe “a gradual improvement in grace and goodness,” I mean, in the knowledge and love of God, is a good “testimony of our present sincerity towards God;” although I dare not say, It is “the only true ground of humble assurance,” or the only foundation on which a Christian builds his “hopes of acceptance and salvation.” For I think, “other foundation” of these “can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ.”

**8.** To the charge of holding “sinless perfection,” as your Lordship states it, I might likewise plead, Not guilty; seeing one ingredient thereof, in your Lordship’s account, is “freedom from temptation.” (*Ibid.* p. 17.) Whereas I believe, “there is no such perfection in this life as implies an entire deliverance from manifold temptations.” But I will not decline the charge. I will repeat once more my coolest thoughts upon this head; and that in the very terms which I did several years ago, as I presume your Lordship cannot be ignorant: —

“What, it may be asked, do you mean by ‘one that is perfect,’ or, ‘one that is as his Master?’ We mean one in whom is ‘the mind which was in Christ,’ and who so ‘walketh as He walked;’ a man that ‘hath clean hands and a pure heart;’ or that is ‘cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit;’ one ‘in whom there is no occasion of stumbling,’ and who, accordingly, ‘doth not commit sin.’ To declare this a little more particularly. We understand by that scriptural expression, ‘a perfect man,’ one in whom God hath fulfilled his faithful word: ‘From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. I will also save you from all your uncleanness.’ We understand hereby, one whom God hath

sanctified throughout, even in ‘body, soul, and spirit;’ one who ‘walketh in the light, as He is in the light,’ in whom ‘is no darkness at all;’ the blood of Jesus Christ his Son having ‘cleansed him from all sin.’

“This man can now testify to all mankind, ‘I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet I live not, but Christ liveth in me.’ He ‘is holy, as God who called him is holy,’ both in life, and ‘in all manner of conversation.’ He ‘loveth the Lord his God with all his heart, and serveth him with all his strength.’ He ‘loveth his neighbor’ (every man) ‘as himself;’ yea, ‘as Christ loved us;’ them in particular that ‘despitefully use him and persecute him,’ because ‘they know not the Son, neither the Father.’ Indeed, his soul is all love, filled with ‘bowels of mercies, kindness, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering.’ And his life agreeth thereto, full of ‘the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love.’ And ‘whatsoever he doeth, either in word or deed,’ he doeth ‘it all in the name,’ in the love and power, ‘of the Lord Jesus.’ In a word, he doeth the will of God ‘on earth, as it is done in heaven.’

“This is to be ‘a perfect man,’ to be ‘sanctified throughout, created anew in Jesus Christ;’ even ‘to have a heart so all-flaming with the love of God,’ (to use Archbishop Usher’s words,) ‘as continually to offer up every thought, word, and work, as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable unto God through Christ.’ In every thought of our hearts, in every word of our tongues, in every work of our hands, ‘to show forth his praise who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.’ O that both we, and all who seek the Lord Jesus in sincerity, may thus ‘be made perfect in one!’”

**9.** I conjure you, my Lord, by the mercies of God, if these are not the words of truth and soberness, point me out wherein I have erred from the truth; show me clearly wherein I have spoken either beyond or contrary to the word of God. But might I not humbly entreat, that your Lordship, in doing this, would abstain from such expressions as these: “If they will but put themselves under their direction and discipline, — after their course of discipline is once over,” (*ibid.* p 15,) as not suitable either to the weight of the subject, or the dignity of your Lordship’s character. And might I not

expect something more than these loose assertions, that this is “a delusion altogether groundless; a notion contrary to the whole tenor both of the Old and New Testament;” that “the Scriptures forbid all thought of it, as vain, arrogant, and presumptuous;” that they “represent all mankind, without distinction, as subject to sin and corruption” (*subject to sin and corruption!* strong words!) “during their continuance in this world; and require no more than an honest desire and endeavor to find ourselves less and less in a state of imperfection.” (*Ibid.* pp. 15, 16.)

Is it not from your Lordship’s entirely mistaking the question, not at all apprehending what perfection I teach, that you go on to guard against the same imaginary consequences, as your Lordship did in the “Observations?” Surely, my Lord, you never gave yourself the trouble to read the answer given in the “Farther Appeal,” to every objection which you now urge afresh; seeing you do not now appear to know any more of my sentiments than if you had never proposed one question, nor received one answer, upon the subject!

**10.** If your Lordship designed to show my real sentiments concerning the last doctrine which you mention, as one would imagine by your adding, “These are his own words,” (*ibid.* p. 18,) should you not have cited all my own words? at least all the words of that paragraph, and not have mangled it as Mr. Church did before?

It runs thus: “Saturday, 28. I showed at large, in order to answer those who taught that none but they who are full of faith and the Holy Ghost ought ever to communicate,

(1.) That the Lord’s supper was ordained by God to be a means of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace, according to their several necessities.

(2.) That the persons for whom it was ordained are all those who know and feel that they want the grace of God, either to restrain them from sin, or to ‘show their sins forgiven,’ or to ‘renew their souls’ in the image of God.

(3.) That inasmuch as we come to his table, not to give him anything, but to receive whatsoever he sees best for us, there is no previous

preparation indispensably necessary, but a desire to receive whatsoever he pleases to give. And,

**(4.)** That no fitness is required at the time of communicating, but a sense of our state, of our utter sinfulness and helplessness; every one who knows he is fit for hell, being just fit to come to Christ, in this, as well as all other ways of his appointment.” (Vol. I.)

In the Second Letter to Mr. Church, I explain myself farther on this head: “I am sorry to find you still affirm, that, with regard to the Lord’s supper also, I ‘advance many injudicious, false, and dangerous things. Such as,

**(1.)** That a man ought to communicate without a sure trust in God’s mercy through Christ.’ (Page 117.) You mark these as my words; but I know them not.

**(2.)** ‘That there is no previous preparation indispensably necessary, but a desire to receive whatsoever God pleases to give.’ But I include abundantly more in that desire, than you seem to apprehend, even a willingness to know and do the whole will of God.

**(3.)** ‘That no fitness is required at the time of communicating,’ (I recite the whole sentence,) ‘but a sense of our state, of our utter sinfulness and helplessness; every one who knows he is fit for hell, being just fit to come to Christ, in this, as well as in all other ways of his appointment.’ But neither can this sense of our utter sinfulness and helplessness subsist without earnest desires of universal holiness.”

And now, what can I say? Had your Lordship never seen this? That is hardly to be imagined. But if you had, how was it possible your Lordship should thus explicitly and solemnly charge me, in the presence of God and all my brethren, (only the person so charged was not present,) with “meaning by those words to set aside self-examination, and repentance for sins past, and resolutions of living better for the time to come, as things no way necessary to make a worthy communicant?” (*Charge*, p. 18.)

If an evidence at the bar should swerve from truth, an equitable judge may place the thing in a true light. But if the judge himself shall bear false witness, where then can we find a remedy?

Actual preparation was here entirely out of the question. It might be absolutely and indispensably necessary, for anything I had either said or meant to the contrary: For it was not at all in my thoughts. And the habitual preparation which I had in terms declared to be indispensably necessary was, “a willingness to know and to do the whole will of God,” and “earnest desires of universal holiness.” Does your Lordship think, this is “meant to set aside all repentance for sins past, and resolutions of living better for the time to come?”

**11.** Your Lordship next falls with all your might upon *that strange assertion*, as you term it, “We come to his table, not to give him anything, but to receive whatsoever he sees best for us.” “Whereas,” says your Lordship, “in the exhortation at the time of receiving, the people are told that they must give most humble and hearty thanks, — and immediately after receiving, both Minister and people join in offering and presenting themselves before God.” (*Ibid.* pp. 20, 21.) O God! in what manner are the most sacred things here treated! the most venerable mysteries of our religion! What quibbling, what playing upon words, is here! *Not to give him anything*. “Yes, to give him thanks.” O my Lord, are these the words of a Father of the Church!

**12.** Your Lordship goes on: “To the foregoing account of these modern principles and doctrines, it may not be improper to subjoin a few observations upon the indirect practices of the same people in gaining proselytes.” (*Ibid.* pp. 23, 24.)

“I. They persuade the people, that the established worship, with a regular attendance upon it, is not sufficient to answer the ends of devotion.”

Your Lordship mentioned this likewise in the Observations. In your fourth query it stood thus: “Whether a due and regular attendance on the public offices of religion, paid in a serious and composed way, does not answer the true ends of devotion.” Suffer me to repeat part of the answer then given: —

“I suppose by ‘devotion’ you mean public worship; by the ‘true ends’ of it, the love of God and man; and by ‘a due and regular attendance on the public offices of religion, paid in a serious and

composed way,’ the going as often as we can to our parish church, and to the sacrament there administered. If so, the question is, Whether this attendance on those offices does not produce the love of God and man. I answer, Sometimes it does, and sometimes it does not. I myself thus attended them for many years; and yet am conscious to myself, that, during that whole time, I had no more of the love of God than a stone. And I know many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of serious persons who are ready to testify the same thing.”

I subjoined,

- (1.) “We continually exhort all who attend on our preaching, to attend the offices of the Church. And they do pay a more regular attendance there than ever they did before.
- (2.) Their attending the Church did not, in fact, answer those ends at all till they attended this preaching also.
- (3.) It is the preaching remission of sins through Jesus Christ which alone answers the true ends of devotion.”

## II.

**13.** “They censure the Clergy,” says your Lordship, “as less zealous than themselves in the several branches of the ministerial function. For this they are undeservedly reproached by these noisy itinerant leaders.” (*Charge*, pp. 24, 25.)

My Lord, I am not conscious to myself of this. I do not willingly compare myself with any man; much less do I reproach my brethren of the Clergy, whether they deserve it or not. But it is needless to add any more on this head than what was said above a year ago: —

“I must explain myself a little on that practice which you so often term ‘abusing the Clergy.’ I have many times great sorrow and heaviness in my heart on account of these my brethren. And this sometimes constrains me to speak to them, in the only way which is now in my power; and

sometimes (though rarely) to speak of them; of a few, not all in general. In either case, I take an especial care,

(1.) To speak nothing but the truth.

(2.) To speak this with all plainness; and,

(3.) With love, and in the spirit of meekness. Now, if you will call this abusing, railing, or reviling, you must. But still I dare not refrain from it. I must thus rail, thus abuse sinners of all sorts and degrees, unless I will perish with them.” (*Second Letter to Mr. Church.*)

### III.

14. “They value themselves upon extraordinary strictnesses and severities in life, and such as are beyond what the rules of Christianity require. They captivate the people by such professions and appearances of uncommon sanctity. But that which can never fail of a general respect is, a quiet and exemplary life, free from the many follies and indiscretions which those restless and vagrant Teachers are apt to fall into.” (*Charge*, p 25.)

By “extraordinary strictnesses and severities,” I presume your Lordship means, the abstaining from wine and animal food; which, it is sure, Christianity does not require. But if you do, I fear your Lordship is not thoroughly informed of the matter of fact. I began to do this about twelve years ago, when I had no thought of “annoying parochial Ministers,” or of “captivating” any “people” thereby, unless it were the Chicasaw or Choctaw Indians. But I resumed the use of them both, about two years after, for the sake of some who thought I made it a point of conscience; telling them, “I *will* eat flesh while the world standeth,” rather than “make my brother to offend.” Dr. Cheyne advised me to leave them off again, assuring me, “Till you do, you will never be free from fevers.” And since I have taken his advice, I have been free (blessed be God!) from all bodily disorders. <sup>f47</sup> Would to God I knew any method of being equally free from all “follies and indiscretions!” But this I never expect to attain till my spirit returns to God.

**15.** But in how strange a manner does your Lordship represent this! What a construction do you put upon it! “Appearances of an uncommon sanctity, in order to captivate the people. Pretensions to more exalted degrees of strictness, to make their way into weak minds and fickle heads.” (*Ibid.* p. 25.) “Pretenses to greater sanctity, whereby they draw over to themselves the most ignorant of the people.” (*Ibid.* p. 4.) If these are “appearances of uncommon sanctity,” (which, indeed, might bear a dispute,) how does your Lordship know that they are only appearances? that they do not spring from the heart? Suppose these were “exalted degrees of strictness,” is your Lordship absolutely assured that we practice them only “to make our way into weak minds and fickle heads?” Where is the proof that these “pretenses to greater sanctity,” (as your Lordship is pleased to phrase them,) are mere pretenses, and have nothing of reality or sincerity in them?

My Lord, this is an accusation of the highest nature. If we are guilty, we are not so much as moral Heathens. We are monsters, not only unworthy of the Christian name, but unfit for human society. It tears up all pretenses to the love of God and man; to justice, mercy, or truth. But how is it proved? Or does your Lordship read the heart, and so pass sentence without any proof at all? O my Lord, ought an accusation of the lowest kind to be thus received, even against the lowest of the people? How much less can this be reconciled with the apostolical advice to the Bishop of Ephesus: “Against a Presbyter receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses;” and those face to face. When it is thus proved, “them that sin, rebuke before all.” Your Lordship doubtless remembers the words that follow: (How worthy to be written in your heart!) “I charge thee, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.” (~~518~~ 1 Timothy 5:19-21.)

#### IV.

**16.** “They mislead the people into an opinion of the high merit of punctual attendances on their performances, to the neglect of the business of their stations.” (*Ibid.* p. 26.) My Lord, this is not so. You yourself, in this very Charge, have cleared us from one part of this accusation. You have born us

witness, (*ibid.* p. 10,) that we disclaim all merit, even in (really) good works; how much more in such works as we continually declare are not good, but very evil! such as the attending sermons, or any public offices whatever, “to the neglect of the business of our station.”

When your Lordship argued this before, in the “Observations,” I openly declared my belief, “that true religion cannot lead into a disregard or disesteem of the common duties and offices of life; that, on the contrary, it leads men to discharge all those duties with the strictest and closest attention; that Christianity requires this attention and diligence, in all stations, and in all conditions; that the performance of the lowest offices of life, as unto God, is truly a serving of Christ; and that this is the doctrine I preach continually;” (*Farther Appeal*, Part I. ;) a fact whereof any man may easily be informed. Now, if, after all this, your Lordship will repeat the charge, as if I had not once opened my mouth concerning it, I cannot help it. I can say no more. I commend my cause to God.

**17.** Having considered what your Lordship has advanced concerning dangerous doctrines and indirect practices, I now come to the instructions your Lordship gives to the Clergy of your diocese.

How awful a thing is this! The very occasion carries in it a solemnity not to be expressed. Here is an angel of the Church of Christ, one of the stars in God’s right hand, calling together all the subordinate Pastors, for whom he is to give an account to God; and directing them (in the name and by the authority of “the great Shepherd of the sheep, Jesus Christ, the First Begotten from the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth”) how to “make full proof of their ministry,” that they may be “pure from the blood of all men;” how to “take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers;” how to “feed the flock of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood!” To this end they are all assembled together. And what is the substance of all his instructions? — “Reverend brethren, I charge you all, lift up your voice like a trumpet; and warn and arm and fortify all mankind against a people called *Methodists!*”

True it is, your Lordship gives them several advices; but all in order to this end. You direct them to “inculcate the excellency of our Liturgy, as a wise, grave, and serious service;” to “show their people, that a diligent

attendance on their business is a serving of God;" "punctually to perform both the public offices of the Church, and all other pastoral duties;" and to "engage the esteem of their parishioners by a constant regularity of life." But all these your Lordship recommends *eo nomine*, as means to that great end, the arming and fortifying their people against the Moravians or Methodists, and their doctrines.

Is it possible! Could your Lordship discern no other enemies of the gospel of Christ? Are there no other heretics or schismatics on earth, or even within the four seas? Are there no Papists, no Deists in the land? Or are their errors of less importance? Or are their numbers in England less considerate, or less likely to increase? Does it appear, then, that they have lost their zeal for making proselytes? Or are all the people so guarded against them already, that their labor is in vain? Can your Lordship answer these few plain questions, to the satisfaction of your own conscience?

Have the Methodists (so called) already monopolized all the sins, as well as errors, in the nation? Is Methodism the only sin, or the only fatal or spreading sin, to be found within the Bills of Mortality? Have two thousand (or more) "ambassadors of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" no other business than to guard, warn, arm, and fortify their people against this? O my Lord, if this engrosses their time and strength, (as it must, if they follow your Lordship's instructions,) they will not give an account with joy, either of themselves or of their flock, in that day!

**18.** Your Lordship seems in some measure sensible of this, when you very gently condemn their opinion, who think the Methodists "might better be disregarded and despised, than taken notice of and opposed, if it were not for the disturbance they give to the parochial Ministers, and their unwarrantable endeavors to seduce the people from their lawful Pastors" (*Charge*, p. 22.) The same complaint with which your Lordship opened your Charge: "They give shameful disturbances to the parochial Clergy; they annoy the established ministry, using very unwarrantable methods, first, to prejudice their people against them, and then to seduce their flocks from them." (*Ibid.* page 4.)

Whether we seduce them or no, (which will be presently considered,) I am sorry your Lordship should give any countenance to that low, senseless, and now generally exploded slander, that we do it for a maintenance. This

your Lordship insinuates, by applying to us those words of Bishop Sanderson: “And all this to serve their own belly, to make a prey of the poor deluded proselytes; for by this means the people fall unto them, and there out suck they no small advantage.” (*Ibid.* p. 15.) Your Lordship cannot but know, that my Fellowship, and my brother’s Studentship, afford us more than sufficient for life and godliness; especially for that manner of life which we choose, whether out of ostentation or in sincerity.

**19.** But do we willingly “annoy the established ministry,” or “give disturbance to the parochial Clergy?” My Lord, we do not. We trust, herein, to have a conscience void of offense. Nor do we designedly “prejudice their people against them.” In this also our heart condemneth us not. But you “seduce their flocks from them.” No, not even from those who feed themselves, not the flock. All who hear us, attend the service of the Church, at least as much as they did before. And for this very thing are we reproached as bigots to the Church by those of most other denominations.

Give me leave, my Lord, to say, you have mistook and misrepresented this whole affair from the top to the bottom. And I am the more concerned to take notice of this, because so many have fallen into the same mistake. It is indeed, and has been from the beginning, the **πρωτον ψευδος**, “the capital blunder,” of our bitterest adversaries; though how they can advance it, I see not, without “loving,” if not “making, a lie.” It is not our care, endeavor, or desire, to proselyte any from one man to another; or from one Church, (so called,) from one congregation or society, to another; (we would not move a finger to do this, to make ten thousand such proselytes;) but from darkness to light, from Belial to Christ, from the power of Satan to God. Our one aim is, to proselyte sinners to repentance; the servants of the devil, to serve the living and true God. If this be not done, in fact, we will stand condemned: not as well-meaning fools, but as devils incarnate. But if it be, if the instances glare in the face of the sun, if they increase daily, maugre all the power of earth and hell; then, my Lord, neither you nor any man beside (let me use great plainness of speech) can “oppose” and “fortify people against us,” without being found even “to fight against God.”

**20.** I would fain set this point in a clearer light. Here are, in and near Moorfields, ten thousand poor souls for whom Christ; died, rushing headlong into hell. Is Dr. Bulkely, the parochial Minister, both willing and able to stop them? If so, let it be done, and I have no place in these parts. I go and call other sinners to repentance. But if, after all he has done, and all he can do, they are still in the broad way to destruction, let me see if God will put a word even in my mouth. True, I am a poor worm that of myself can do nothing. But if God sends by whomsoever he will send, his word shall not return empty. All the messenger of God asks is, **Δος μου σω;** (no help of man!) **και γην κινησω.**<sup>f48</sup> The arm of the Lord is revealed. The lion roars, having the prey plucked out of his teeth. And “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over” more than “one sinner that repenteth.”

**21.** Is this any annoyance to the parochial Minister? Then what manner of spirit is he of? Does he look on this part of his flock as lost, because they are found of the great Shepherd? My Lord, great is my boldness toward you. You speak of the consequences of our doctrines. You seem well pleased with the success of your endeavors against them, because, you say, they “have pernicious consequences, are big with pernicious influences upon practice, dangerous to religion and the souls of men.” (*Ibid.* pp. 8, 22.) In answer to all this, I appeal to plain fact. I say once more, “What have been the consequences (I would not speak, but I dare not refrain) of the doctrines I have preached for nine years last past? By the fruits shall ye know those of whom I speak; even the cloud of witnesses, who at this hour experience the gospel which I preach to be the power of God unto salvation. The habitual drunkard that was, is now temperate in all things; the whoremonger now flees fornication; he that stole, steals no more, but works with his hands; he that cursed or swore, perhaps at every sentence, has now learned to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with reverence; those formerly enslaved to various habits of sin are now brought to uniform habits of holiness. These are demonstrable facts; I can name the men, with their places of abode. One of them was an avowed Atheist for many years; some were Jews; a considerable number Papists; the greatest part of them as much strangers to the form, as to the power, of godliness.”

My Lord, can you deny these facts? I will make whatever proof of them you shall require. But if the facts be allowed, who can deny the doctrines to be, in substance, the gospel of Christ? “For is there any other name under heaven given to men, whereby they may thus be saved?” or is there any other word that thus “commendeth itself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God?”

**22.** But I must draw to a conclusion. Your Lordship has, without doubt, had some success in opposing this doctrine. Very many have, by your Lordship’s unwearied endeavors, been deterred from hearing at all; and have thereby probably escaped the being seduced into holiness, have lived and died in their sins. My Lord, the time is short. I am past the noon of life, and my remaining years flee away as a shadow. Your Lordship is old and full of days, having past the usual age of man. It cannot, therefore, be long before we shall both drop this house of earth, and stand naked before God: No, nor before we shall see the great white throne coming down from heaven, and Him that sitteth thereon. On his left hand shall be those who are shortly to dwell in everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. In that number will be all who died in their sins; and, among the rest, those whom you *preserved* from repentance. Will you then rejoice in your success? The Lord God grant it may not be said in that hour, “These have perished in their iniquity; but their blood I require at thy hands!” I am

Your Lordship’s dutiful son and servant,

***John Wesley.***

***LONDON June 11, 1747.***

## A

## LETTER TO A CLERGYMAN

Reverend Sir, *Tullamore*, May 4, 1748.

I HAVE at present neither leisure nor inclination to enter into a formal controversy; but you will give me leave just to offer a few loose hints relating to the subject of last night's conversation: —

## I.

1. Seeing life and health are things of so great importance, it is, without question, highly expedient that Physicians should have all possible advantages of learning and education.
2. That trial should be made of them, by competent judges, before they practice publicly.
3. That after such trial, they be authorized to practice by those who are empowered to convey that authority.
4. And that, while they are preserving the lives of others, they should have what is sufficient to sustain their own.
5. But supposing a gentleman, bred at the University in Dublin, with all the advantages of education, after he has undergone all the usual trials, and then been regularly authorized to practice:
6. Suppose, I say, this Physician settles at —, for some years, and yet makes no cures at all; but, after trying his skill on five hundred persons, cannot show that he has healed one; many of his patients dying under his hands, and the rest remaining just as they were before he came:
7. Will you condemn a man who, having some little skill in physic, and a tender compassion for those who are sick or dying all around him, cures many of those, without fee or reward, whom the Doctor *could* not cure?
8. A least *did* not, (which is the same thing as to the case in hand,) were it only for this reason, because he did not go to them, and they would not come to him?

**9.** Will you condemn him because he has not learning, or has not had an University education?

What then? He cures those whom the man of learning and education cannot cure!

**10.** Will you object, that he is no Physician, nor has any authority to practice?

I cannot come into your opinion. I think, *Medicus est qui medetur*, “He is a Physician who heals;” and that every man has authority to save the life of a dying man.

But if you only mean, he has no authority to take fees, I contend not; for he takes none at all.

**11.** Nay, and I am afraid it will hold, on the other hand, *Medicus non est qui non medetur*, I am afraid, if we use propriety of speech, “he is no Physician who works no cure.”

**12.** “O, but he has taken his degree of Doctor of Physic, and therefore has authority.”

Authority to do what? “Why, to heal all the sick that will employ him.” But (to wave the case of those who will not employ him; and would you have even their lives thrown away?) he does not heal those that do employ him. He that was sick before, is sick still; or else he is gone hence, and is no more seen.

Therefore, his authority is not worth a rush; for it serves not the end for which it was given.

**13.** And surely he has no authority to kill them, by hindering another from saving their lives!

**14.** If he either attempts or desires to hinder him, if he condemns or dislikes him for it, it is plain to all thinking men, he regards his own fees more than the lives of his patients.

## II.

Now to apply:

1. Seeing life everlasting, and holiness, or health of soul, are things of so great importance, it is highly expedient that Ministers, being Physicians of the soul, should have all advantages of education and learning.
2. That full trial should be made of them in all respects, and that by the most competent judges, before they enter on the public exercise of their office, the saving souls from death.
3. That after such trial, they be authorized to exercise that office by those who are empowered to convey that authority. (I believe Bishops are empowered to do this, and have been so from the apostolic age.)
4. And that those whose souls they save ought, meantime, to provide them what is needful for the body.
5. But suppose a gentleman bred at the University in Dublin, with all the advantages of education, after he has undergone the usual trials, and been regularly authorized to save souls from death:
6. Suppose, I say, this Minister settles at —, for some years, and yet saves no soul at all, saves no sinners from their sins; but after he has preached all this time to five or six hundred persons, cannot show that he has converted one from the error of his ways; many of his parishioners dying as they lived, and the rest remaining, just as they were before he came:
7. Will you condemn a man, who, having compassion on dying souls, and some knowledge of the gospel of Christ, without any temporal reward, saves them from their sins whom the Minister *could* not save?
8. At least *did* not; nor ever was likely to do it; for he did not go to them, and they would not come to him.
9. Will you condemn such a Preacher because he has not earning, or has not had an University education?

What then? He saves those sinners from their sins whom the man of learning and education cannot save.

A peasant being brought before the College of Physicians, at Paris, a learned Doctor accosted him, “What, friend, do you pretend to prescribe to people that have agues? Dost thou know what an ague is?”

He replied, “Yes, Sir; an ague is what I can cure, and you cannot.”

**10.** Will you object, “But he is no Minister, nor has any authority to save souls?”

I must beg leave to dissent from you in this. I think he is a true, evangelical Minister, **διακονος**, “servant” of Christ and his Church, who **οὕτω διακονει**, “so ministers,” as to save souls from death, to reclaim sinners from their sins; and that every Christian, if he is able to do it, has authority to save a dying soul.

But if you only mean, “He has no authority to take tithes,” I grant it. He takes none: As he has freely received, so he freely gives.

**11.** But, to carry the matter a little farther: I am afraid it will hold, on the other hand, with regard to the soul as well as the body, *Medicus non est qui non medetur.* <sup>f49</sup> I am afraid, reasonable men will be much inclined to think, he that saves no souls is no Minister of Christ.

**12.** “O, but he is ordained, and therefore has authority.” Authority to do what? “To save all the souls that will put themselves under his care.” True; but (to wave the case of them that; will not; and would you desire that even those should perish?) he does not, in fact, save them that are under his care: Therefore, what end does his authority serve? He that was a drunkard is a drunkard still. The same is true of the Sabbath-breaker, the thief, the common swearer. This is the best of the case; for many have died in their iniquity, and their blood will God require at the watchman’s hand.

**13.** For surely he has no authority to murder souls, either by his neglect, by his smooth, if not false, doctrine, or by hindering another from plucking them out of the fire, and bringing them to life everlasting.

**14.** If he either attempts or desires to hinder him, if he condemns or is displeased with him for it, how great reason is there to fear that he regards his own profit more than the salvation of souls! I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your affectionate brother,

**JOHN WESLEY.**

## A LETTER

TO

THE REVEREND DR. FREE.

*TULLAMORE, May 2, 1758.*

Reverend Sir,

1. A LITTLE tract appearing under your name was yesterday put into my hands. You therein call upon me to speak, if I have my exceptions to make to what is advanced: and promise to reply as fairly and candidly as I can expect, “provided those exceptions be drawn up, as you have set the example, in a short compass, and in the manner wherein all wise and good people would choose to manage a religious dispute.” (Page 22.)

2. “In a short compass,” Sir, they will certainly be drawn up, for my own sake as well as yours: For I know the value of time, and would gladly employ it all in what more immediately relates to eternity. But I do not promise to draw them up in that manner whereof you have set the example. I cannot, I dare not; for I fear God, and do really believe there is a judgment to come. Therefore, I dare not “return evil for evil,” neither “railing for railing.” Nor can I allow that your manner of treating this subject is that “wherein all wise and good people would choose to manage a religious dispute.” Far, very far, from it. I shall rejoice if a little more fairness and candor should appear in your future writings. But I cannot expect it; for the *nigrae succus loliginis*, “wormwood and gall,” seem to have infected your very vitals.

3. The quotation from Bishop Gibson, which takes up five out of nineteen pages, I have answered already; <sup>f50</sup> and in a manner wherewith I have good reason to believe his Lordship was entirely satisfied. With his Lordship, therefore, I have no present concern; my business now is with you only: And seeing you are “now ready,” as you express it, “to run a tilt,” I must make what defence I can. Only you must excuse me from meeting you on

the same weapons: My weapons are only truth and love. May the God of truth and love strengthen my weakness!

**4.** I wave what relates to Mr. V——’s personal character, which is too well known to need my defence of it; as likewise the occurrence (real or imaginary I cannot tell) which gave birth to your performance. All that I concern myself with is your five vehement assertions with regard to the people called Methodists. These I shall consider in their order, and prove to be totally false and groundless.

**5.** The first is this: “Their whole ministry is an open and avowed opposition to one of the fundamental articles of our religion.” (Page 4.) How so? Why “the Twentieth Article declares, we may not so expound one scripture, that it be repugnant to another. And yet it is notorious, that the Methodists do ever explain the word ‘faith’ as it stands in some of St. Paul’s writings, so as to make his doctrine a direct and flat contradiction to that of St. James.” (Page 5.)

This stale objection has been answered an hundred times, so that I really thought we should have heard no more of it. But since it is required, I repeat the answer once more: By *faith* we mean “the evidence of things not seen;” by *justifying faith*, a divine evidence or conviction, that “Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.” St. Paul affirms, that a man is justified by this faith; which St. James never denies, but only asserts, that a man cannot be justified by a dead faith: And this St. Paul never affirms.

“But St. James declares, ‘Faith without works is dead.’ Therefore it is clearly St. James’s meaning, that a faith which is without virtue or morality will produce salvation.” (Page 6.) Where? in which of their writings? This needs some proof: I absolutely deny the fact. So that all which follows is mere flourish, and falls to the ground at once; and all that you aver of their “open and scandalous opposition to the Twentieth Article” (*ibid.*) is no better than open and scandalous slander.

**6.** Your Second assertion is this: “The Methodist, for the perdition of the souls of his followers, openly gives our Savior the lie, loads the Scripture with falsehood and contradiction;” (and pray what could a Mahometan, or infidel, or the devil himself do more?) “yea, openly blasphemes the name of Christ, by saying that the works of men are of no consideration at all; that God makes no distinction between virtue and vice, that he does not

hate vice or love virtue. What blasphemy then and impiety are those wretches guilty of who, in their diabolical frenzy, dare to contradict our Savior's authority, and that in such an essential article of religion!" (Pages 7-9.) Here also the Methodists plead, Not guilty, and require you to produce your evidence; to show in which of their writings they affirm that God "will not reward every man according to his works; that he makes no distinction between virtue and vice; that he does not hate vice or love virtue." These are positions which they never remember to have advanced. If you can, refresh their memory.

**7.** You assert, Thirdly, the Methodists, by these positions, "destroy the essential attributes of God, and ruin his character as Judge of the world." Very true; if they holden these positions. But here lies the mistake. They hold no such positions. They never did. They detest and abhor them. In arguing, therefore, on this supposition, you are again "beating the air."

**8.** You assert, Fourthly, the Methodists "teach and propagate downright Atheism, — a capital crime; and Atheists in some countries have been put to death. Hereby they make room for all manner of vice and villany; by which means the bands of society are dissolved. And therefore this attempt must be considered as a sort of treason by Magistrates." (Pages 10, 11.)

Again we deny the whole charge, and call for proof; and, blessed be God, so do the Magistrates in Great Britain. Bold, vehement asseverations will not pass upon them for legal evidence: Nor indeed on any reasonable men. They can distinguish between *arguing* and *calling names*: The former becomes a gentleman and a Christian: But what is he who can be guilty of the latter?

**9.** You assert, Lastly, that any who choose a Methodist Clergyman for their Lecturer, "put into that office, which should be holden by a Minister of the Church of England, an enemy, who undermines not only the legal establishment of that Church, but also the foundation of all religion." (Page 13.)

Once more we must call upon you for the proof; the proof of these two particulars, First, that I, John Wesley, am "an enemy to the Church; and that I undermine not only the legal establishment of the Church of England, but also the very foundation of all religion." Secondly. That "Mr.

V—— is an enemy to the Church, and is undermining all religion, as well as the establishment.”

**10.** Another word, and I have done: Are there “certain qualifications required of all Lecturers, before they are by law permitted to speak to the people?” (Page 14.) And is a subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles of religion one of these qualifications? And is a person who does not “conform to such subscription” disqualified to be a Lecturer? or, who “has ever holden or published anything contrary to what the Church of England maintains?” Then certainly you, Dr. John Free, are not “permitted by law to speak to the people;” neither are you “qualified to be a Lecturer” in any church in London or England, as by law established. For you flatly deny and openly oppose more than one or two of those Articles. You do not in anywise conform to the subscription you made before you was ordained either Priest or Deacon. You both hold and publish (if you are the author and publisher of the tract before me) what is grossly, palpably “contrary to what the Church of England maintains,” in her Homilies as well as Articles; those Homilies to which you have also subscribed, in subscribing the Thirty-sixth Article. You have subscribed them, Sir; but did you ever read them? Did you ever read so much as the three first Homilies? I beg of you, Sir, to read these at least, before you write again about the doctrine of the Church of England. And would it not be prudent to read a few of the writings of the Methodists before you undertake a farther confutation of them? At present you know not the men, or their communication. You are as wholly unacquainted both with them and their doctrines, as if you had lived all your days in the islands of Japan, or the deserts of Arabia. You have given a furious assault to you know not whom; and you have done it, you know not why. You have not hurt me thereby; but you have hurt yourself, perhaps in your character, certainly in your conscience. For this is not doing to others “as you would they should do unto you.” When you grow cool, I trust you will see this clearly; and will no more accuse, in a manner so remote from fairness and candor,

Reverend Sir,

Your servant for Christ’s sake,

*John Wesley.*

# SECOND LETTER

## TO

### THE REVEREND DR. FREE.

*FONMON CASTLE, August 24, 1758.*

Reverend Sir,

IN the preface to your Sermon, lately printed, you mention your having received my former letter, and add, that “if the proofs you have now brought do not satisfy me as to the validity of your former assertions; if I am not yet convinced that such positions are holden by people who pass under the denomination of Methodists, and will signify this by a private letter, I shall have a more particular answer.” I desire to live peaceably with all men; and should therefore wish for no more than a private answer to a private letter, did the affair lie between you and me. But this is not the case: You have already appealed to the Archbishop, the University, the nation. Before these judges you have advanced a charge of the highest kind, not only against me, but a whole body of people.

Before these, therefore, I must either confess the charge, or give in my answer.

But you say, I charge blasphemy, impiety, etc., upon the profession of Methodism in general. I use no personal reflections upon you, nor any invective against you, but in the character of a Methodist. That is, you first say, “All Methodists are pickpockets, rebels, blasphemers, Atheists;” and then add, “I use no reflections upon you, but in the character of a Methodist;” but in the character of a pickpocket, blasphemer, Atheist. *None but!* What can you do more?

But this, you say, is the practice of all honest men, and a part of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. Nay, surely there are some honest men who scruple using their opponents in this manner. At least I do: Suppose you was an Atheist, I would not bring against you a railing accusation. I would still endeavor to “treat you with gentleness and meekness,” and thus to “show the sincerity” of my my faith. I leave to you that exquisite “bitterness of spirit, and extreme virulence of language,” which, you say, is your duty, and term *zeal*. (*Preface*, p. 5.) And certainly zeal, fervor, heat, it is. But is this heat from above? Is it the offspring of heaven, or a smoke from the bottomless pit?

O Sir, whence is that zeal which makes you talk in such a manner to his Grace of Canterbury? “I lay before you the disposition of an enemy who threaten our Church with a general alteration or total subversion; who interrupt us as we walk the streets,” (Whom? When? Where?) “in that very dress which distinguishes us as servants of the state,” (altogether servants of the state?) “in the now sad capacity of Ministers of the falling Church of England. Such being the prostrate, miserable condition of the Church, and such the triumphant state of its enemies, none of the English Priesthood can expect better security or longer continuance than the rest. They all subsist at mercy. Your Grace and those of your order will fare no better than those of your own.” Sir, are you in earnest? Do you really believe Lambeth is on the point of being blown up?

You go on: “In the remote countries of England, I have seen a whole troop of these divisions on horseback, traveling with each a sister behind him.” O Sir, O Sir,

What should be great you turn to farce!

Have you forgot, that the Church and nation are on the brink of ruin? But pray when and where did you see this? in what year or in what country? I cannot but fear you take this story on trust; for such a sight, I will be bold to say, was never seen.

With an easy familiarity you add: “My Lord, permit me here to whisper a word” (Is not this whispering in print something new?) “that may be worth remembering. In our memory, some of the Priesthood have not proved so good subjects as might have been expected, till they have been

brought over with preferments, that were due other people.” Meaning, I presume, to yourself. Surely his Grace will remember this, which is so well worth remembering, and dispose of the next preferment in his gift where it is so justly due. If he does not, if either forgets this or your other directions, you tell him frankly what will be the consequence: “We must apply to Parliament;” (p. 6;) or to His Majesty; and, indeed, how can you avoid it? “For it would be using him,” you think, “extremely ill, not to give him proper information, that there” are now a set of people offering, such indignity to his crown and government.

However, we are not to think your opposing the Methodists was “owing to self-interest” alone. Though, what if it was? “Was I to depart from my duty, because it happened to be my interest? Did these saints ever forbear to preach to the mob in the fields, for fear lest they should get the pence of the mob? Or do not” the pence and the preaching “go hand in hand together?” No, they do not; for many years neither I, nor any connected with me, have got any “pence,” as you phrase it, “in the fields.” Indeed, properly speaking, they never did. For the collections which Mr. Whitefield made, it is well known, were not for his own use, either in whole or part. And he has long ago given an account, in print, of the manner wherein all that was received was expended.

But it is not my design to examine at large, either your dedication preface, or Sermon. I have only leisure to make a few cursory remarks on your “definition” of the Methodists, (so called,) and on the account you give of their first rise, of their principles and practice; just premising, that I speak of those alone who began, as you observe, at Oxford. If a thousand other sets of men “pass under that denomination,” yet they are nothing to me. As they have no connection with me, so I am in no way concerned to answer either for their principles or practice, any more than you are to answer for all who “pass under the denomination of Church-of-England men.”

The account you give of their rise, is this: The Methodists began at Oxford. “The name was first given to a few persons, who were so uncommonly methodical, as to keep a diary of the most trivial actions of their lives, as how many slices of bread and butter they ate, how many country dances they danced at their dancing club, or after a fast how many

pounds of mutton they devoured. For upon these occasions they ate like lions, having made themselves uncommonly voracious.” Of this, not one line is true; for,

- (1.) It was from an ancient sect of Physicians, whom we were supposed to resemble in our regular diet and exercise, that we were originally styled Methodists.
- (2.) Not one of us ever kept a diary of “the most trivial actions” of our lives.
- (3.) Nor did any of us ever set down, what, or how much, we ate or drank.
- (4.) Our “dancing club” never existed; I never heard of it before.
- (5.) On our “fast-days” we used no food but bread; on the day following, we fed as on common days.
- (6.) Therefore our voraciousness and eating like lions is also pure, lively invention.

You go on: “It was not long before these gentlemen began to dogmatize in a public manner, feeling a strong inclination to new-model almost every circumstance or thing in the system of our national religion.” Just as true as the rest. These gentlemen were so far from feeling any inclination at all “to new-model” any “circumstance or thing,” that, during their whole stay at Oxford, they were High Churchman in the strongest sense; vehemently contending for every “circumstance” of Church order, according to the old “model.” And in Georgia too, we were rigorous observers of every Rubric and Canon; as well as (to the best of our knowledge) every tenet of the Church. Your account, therefore, of the rise of the Methodists is a mistake from beginning to end.

I proceed to your definition of them: “By the Methodists, was then and is now understood, a set of enthusiasts, who, pretending to be members of the Church of England, either offend against the order and discipline relating to faith and works, and the terms of salvation.”

Another grievous mistake. For whatever “is now, by the Methodists then was” not “understood any set of enthusiasts,” or not enthusiasts,

“offending against the order and discipline of the Church.” They were tenacious of it to the last degree, in every the least jot and tittle. Neither were they “they understood to pervert its doctrines, relating to faith and works, and the terms of salvation.” For they thought and talked of all these, just as you do now, till some of them, after their return from Georgia, were “perverted” into different sentiments, by reading the book of Homilies. Their perversion, therefore, (if such it be,) is to be dated from this time. Consequently, your definition by no means agrees with the persons defined.

However, “as a Shibboleth to distinguish them at present, when they pretend to conceal themselves, throw out this, or such like proposition, ‘Good works are necessary to salvation.’” You might have spared yourself the labor of proving this: For who is there that denies it? Not I: Not any in connection with me. So that this Shibboleth is just good for nothing.

**5.** And yet we firmly believe, that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law; that to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith, without any good work preceding, is counted to him for righteousness. We believe (to express it a little more largely) that we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Good works follow after justification, springing out of true, living faith; so that by them living faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit. And hence it follows, that as the body without the soul is dead, so *that* faith which is without works is dead also. This, therefore, properly speaking, is not faith; as a dead man is not properly a man.

You add, “The original Methodists affect to call themselves Methodists of the Church of England; by which they plainly inform us, there are others of their body who do not profess to belong to it. Whence we may infer, that the Methodists who take our name, do yet, by acknowledging them as namesakes and brethren, give themselves the lie when they say they are of our communion.” *Our name! Our communion! Apage cum ista tua magnificentia!* <sup>f51</sup> How came it, I pray, to be your name any more than Mr. Venn’s? But waving this: Here is another train of mistakes. For,

**(1.)** We do not call ourselves Methodists at all.

**(2.)** That we call ourselves members of the Church of England is certain. Such we ever were, and such we are at this day.

**(3.)** Yet we do not by this plainly inform you, that there are others of our body who do not belong to it. By what rule of logic do you infer this conclusion from those premises?

**(4.)** You have another inference full as good: “Hence one may infer, that, by acknowledging them as namesakes and brethren, they give themselves the lie when they say they are of our communion.” As we do not take the name of Methodists at all, so we do not acknowledge any “namesakes” in this. But we acknowledge any “brethren” all Dissenters (whether they are called Methodists or not) who labor to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man.

What lies upon you to prove, is this: Whoever acknowledges any Dissenters as brethren, does hereby give himself the lie, when he says he is a member of the Church of England.

However, you allow, there may be place for repentance: “For if any of the founders of this sect renounce the opinion they once were charged with, they may be permitted to lay aside the name.” But what are the opinions which you require us to renounce? What are, according to you, the principles of the Methodists?

You say in general, “They are contradictory to the gospel, contradictory to the Church of England, full of blasphemy, impiety, and ending in downright Atheism:” — For,

**“(1.)** They expound the Scripture in such a manner as to make it contradict itself.

**“(2.)** With blasphemy, impiety, diabolical frenzy, they contradict our Savior, by denying that he will judge man according to his works.

**“(3.)** By denying this they destroy the essential attributes of God, and ruin his character as Judge of the world.”

In support of the First charge, you say, “It is notorious; and few men of common sense attempt to prove what is notorious, till they meet with people of such notorious impudence as to deny it.”

I must really deny it. Why, then, you will prove it by Mr. Mason's own words. Hold, Sir: Mr. Mason's words prove nothing. For we are now speaking of original Methodists; but he is not one of them; nor is he in connection with them; neither with Mr. Whitefield nor me. So that what Mr. Mason speaks, be it right or wrong, is nothing to the present purpose. Therefore, unless you can find some better proof, this whole charge falls to the ground.

Well, "here it is: Roger Balls." — Pray who is Roger Balls? No more a Methodist than he is a Turk. I know not one good thing he ever did or said, beside the telling all men, "I am no Methodist," which he generally does in the first sentence he speaks, when he can find any one to hear him. He is therefore one of your own allies; and a champion worthy of his cause!

If then you have no more than this to advance in support of your first charge, you have alleged what you are not able to prove. And the more heavy that allegation is, the more unkind, the more unjust, the more unchristian, the more inhuman, it is to bring it without proof.

In support of the Second charge, you say, "Our Savior declares our works to be the object of his judgment. But the Methodist, for the perdition of the souls of his followers, says our works are of no consideration at all."

Who says so? Mr. Whitefield, or my brother, or I? We say the direct contrary. But one of my "anonymous correspondents says so." Who is he? How do you know he is a Methodist? For aught appears, he may be another of your allies, a brother to Roger Balls.

Three or threescore anonymous correspondents cannot yield one grain of proof, any more than an hundred anonymous remarkers on *Theron* and *Aspasio*. Before these can prove what the Methodists hold, you must prove that these are Methodists; either that they are *original* Methodists, or in connection with them.

Will you say, "If these were not Methodists themselves, they would not defend the Methodists?" I deny the consequence: Men may be far from being Methodists, and yet willing to do the Methodists justice. I have known a Clergyman of note say to another, who had just been preaching a very warm sermon, "Sir, I do not thank you at all for this. I have no

acquaintance with Mr. Whitefield or Mr. Wesley; and I do not agree with them in opinion; but I will have no more railing in my pulpit.”

From the principles of the Methodists, you proceed to their practices: “They hunt,” say you, “for extraordinary marks and revelations, whereby to know the state of the soul.” The marks by which I know the state of any soul, are the inward fruit of the Spirit, — love, joy, peace, and meekness, gentleness, goodness, longsuffering, temperance, patience; shown, not by words only, but by the genuine fruit of outward holiness.

Again: “They magnify their office beyond the truth, by high pretenses to miraculous inspiration.” To this assertion, we have answered over and over, We pretend to no other inspiration than that which, not only every true gospel Minister, but every real Christian, enjoys.

Again: “The end of all impostors is some kind of worldly gain; and it is difficult for them to conceal their views entirely. The love of filthy lucre will appear, either by the use they make of it, or the means of getting it.” As to the use made of it, you are silent. But as to the means of getting it, you say, “Besides inhumanly wringing from the poor, the helpless widows, the weeping orphans,” (the proof! the proof!) “they creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with divers lusts.” It is easy to say this, and ten times more; but can you prove it? And ought you to say it, till you can?

I shall not concern myself with anything in your *Appendix*, but what relates to me in particular. This premised, I observe on No. I. There are several instances in my Journals, of persons that were in agonies of grief or fear, and roared for the disquietness of their heart; of some that exceedingly trembled before God, perhaps fell down to the ground; and of others whom God, in his adorable providence, suffered to be lunatic and sore vexed. The particular instances hereof, to which you refer, have been largely vindicated already, in the *Two Letters to the Rev. Dr. Church*, as well as that to the late Bishop of London.

In the six following numbers I am not concerned. The Eighth contains those words from my *Second Journal*: “The rest of the day we spent in hearing the wonderful work which I have spoken at large to Dr. Church and Bishop Gibson. The sum is, it is a great work when one notorious

sinner is thoroughly changed in heart and life. It is wonderfully great, when God works this entire change in a number of people; particularly when it is done in a very short time: But so he hath wrought in Kingswood, Cornwall, Newcastle. It is therefore a truly wonderful work, which God hath now more than begun to work upon earth.

I have now, Sir, briefly answered for myself, which if required, I will do more at large. But I trust it does already appear, to every impartial reader, that of the many and heavy allegations you have brought with an unparalleled bitterness of spirit, and an acrimony of language almost without precedent, you have not yet proved one. How far you are to be commended for this, (unless by Messrs. Balls and the Monthly Reviewers,) it is not fit for me to judge. Let all lovers of truth, of humanity, and candor, determine. At present, I have no more to add, than that I beseech the Father of everlasting compassion to show more mercy to you, than you have shown to,

Reverend Sir,

Your servant for Christ's sake,

**JOHN WESLEY.**

## A LETTER

TO

THE AUTHOR OF “THE  
CRAFTSMAN,”CONCERNING REAL CHRISTIANITY, DISPARAGED UNDER  
THE NAME OF METHODISM.*(Printed In The Year 1745.)*

TO THE AUTHOR OF “THE CRAFTSMAN.”

SIR,

IN your late paper of June 22, I find (among many to the same effect) these words: “Methodists place all merit in *faith*, and *grace*, and none in good works. This unwarrantable strange sect of a religion, founded on madness and folly, hold that there is no justification by good works, but by faith and grace only. They hereby banish that divine part of our constitution, *reason*, and out off the most essential recommendation to heaven, *virtue*.

“Men who are far gone in their mad principles of religion, suspend the hand of industry, become inactive, and leave all to Providence, without exercising either their heads or hands.

“The doctrine of regeneration is essential with political Methodists; — who are now regenerated, place all merit in faith, and have thrown good works aside.”

I am pressed by those to whose judgment I pay great regard, to take some notice of these assertions; and the rather, because you sometimes seem as if you thought the Christian institution was of God.

Now, if you really think so, or if you desire that any man should believe you do, you must not talk so ludicrously of regeneration; for it is an essential doctrine of Christianity. And you may probably have heard, or even read in former years, that it was the Author of this institution who said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

This he represents as the only possible entrance into the experimental knowledge of that religion, which is not founded (whatever you may suppose) on either madness or folly, but on the inmost nature of things, the nature of God and man, and the immutable relations between them.

By this religion, we do not banish reason, but exalt it to its utmost perfection; this being in every point consistent therewith, and in every step guided thereby.

But you say, "They hereby cut off the most essential recommendation to Heaven, *virtue*." What virtue? that of self-murder; that of casting their own infants to be devoured by beasts or wolves; that of dragging at their chariot-wheels those whose only crimes were the love of their parents, or children, or country? These Roman virtues our religion does cut off; it leaves no place for them. And a reasonable Deist will allow, "that these are not the most essential recommendation to Heaven." But it is far from cutting off any sort, degree, or instance of genuine virtue; all which is contained in the love of God and man, producing every divine and amiable temper.

And this love we suppose (according to the Christian scheme) to flow from a sense of God's love to us; which sense and persuasion of God's love to man in Christ Jesus, particularly applied, we term *faith*; a thing you seem to be totally unacquainted with. For it is not the faith whereof we speak, unless it be a "faith working by love," a faith "zealous of good works, "careful to maintain, nay, to excel in them. Nor do we acknowledge him to have one grain of faith, who is not continually doing good, who is not willing "to spend and be spent in doing all good, as he has opportunity, to all men."

Whoever therefore they are, that "throw aside good; that suspend" (as you prettily phrase it) "the hand of industry, become inactive, and leave all to Providence, without exercising either their heads or hands;" they are no

more led into this by any doctrine of ours, than by the writings of Paul of Tarsus.

And yet “this unaccountable strange sect” (so I believe we appear to you) “place no merit at all in good works.” Most true. No, nor in faith neither; (which you may think more unaccountable still;) but only in “the blood of the everlasting covenant.” We do assuredly hold, (which I beg to leave with you, and to recommend to your deepest consideration,) that there is no justification, in your sense, either by faith or works, or both together; that is, that we are not pardoned and accepted with God for the merit of either, or both; but only by the grace or free love of God, for the alone merits of his Son Jesus Christ.

I am,

Sir,

Your friend, though not admirer,

*JOHN WESLEY.*

# AN ANSWER TO A LETTER

**PUBLISHED IN THE BATH JOURNAL, APRIL 17, 1749,  
SIGNED, N. D.**

**TO THE AUTHOR OF “A LETTER,” ETC.**

*LIMERICK, May 27, 1749.*

SIR,

You ask, why I “do not warn the members of our society against fornication and adultery.” I answer, For the same reason that I do not warn them (in those short hints) against rebellion or murder; namely, because I do not apprehend them to be in immediate danger thereof. Whereas many of them are in continual danger, either of “taking the name of God in vain, of profaning the day of the Lord, or of drunkenness, or brawling, or of uncharitable or unprofitable conversation.”

But you say, “Many persons of great eminence among you have been publicly charged with the commission of these crimes.” But will you undertake to make those charges good? Whenever your “Christian charity, and hearty desire for our success in so important a work,” shall oblige you to instance particulars, I do hereby promise to give you a particular answer.

“But has not a Preacher of your sect preached and printed to prove the lawfulness of polygamy?” I answer, No Preacher in connection with me has ever done any such thing. If what Mr. Hall of Salisbury has done, is no more to me than it is to you; only that I am a greater sufferer by it. For he renounced all the Methodists several years since: And, when I was at Salisbury last, turned both me and my sister out of his house. No man therefore of common, heathen humanity, could ever blame me for the faults of that unhappy man.

In declaring my “abhorrence of all vices of that kind,” I cannot be more plain or explicit than I have been. I can only declare again, that I believe

neither fornicators, adulterers, nor unclean persons shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; and that I rank together sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and whosoever maketh or loveth a lie.

I well know, "a weak brother," as you define him, that is a man of "profane eyes, and an unholy imagination," if you talk either of love feasts, or persons confessing their faults to one another, will immediately run over all the scenes of the "New Atalantis." But I leave that to himself. I must not neglect a scriptural advice, because such an one is offended at my following it.

Your "friendly advice to avoid spiritual selfishness," I will endeavor to follow as soon as I understand it. At present, I do not; neither do I well understand how any "sober Christian should think me guilty of arrogance or self-conceit," because I relate a fact in which I had no share at all; namely, that other men "prayed for one another, that they might be healed of the faults they had confessed; and it was so."

You add, "Dr. Middleton absolves you from all boasting, in relation to the miracle you worked upon Kirkman." Dr. Middleton does me too much honor, in taking any notice of so inconsiderable a person. But, miracle or no miracle, the fact is plain: William Kirkman is, I apprehend, yet alive, and able to certify for himself, that he had that cough threescore years, and that since that time it has not yet returned. I do not know that any "one patient yet has died under my hands." If any person does, let him declare it, with the time and circumstances.

You conclude: "Let me beg of you, as a fellow-Christian, to remove that great load of scandal that now lies upon your sect; and that you will not, by a careless or premeditated silence, bring yourself and your followers under a just suspicion of not being enemies to certain vices which you seem afraid even to name."

Alas, Sir, is your "hearty wish for my success" dwindled down to this? and your "sorrow for any oversight that should afford ground of cavil to those who are disposed to think unfavorably of me?" Sir, I take knowledge of you. I no longer wonder at your so readily answering for Dr. Middleton. I am persuaded none has a better right so to do: No, not the gentleman who lately printed in the public papers a letter to the Lord

Bishop of Exeter. Well, Sir, you may now lay aside the mask. I do not require you to style yourself my “fellow-Christian.” But we are fellow-creatures, at least fellow-servants of the great Lord of heaven and earth! May we both serve him faithfully! For his sake, I remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

**JOHN WESLEY.**

P. S. — I did not receive yours till last night.

# FOOTNOTES

ft1. The soul of the world.

ft2. The all-informing soul, Which spreads through the vast mass, and moves the whole.

ft3. My friends, I have lost a day.

ft4. The following is Dr. Mason Good's translation of this quotation from Lucretius, and of the lines connected with it: —

*“Them long the tyrant power  
Of SUPERSTITION sway'd, uplifting proud  
Her head to heaven, and with horrific limb  
Brooding o'er earth.” — EDIT.*

ft5. At Epworth, in Lincolnshire.

ft6. The author of a tract just published at Newcastle, entitled, “The Notions of the Methodists fully disproved, in a Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley,” much insists upon this objection. I have read, and believe it quite needless to take any further notice of, this performance; the writer being so utterly unacquainted with the merits of the cause; and showing himself so perfectly a stranger, both to my life, preaching, and writing, and to the word of God, and to the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England.

ft7. Evidence, or conviction.

ft8. The (then) Archbishop of York.

ft9. I will love thee from my inmost bowels.

ft10. I take it for granted, that the citation of texts in the margin, which is totally wrong, is a blunder of the printer's.

ft11. An unknown proposition by one that is less known. — EDIT.

ft12. According to (the will of) God. — EDIT.

ft13. To excite ill-will. — EDIT.

ft14. Thinkest thou that God is mocked?

ft15.

*Jove spake,  
and nodded with his sable brow,  
And huge Olympus to his center shook.*

ft16. This quotation from Horace is thus translated by Francis: —  
*“Britons of inhospitable strain.” — EDIT.*

ft17. You say you do testify against it in the congregation. Against what? “Against gay and gaudy apparel.” I grant it. But this is not the thing I speak of. You quite mistake my mark. Do you testify against the costliness of their apparel, however plain and grave it may be? against the price of the velvet, the linen, the silk, or raiment of whatever kind? If you do this frequently and explicitly, you are clear. If not, own and amend the fault.

It is easy to discern how your people fell into this snare of the devil. You were at first a poor, despised, afflicted people. Then what some of you had to spare was little enough to relieve the needy members of your own society. In a few years you increased in goods, and were able to relieve more than your own poor. But you did not bestow all that you had to spare from them on the poor belonging to other societies. It remained either to lay it up, or to expend it in superfluities. Some chose one way, and some the other.

Lay this deeply to heart, ye who are now a poor, despised, afflicted people. Hitherto ye are not able to relieve your own poor. But if ever your substance increase, see that ye be not straitened in your own bowels, that ye fall not into the same snare of the devil. Before any of you either lay up treasures on earth, or indulge needless expense of any kind, I pray the Lord God to scatter you to the corners of the earth, and blot out your name from under heaven!

ft18. Frets at the narrow limits of the world, As in a prison pent.

ft19. They are surfeited with the dull repetition.

ft20.

*Some to the piercing winds are stretch'd abroad;  
Some plunged beneath the watery gulf: The fire  
In some burns out the deep-imprinted stain,  
Till the long course of slowly-rolling years  
Has purged out every spot, and pure remains  
The' ethereal spirit, and simple heavenly fire.*

ft21. This quotation from Cicero is thus translated by Addison: —  
*“If virtue could be made the object of sight,  
she would (as Plato says) excite in us a wonderful love”*  
— EDIT.

ft22. So much mischief *this* religion does!

ft23. How old must a book be before it is good for anything?

ft24. In the year 1772: — EDIT.

ft25. “A cure of souls.” — EDIT.

ft26. Creeping silent through the sylvan shades, Exploring what is wise and good in man.

ft27. See the Rules of the United Societies.

ft28. The Leaders now do this.

ft29. This has been since dropped for want of support.

ft30. This also has been dropped for some time. 1772:

ft31. We now (1772) lend any sum not exceeding five pounds.

ft32. This tract, which is usually denominated, “The Large Minutes,” contains the plan of discipline as practiced in the Methodist Connection during the life of Mr. Wesley. As its title intimates, it underwent several alterations and enlargements from the year 1744 to 1789, when the last revision took place. It is here reprinted from a copy which bears the date of 1791, — the year in which Mr. Wesley died, — collated with the edition of 1789 — EDIT.

ft33. I have not been able to ascertain the precise time at which this tract was written. It notices the separation of Maxfield in 1763; and the second edition of it bears the date of 1765: It appears therefore to have been first published sometime about 1764; and was probably intended

to screen Mr. Wesley and his friends from the reproach attached to the conduct of those who separated from him. — EDIT.

ft34. Thus translated by Francis: —

*“To the instruction of a humble friend,  
Who would himself be better taught, attend.” — EDIT*

ft35. “Mr. Charles Wesley,” the note says, “was not persuaded of the truth of the Moravian faith, till some time after his brother’s return from Germany.” There is a great mistake in this. I returned not from Germany till Saturday, September 16 Whereas my brother was fully persuaded of the truth of the Moravian faith (so called) on Wednesday, May 3, preceding. The note adds, “This,” that is, justifying faith, “he received but very lately.” This also is a mistake. What he believed to be justifying faith, he received May 21, 1738 (VOL. I.)

ft36. The next note runs thus: “Mr. Wesley has such a peculiar turn and tendency towards inconsistencies in his principles, that in his Preface to Haliburton’s Life, (wrote February 9, 1738-9, just after his return from Germany,) he contradicts all that he has said elsewhere for this sinless perfection; viz., ‘But it may be said, the gospel covenant does not promise entire freedom from sin. What do you mean by the word sin? the infection of nature, or those numberless weaknesses and follies, sometimes (improperly) termed sins of infirmity? If you mean only this, you say most true. We shall not put off these, but with our bodies. But if you mean, it does not promise entire freedom from sin, in its proper sense, or from committing sin; this is by no means true, unless the Scriptures be false. *For thus it is written, Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*, unless he lose the Spirit of adoption, if not finally, yet for a while, as did this child of God: *For his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God*. He cannot sin, so long as he keepeth himself; for then the wicked one toucheth him not.’”

The question is not, whether this be right or wrong; but whether it contradict any thing I have said elsewhere. Thrice I have spoken expressly on this subject, — in a sermon, and in two prefaces. If in

any of these I have contradicted what I said before, I will own the former assertion as a mistake.

- ft37. These are the words of the Fourth Journal, Vol. I.
- ft38. The Band society in London began May 1, some time before I set out for Germany.
- ft39. See this glaring misprint of one of the earliest editions corrected by Mr. Wesley himself in a subsequent part of this volume. — EDIT.
- ft40. Vol. I., of the Present Edition. — EDIT.
- ft41. For the purpose of exciting ill-will. — EDIT.
- ft42. Remarks, p. 58
- ft43. Beware whom you commend, lest you should be blamed for the faults of another man.
- ft44. In the Preface to the Answer to Mr. Tucker.
- ft45. Vol. I., of the present Edition. — EDIT.
- ft46. Vol. I. of the present Edition. — EDIT.
- ft47. I continued this about two years.
- ft48. Give me a point on which to stand, and I will move the world. — EDIT.
- ft49. He is not a Physician who effects no cures. — EDIT.
- ft50. In “A Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London.”
- ft51. Mr. Wesley seems in this instance, as in several others, to have been purposely inaccurate in his quotation, to avoid the malediction couched in the original words of Terence: —

*I in malam rem hinc cum istac magnificentia  
Fugitive (Phormio. Act. v. sc. 6, v. 37)*

which Dr. Patrick has rather broadly translated: “Go, be hanged, you rascal with your vain rodомontades!”

Mr. Wesley’s accommodated quotation of it may be thus rendered: —  
*“Away with this your grandiloquent verbiage!” — EDIT.*

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