

either of the blows, than if they had touched me with a straw.

October 22, 1743.

“‘Lo, I come,’ if this soul and body may be useful to anything, ‘to do thy will, O God.’ And if it please thee to use the power thou hast over dust and ashes, over weak flesh and blood, over a brittle vessel of clay, over the work of thine own hands; lo, here they are, to suffer also thy good pleasure. If thou please to visit me either with pain or dishonour, I will ‘humble myself’ under it, and, through thy grace, be ‘obedient unto death, even the death upon the cross.’ Whatsoever may befall me, either from neighbours or strangers, since it is thou employest them, though they know it not, (unless thou help me to some lawful means of redressing the wrong,) I will not ‘open my mouth before the Lord,’ who smiteth me, except only to ‘bless the Lord.’ Hereafter no man can take away anything from me, no life, no honour, no estate; since I am ready to lay them down, as soon as I perceive thou requirest them at my hands. Nevertheless, ‘O Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; but if not, thy will be done.’ Whatever sufferings hereafter may trouble my flesh, or whatever agonies may trouble my spirit, ‘O Father, into thy hands will I commend’ my life, and all that concerneth it. And if thou be pleased, either that I live yet awhile, or not, I will, with my Saviour, ‘bow down my head;’ I will humble myself under thy hand; I will give up all thou art pleased to ask, until at last I ‘give up the ghost.’”

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## A LETTER

TO

THE REVEREND MR. WALKER.

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REV. AND DEAR SIR,

BRISTOL, *September 24, 1755.*

1. You greatly oblige me by speaking your thoughts so freely; and the more by giving me hopes of seeing your

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further sentiments on so nice and important an affair. I did not delay one day to follow your advice with regard to Mr. Adams, but sent him, by the very next post, a copy of those papers; although I am satisfied already as to the publishing them, and have laid aside that design; the reasons you urge against the expediency of it being abundantly sufficient. But you seem a little to misapprehend what we speak of hearing Predestinarian Preachers. We find, by long experience, that this is deadly poison, not in itself, but to the members of our societies. This we know to be an unquestionable truth; and it was a truth necessary to be observed; nay, and strongly insisted on, (though without any design of bearing hard on any particular person,) when many were enlarging on the poisonous doctrines which they heard at many of their parish churches.

2. All that you say concerning the inexpediency of a separation from the Church, I readily allow; as likewise, that the first and main question must be, "Is it lawful to separate?" Accordingly, this was debated first, and that at large, in seven or eight long conversations. And it was then only, when we could not agree concerning this, that we proceeded to weigh the expediency of it.

3. As to the grounds on which those who plead for a separation from the Church proceed, some of them have weighed the point long and deeply. They have very particularly, and with earnest and continued prayer, considered the lawfulness of it. And they allow, "If it be lawful to abide therein, then it is not lawful to separate." But they aver, "It is not lawful to abide therein;" and that for the following reasons:—

First. With regard to the Liturgy itself: Though they allow it is, in the general, one of the most excellent human compositions that ever was, yet they think it is both absurd and sinful to declare such an assent and consent as is required, to any merely human composition. Again: Though they do not object to the use of forms, yet they dare not confine themselves to them. And in this form (the Book of Common Prayer) there are several things which they apprehend to be contrary to Scripture.

Secondly. As to the laws of the Church, if they include the Canons and Decretals, both which are received as such in our Courts, they think "the latter are the very dregs

of Popery, and that many of the former, the Canons of 1603, are as grossly wicked as absurd." And, over and above the objections which they have to several particular ones, they think, "1. That the spirit which they breathe is throughout truly Popish and antichristian. 2. That nothing can be more diabolical than the *ipso facto* excommunication so often denounced therein. 3. That the whole method of executing these Canons, the process used in our Spiritual Courts, is too bad to be tolerated (not in a Christian, but) in a Mahometan or Pagan nation."

Thirdly. With respect to the Ministers, they doubt "whether there are not many of them whom God hath not sent; inasmuch as they neither live the Gospel nor teach it; neither indeed can, seeing they do not know it." They doubt the more, "because themselves disclaim that inward call to the ministry, which is at least as necessary as the outward." And they are not clear, "whether it be lawful to attend the ministrations of those whom God has not sent to minister."

Fourthly. The doctrines actually taught by these, and indeed by a great majority of the Church Ministers, they think "are not only wrong, but fundamentally so, and subversive of the whole Gospel." They therefore doubt "whether it be lawful to bid them God speed, or to have any fellowship with them."

I will freely acknowledge that I cannot answer these arguments to my own satisfaction. So that my conclusion, which I cannot yet give up,—that it is lawful to continue in the Church,—stands, I know not how, almost without any premises that are to bear its weight.

My difficulty is very much increased by one of your observations. I know the original doctrines of the Church are sound; I know her worship is in the main pure and scriptural. But if "the essence of the Church of England, considered as such, consists in her orders and laws," (many of which I myself can say nothing for,) "and not in her worship and doctrines," those who separate from her have a far stronger plea than I was ever sensible of.

4. At present I apprehend those, and those only, to separate from the Church, who either renounce her fundamental doctrines, or refuse to join in her public worship. As yet we have done neither; nor have we taken one step

further than we were convinced was our bounden duty. It is from a full conviction of this, that we have, (1.) Preached abroad: (2.) Prayed extempore: (3.) Formed societies: And, (4.) Permitted Preachers who were not Episcopally ordained. And were we pushed on this side, were there no alternative allowed, we should judge it our bounden duty, rather wholly to separate from the Church, than to give up any one of these points. Therefore, if we cannot stop a separation without stopping lay-Preachers, the case is clear,—we cannot stop it at all.

5. “But if we permit them, should we not do more? Should we not appoint them rather? since the bare permission puts the matter quite out of our hands, and deprives us of all our influence.” In great measure, it does; therefore, to appoint them is far more expedient, if it be lawful. But is it lawful for Presbyters, circumstanced as we are, to appoint other Ministers? This is the very point wherein we desire advice; being afraid of leaning to our own understanding.

It is undoubtedly “needful,” as you observe, “to come to some resolution in this point;” and the sooner the better. I therefore rejoice to hear that you think “this matter may be better and more inoffensively ordered; and that a method may be found, which, conducted with prudence and patience, will reduce the constitution of Methodism to due order, and render the Methodists, under God, more instrumental to the ends of practical religion.”

This, Sir, is the very thing I want. I must therefore beg your sentiments on this head; and that as particularly as your other engagements will allow. Wishing you more and more of the wisdom from above,

I remain, Rev. and dear Sir,

Your obliged and affectionate brother and servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

## SECOND LETTER

TO

THE REVEREND MR. WALKER.

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REV. AND DEAR SIR,                      KINGSWOOD, *September 3, 1756.*

I HAVE one point in view,—to promote, so far as I am able, vital, practical religion; and by the grace of God to beget, preserve, and increase the life of God in the souls of men. On this single principle I have hitherto proceeded, and taken no step but in subserviency to it. With this view, when I found it to be absolutely necessary for the continuance of the work which God had begun in many souls, (which their regular Pastors generally used all possible means to destroy,) I permitted several of their brethren, whom I believe God had called thereto, and qualified for the work, to comfort, exhort, and instruct those who were athirst for God, or who walked in the light of his countenance. But as the persons so qualified were few, and those who wanted their assistance very many, it followed, that most of these were obliged to travel continually from place to place; and this occasioned several regulations from time to time, which were chiefly made in our Conferences.

So great a blessing has, from the beginning, attended the labours of these Itinerants, that we have been more and more convinced every year, of the more than lawfulness of this proceeding. And the inconveniences, most of which we foresaw from the very first, have been both fewer and smaller than were expected. Rarely two in one year, out of the whole number of Preachers, have either separated themselves or been rejected by us. A great majority have all along behaved as becometh the Gospel of Christ, and, I am clearly persuaded, still desire nothing more than to spend and be spent for their brethren.

But the question is, “How may these be settled on such

a footing, as one would wish they might be after my death?" It is a weighty point, and has taken up many of my thoughts for several years: But I know nothing yet. The steps I am *now* to take are plain. I see broad light shining upon them. But the other part of the prospect I cannot see: Clouds and darkness rest upon it.

Your general advice on this head,—to follow my own conscience, without any regard to consequences, or prudence, so called, is unquestionably right; and it is a rule which I have closely followed for many years, and hope to follow to my life's end. The first of your particular advices is "to keep in full view the interests of Christ's church in general, and of practical religion; not considering the Church of England, or the cause of Methodism, but as subordinate thereto." This advice I have punctually observed from the beginning, as well as at our late Conference. You advise, secondly, "to keep in view also the unlawfulness of a separation from the Church of England." To this likewise I agree. It cannot be lawful to separate from it, unless it be unlawful to continue in it. You advise, thirdly, "fully to declare myself on this head, and to suffer no dispute concerning it." The very same thing I wrote to my brother from Ireland; and we have declared ourselves without reserve. Nor was there any at the Conference otherwise minded. Those who would have aimed at dispute had left us before. Fourthly, All our Preachers, as well as ourselves, purpose to continue in the Church of England. Nor did they ever before so freely and explicitly declare themselves on this subject.

Your last advice is, "That as many of our Preachers as are fit for it, be ordained; and that the others be fixed to certain societies, not as Preachers, but as readers or inspectors."

You oblige me by speaking your sentiments so plainly: With the same plainness I will answer. So far as I know myself, I have no more concern for the reputation of Methodism, or my own, than for the reputation of Prester John. I have the same point in view as when I set out,—the promoting, as I am able, vital, practical religion: And in all our discipline I still aim at the continuance of the work which God has already begun in so many souls. With this view, and this only, I permitted those whom I believed God had called thereto, to comfort, exhort, and instruct their

brethren. And if this end can be better answered some other way, I shall subscribe to it without delay.

But is that which you propose a better way? This should be coolly and calmly considered.

If I mistake not, there are now in the county of Cornwall about four-and-thirty of these little societies, part of whom now experience the love of God; part are more or less earnestly seeking it. Four Preachers, Peter Jaco, Thomas Johnson, W. Crabb, and William Alwood, design for the ensuing year, partly to call other sinners to repentance, but chiefly to feed and guide those few feeble sheep; to forward them, as of the ability which God giveth, in vital, practical religion.

Now, suppose we can effect, that Peter Jaco and Thomas Johnson be ordained and settled in the curacies of Buryan and St. Just; and suppose William Crabb and William Alwood fix at Launceston and Plymouth-dock, as readers and exhorters; will this answer the end which I have in view so well as travelling through the county?

It will not answer it so well even with regard to those societies with whom Peter Jaco and Thomas Johnson have settled. Be their talents ever so great, they will ere long grow dead themselves, and so will most of those that hear them. I know, were I myself to preach one whole year in one place, I should preach both myself and most of my congregation asleep. Nor can I believe it was ever the will of our Lord that any congregation should have one Teacher only. We have found by long and constant experience, that a frequent change of Teachers is best. This Preacher has one talent; that, another. No one whom I ever yet knew has all the talents which are needful for beginning, continuing, and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation.

But suppose this would better answer the end with regard to those two societies, would it answer in those where W. Alwood and W. Crabb were settled as inspectors or readers? First, Who shall feed them with the milk of the word? The Ministers of their parishes? Alas, they cannot! they themselves neither know, nor live, nor teach the Gospel. These readers? Can then either they, or I, or you, always find something to read to our congregation, which will be as exactly adapted to their wants, and as much blessed to

them, as our preaching? And here is another difficulty still: What authority have I to forbid their doing what I believe God has called them to do? I apprehend indeed that there ought, if possible, to be both an outward and inward call to this work; yet, if one of the two be supposed wanting, I had rather want the outward than the inward call. I rejoice that I am called to preach the Gospel both by God and man. Yet I acknowledge, I had rather have the divine without the human, than the human without the divine, call.

But, waving this, and supposing these four societies to be better provided for than they were before; what becomes of the other thirty? Will they prosper as well when they are left as sheep without a shepherd? The experiment has been tried again and again; and always with the same event: Even the strong in faith grew weak and faint; many of the weak made shipwreck of the faith; the awakened fell asleep; sinners, changed for a while, returned as a dog to the vomit. And so, by our lack of service, many of the souls perished for whom Christ died. Now, had we willingly withdrawn our service from them, by voluntarily settling in one place, what account of this could we have given to the great Shepherd of all our souls?

I cannot therefore see, how any of those four Preachers, or any others in like circumstances, can ever, while they have health and strength, ordained or unordained, fix in one place, without a grievous wound to their own conscience, and damage to the general work of God. Yet I trust I am open to conviction; and your farther thoughts on this, or any subject, will be always acceptable to,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Your very affectionate brother and fellow-labourer,  
JOHN WESLEY.

## THIRD LETTER

TO

THE REVEREND MR. WALKER

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REV. AND DEAR SIR,                      HELSTONE, *September 16, 1757.*

NOTHING can be more kind than the mentioning to me whatever you think is amiss in my conduct: And the more freedom you use in doing this, the more I am indebted to you. I am thoroughly persuaded that you "wish me well;" and that it is this, together with a "concern for the common interests of religion," which obliges you to speak with more plainness than otherwise you would. The same motives induce me to lay aside all reserve, and tell you the naked sentiments of my heart.

Two years since, eleven or twelve persons of Falmouth were members of our society. Last year I was informed that a young man there had begun to teach them new opinions; and that, soon after, offence and prejudice crept in, and increased till they were all torn asunder. What they have done since, I know not; for they have no connexion with us. I do "exert myself" so far as to separate from us those that separate from the Church. But in a thousand other instances I feel the want of more resolution and firmness of spirit. Yet sometimes that may appear irresolution which is not so. I exercise as little authority as possible, because I am afraid of people's depending upon me too much, and paying me more reverence than they ought.

But I proceed to the substance of your letter. You say, 1. "If you still hold the essence of justifying faith to be in assurance, why did you encourage J. H. to believe his state good?"

Assurance is a word I do not use, because it is not scriptural. But I hold, that a divine evidence or conviction that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me, is essential to, if not the very essence of, justifying faith. J. H. told me he had more than this; even a clear conviction that his sins

were forgiven; although he said that conviction was not so clear now as it had been in times past.

2. "If you believed Mr. V. to be a gracious person, and a Gospel Minister, why did you not, in justice to your people, leave them to him?"

J. H. assured me that Mr. V. also had a clear conviction of his being reconciled to God. If so, I could not deny his being a gracious person; and I heard him preach the true, though not the whole, Gospel. But had it been the whole, there are several reasons still, why I did not give up the people to him. (1.) No one mentioned or intimated any such thing, nor did it once enter into my thoughts. But if it had, (2.) I do not know that every one who preaches the truth has wisdom and experience to guide and govern a flock. I do not know that Mr. V. in particular has. He may, or he may not. (3.) I do not know whether he would or could give that flock all the advantages for holiness which they now enjoy: And to leave them to him, before I was assured of this, would be neither justice nor mercy. (4.) Unless they were also assured of this, they could not in conscience give up themselves to him; and I have neither right nor power to dispose of them contrary to their conscience.

"But they are his already by legal establishment." If they receive the sacrament from him thrice a year, and attend his ministrations on the Lord's day, I see no more which the law requires. But, to go a little deeper into this matter of legal establishment: Does Mr. Conon or you think that the King and Parliament have a right to prescribe to me what Pastor I shall use? If they prescribe one which I know God never sent, am I obliged to receive him? If he be sent of God, can I receive him with a clear conscience till I know he is? And even when I do, if I believe my former Pastor is more profitable to my soul, can I leave him without sin? Or has any man living a right to require this of me?

I "extend this to every Gospel Minister in England." Before I could with a clear conscience leave the Methodist society even to such an one, all these considerations must come in.

And with regard to the people: Far from thinking that "the withdrawing our Preachers" from such a society with-

out their consent, would prevent a separation from the Church, I think it would be the direct way to cause it. While we are with them, our advice has weight, and keeps them to the Church: But were we totally to withdraw, it would be of little or no weight. Nay, perhaps resentment of our unkindness (as it would appear to them) would prompt them to act in flat opposition to it. "And will it not be the same at your death?" I believe not; for I believe there will be no resentment in this case; and the last advice of a dying friend is not likely to be so soon forgotten.

3. But "was there no inconsistency in your visiting Mr. V., as a Minister of the Gospel, when you do not give up your people to him?" My visiting him as a Gospel Minister did not imply any obligation so to do.

4. "If that was not the design of the visit, you should not have visited him at all." Does that follow? I visited him as a brother and a fellow-labourer, because he desired it.

5. "Does not this conduct, on the whole, savour of a party spirit, and show a desire to please the Methodists, as Methodists?"

I am not conscious of any such spirit, or of any desire but that of pleasing all men for their good to edification. And I have as great a desire thus to please you as any Methodist under heaven.

You add one thing more, which is of deep importance, and deserves a particular consideration. "You spake to Mr. Vowler of your being as one man. Nothing is so desirable: But really, before it can be effected, something must be done on your part more than paying us visits; which, as far as I can see, can serve no other purpose, in the present circumstances, than to bring us under needless difficulties."

I did indeed speak to Mr. V. of our being as one man; and not to him only, but to several others; for it lay much upon my heart. Accordingly, I proposed that question to all who met at our late Conference, "What can be done in order to a close union with the Clergy who preach the truth?" We all agreed that nothing could be more desirable. I, in particular, have long desired it; not from any view to my own ease, or honour, or temporal convenience in any kind; but because I was deeply convinced it might

be a blessing to my own soul, and a means of increasing the general work of God.

But you say, "Really, before it can be effected, something must be done on your part." Tell me what, and I will do it without delay, however contrary it may be to my ease or natural inclination; provided only that it consists with my keeping a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man. It would not consist with this, to give up the flock under my care to any other Minister, till I and they were convinced they would have the same advantages for holiness under him which they now enjoy. But "paying us visits can serve no other purpose than to bring us under needless difficulties." I will speak very freely on this head. Can our conversing together serve no other purpose? You seem, then, not to have the least conception of your own wanting any such thing. But whether you do or not, I feel I do. I am not *in memet totus teres atque rotundus*.\* I want more light, more strength, for my personal walking with God; and I know not but He may give it me through you. And whether you do or no, I want more light and strength for guiding the flock committed to my charge. May not the Lord send this also by whom he will send? and by you, as probably as by any other? It is not improbable that he may by you give me clearer light, either as to doctrine or discipline. And even hereby, how much comfort and profit might redound to thousands of those for whom Christ hath died! which, I apprehend, would abundantly compensate any difficulties that might arise from such conversation.

But what difficulties are those? All that are the necessary consequence of sharing our reproach. And what reproach is it which we bear? Is it the reproach of Christ, or not? It arose first while my brother and I were at Oxford, from our endeavouring to be real Christians. It was increased abundantly when we began to preach repentance and remission of sins, and insisted that we are justified by faith. For this cause were we excluded from preaching in the churches. (I say, for this: As yet there was no field-preaching.) And this exclusion occasioned our preaching

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

"Firm in himself, who on himself relies;

Polish'd and round who runs his proper course."—EDIT.

elsewhere, with the other irregularities that followed. Therefore, all the reproach consequent thereon is no other than the reproach of Christ.

And what are we worse for this? It is not pleasing to flesh and blood; but is it any hinderance to the work of God? Did He work more by us when we were honourable men? By no means. God never used us to any purpose till we were a proverb of reproach. Nor have we now a jot more of dishonour, of evil report, than we know is necessary both for us and for the people, to balance that honour and good report which otherwise could not be borne.

You need not, therefore, be so much afraid of, or so careful to avoid, this. It is a precious balm: It will not break your head, neither lessen your usefulness. And, indeed, you cannot avoid it any otherwise than by departing from the work. You do not avoid it by standing aloof from us; which you call Christian, I worldly, prudence.

I speak as a fool: Bear with me. I am clearly satisfied that you have far more faith, more love, and more of the mind which was in Christ, than I have. But have you more gifts for the work of God, or more fruit of your labour? Has God owned you more? I would He had a thousand-fold! I pray God that He may. Have you at present more experience of the wisdom of the world and the devices of Satan, or of the manner and method wherein it pleases God to counterwork them in this period of His providence? Are you sure God would add nothing to you by me, beside what He might add to me by you? Perhaps when the time has slipped out of your hands, when I am no more seen, you may wish you had not rejected the assistance of even

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

## FOURTH LETTER

TO

THE REVEREND MR. WALKER.

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REV. AND DEAR SIR,

*October, 1758.*

I RETURN you many thanks for the welcome letter from Mr. Adams, as well as for your own. I have answered his, (which is written in a truly Christian spirit,) and now proceed to consider yours. After having observed that two of our Preachers are gone from us, and none of these remaining (to my knowledge) have at present any desire or design of separating from the Church, yet I observe,

1. Those Ministers who truly feared God near a hundred years ago, had undoubtedly much the same objections to the Liturgy which some (who never read their Works) have now. And I myself so far allow the force of several of those objections, that I should not dare to declare my assent and consent to that book in the terms prescribed. Indeed, they are so strong, that I think they cannot safely be used with regard to any book but the Bible. Neither dare I confine myself wholly to forms of prayer, not even in the church. I use, indeed, all the forms; but I frequently add extemporary prayer, either before or after sermon.

2. In behalf of many of the Canons, I can say little; of the Spiritual Courts, nothing at all. I dare not, therefore, allow the authority of the former, or the jurisdiction of the latter. But I am not yet required to do it. So that difficulty does not lie in my way yet.

3. "Whether it be lawful to attend the ministrations of one whom I know God has not sent to minister, seeing he expressly disclaims that call of God which is, at least, as necessary as the call of man," is really a question which (as I said before) I cannot answer to my own satisfaction. Neither can I tell,

4. How far that command of our Lord, "Beware of false prophets," obliges me to refrain from hearing such as put

darkness for light, and light for darkness. I am still in doubt whether quietly attending them while they do this, be not, in effect, the bidding them God speed, the strengthening their hands in evil, and encouraging others to hear them till they fall into hell together.

I am still desirous of knowing in what particular manner you think the present work of God could be carried on, without the assistance of lay Preachers. This I will fairly weigh, and give you my thoughts upon it.

Some little things occurred to me in reading over your Sermons, which I had a desire to communicate to you. In the great points I cannot observe any difference between us. We both contend for the inward kingdom, the mind that was in Christ Jesus, the image of God to be new stamped upon the heart. I am sometimes much discouraged at finding so little of this in myself. Assist, both with your advice and prayers,

Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate brother and servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

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## A LETTER

TO

THE REVEREND THOMAS ADAMS.

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REVEREND SIR,

LONDON, *October 31, 1755.*

ONE good effect, at least, has arisen already, from the moving of the present question : It has been the occasion of my having some little acquaintance with Mr. Walker and you ; which, I doubt not, would be enlarged, were it not for what you probably think to be Christian, I think to be worldly, prudence.

You have much obliged me by your clear and friendly answer ; with the main of which I fully agree ; for I am still in my former sentiment, " We will not go out : If

we are thrust out, well." And of the same judgment are, I believe, at least nineteen in twenty of our Preachers, and an equal majority of the people. We are fully convinced that to separate from an established Church is never lawful but when it is of absolute necessity; and we do not see any such necessity yet. Therefore, we have at present no thoughts of separation.

With regard to the steps we have hitherto taken, we have used all the caution which was possible. We have done nothing rashly, nothing without deep and long consideration, hearing and weighing all objections, and much prayer. Nor have we taken one deliberate step, of which we, as yet, see reason to repent. It is true, in some things we vary from the rules of our Church; but no further than we apprehend is our bounden duty. It is from a full conviction of this, that we preach abroad, use extemporary prayer, form those who appear to be awakened into societies, and permit laymen, whom we believe God has called, to preach.

I say, permit, because we ourselves have hitherto viewed it in no other light. This we are clearly satisfied we may do: That we may do more, we are not satisfied. It is not clear to us, that Presbyters, so circumstanced as we are, may appoint or ordain others; but it is, that we may direct, as well as suffer, them to do what we conceive they are moved to by the Holy Ghost. It is true, that, in ordinary cases, both an inward and an outward call are requisite. But we apprehend there is something far from ordinary in the present case. And upon the calmest view of things, we think, they who are only called of God, and not of man, have more right to preach, than they who are only called of man, and not of God. Now, that many of the Clergy, though called of man, are not called of God, to preach his Gospel, is undeniable, 1. Because they themselves utterly disclaim, nay, and ridicule, the inward call. 2. Because they do not know what the Gospel is; of consequence, they do not and cannot preach it.

Dear Sir, coolly and impartially consider this, and you will see on which side the difficulty lies. I do assure you, this at present is my chief embarrassment. That I have not gone too far yet, I know; but whether I have gone far enough, I am extremely doubtful. I see those running whom God hath not sent; destroying their own souls, and

those that hear them; perverting the right ways of the Lord, and blaspheming the truth as it is in Jesus. I see the blind leading the blind, and both falling into the ditch. Unless I warn, in all the ways I can, these perishing souls of their danger, am I clear of the blood of these men? Soul-damning Clergymen lay me under more difficulties than soul-saving laymen!

Those among ourselves who have been in doubt whether they ought so to beware of these false prophets, as not to hear them at all, are not men of a "forward, uncharitable zeal;" but of a calm, loving, temperate spirit. They are perfectly easy as to their own call to preach; but they are troubled for these poor, uncalled, blind guides; and they are sometimes afraid that the countenancing these is a dead weight even on those Clergymen who are really called of God. "Why else," say they, "does not God bless their labours? Why do they still stretch forth their hands in vain?" We know several regular Clergymen who do preach the genuine Gospel; but to no effect at all. There is one exception in England,—Mr. Walker, at Truro. We do not know one more who has converted one soul in his own parish. If it be said, "Has not Mr. Grimshaw and Mr. Baddiley?" No, not one, till they were irregular; till both the one and the other formed irregular societies, and took in laymen to assist them. Can there be a stronger proof that God is pleased with irregular, even more than with regular, preaching?

"But might not the Methodists in general serve the interests of Christ better, as witnesses and examples of a living faith, by returning to a closer union with the Church, than by separating still further?" We have no design at present of separating further, if we have yet separated at all. Neither dare we return to a closer union, if that means either prohibiting lay Preachers, or ceasing to watch over each other in love, and regularly meeting for that purpose.

If there be any further advices, whether with regard to doctrines or practice, which you judge might be of service to us, they would be thankfully received and considered by,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Your obliged and affectionate brother and servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

## A LETTER

TO

THE REVEREND MR. CLARKE.

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REV. SIR,

CASTLEBAR, *July 3, 1756.*

I AM obliged to you for the openness and candour with which you write, and will endeavour to follow the pattern which you have set me. I sent that sermon with no particular view, but as a testimony of love to a fellow-labourer in the Gospel.

From the text of that sermon, I do not infer that Christians are not to inquire into each other's opinions. Indeed, from that text I do not infer anything. I use it to illustrate, not to prove. I am very sensible, "Jehu had more regard to state policy than to religion;" (page 5;) and have no objection at all to the very fair explication which you have given of his words. Accordingly, I say, (page 13,) "What is implied in the question? I do not mean, what did Jehu imply therein, but what should a follower of Christ understand thereby, when he proposes it to any of his brethren?"

Of these only I speak. My general proposition, you may please to remember, is this: "All the children of God may unite in love, notwithstanding difference in opinions or modes of worship."

From this persuasion, whenever I meet with any whom I have reason to believe children of God, I do not ask of him with whom I would unite in love, (never at the entrance upon our conversation, seldom till we are a little acquainted,) "Do you agree with my opinions and mode of worship? particularly with regard to church government, baptism, and the Lord's supper?" I "let all these stand by," till we begin to know, and have confirmed our love to, each other. Then may come "a more convenient season" for entering into controversy. My only question at present is, "Is thy heart right?" (Page 13.)

At present, I say, keep your own opinion; I mine. I

do not desire you to dispute these points. Whether we shall dispute them hereafter, is another question: Perhaps we may, perhaps we may not. This will depend on a great variety of circumstances; particularly on a probability of success; for I am determined never to dispute at all, if I have no hope of convincing my opponent.

As to my own judgment, I still believe "the Episcopal form of church government to be scriptural and apostolical." I mean, well agreeing with the practice and writings of the Apostles. But that it is prescribed in Scripture, I do not believe. This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I have been heartily ashamed of ever since I read Bishop Stillingfleet's "Irenicon." I think he has unanswerably proved, that "neither Christ nor his Apostles prescribe any particular form of church government; and that the plea of divine right for diocesan Episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive church."

But, were it otherwise, I should still call these "smaller points" than the "loving God and all mankind." (Page 18.) And could any man answer those questions, "Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God over all, blessed for ever?" (which indeed no Arian or semi-Arian, and much less Socinian, can do:) "Is God the centre of thy soul? the sum of all thy desires? Art thou more afraid of displeasing God, than either of death or hell?" (page 15;) which no wicked man can possibly do; none who is not a real child of God: If, I say, a man could answer these in the affirmative, I would then gladly give him my hand.

This is certainly a principle held by those who are in derision termed Methodists; and to whom a Popish Priest in Dublin gave the still more unmeaning title of Swaddlers. They all desire to be of a catholic spirit; meaning thereby, not "an indifference to all opinions;" not "indifference as to the manner of public worship:" This they know to be quite another thing. "Love, they judge, gives a title to this character. Catholic love is a catholic spirit." (Page 25.)

As to heresy and schism, I cannot find one text in the Bible where they are taken in the modern sense. I remember no one scripture wherein heresy signifies "error in opinion," whether fundamental or not; nor any wherein schism signifies a "separation from the Church," whether

with cause or without. I wish, Sir, you would re-consider this point, and review the scriptures wherein those terms occur.

Yet I would take some pains to recover any one from error, or to reconcile him to our Church: I mean, to the Church of England; from which I do not separate yet, and probably never shall. The little church, in the vulgar sense of the word, which I occasionally mentioned at Holy-Mount, is that wherein I read prayers, and preach, and administer the sacrament, every Sunday when I am in London. But I would take much more pains to recover any one from sin. One who lives and dies in error, or in dissent from our Church, may yet be saved; but one who lives and dies in sin must perish. O Sir, let us bend our main force against this! against all sin both in ourselves and them that hear us! I would to God we could all agree both in opinions and outward worship. But if this cannot be, may we not agree in holiness? May we not all agree in being holy, as He that hath called us is holy, both in heart, and in all manner of conversation? This is the great desire of,

Rev. Sir,

Your very humble servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

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## SECOND LETTER

TO

THE REVEREND MR. CLARKE.

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REV. SIR,

LONDON, *September 10, 1756.*

YESTERDAY I received your favour of July 9. As you therein speak freely and openly, I will endeavour to do the same; at which I am persuaded you will not be displeas'd.

1. Of the words imputed to Mr. Langston, I said nothing, because he denied the charge: And I had not an opportunity of hearing the accused and the accuser face to face.

2. That there are enthusiasts among the Methodists, I doubt not; and among every other people under heaven: But that they are "made such either by our doctrine or discipline," still remains to be proved. If they are such in spite of our doctrine and discipline, their madness will not be laid to our charge.

I know nothing of that anonymous pamphlet on inspiration. How does it appear to be wrote by a disciple of mine? Be it good, bad, or indifferent, I am not concerned or anyway accountable for it.

3. I believe several who are not Episcopally ordained are called of God to preach the Gospel. Yet I have no objection to the Twenty-third Article, though I judge there are exempt cases.

That the seven Deacons were outwardly ordained, even to that low office, cannot be denied. But when Paul and Barnabas were separated for the work to which they were called, this was not ordaining them. St. Paul was ordained long before, and that not of man, nor by man. It was only inducting him to the province for which our Lord had appointed him from the beginning. For this end the Prophets and Teachers fasted, prayed, and "laid their hands upon them;" a rite which was used, not in ordination only, but in blessing, and on many other occasions.

4. Concerning diocesan Episcopacy, there are several questions I should be glad to have answered: (1.) Where is it prescribed in Scripture? (2.) How does it appear that the Apostles "settled it in all the churches they planted?" (3.) How does it appear that they so settled it in any, as to make it of perpetual obligation? It is allowed, "Christ and his Apostles did put the churches under some form of government or other." But, (1.) Did they put all churches under the same precise form? If they did, (2.) Can we prove this to have been the very same which now remains in the Church of England?

5. How Favorinus and many more may define both heresy and schism, I am not concerned to know. I well know, heresy is vulgarly defined, "a false opinion, touching some necessary article of faith;" and schism, "a causeless separation from a true church." But I keep to my Bible, as our Church in her Sixth Article teaches me to do. Therefore, I cannot take schism for a separation from a church, true or

false ; because I cannot find it is ever so taken in Scripture. The first time I read the term there, is 1 Cor. i. : I meet with it again, chap. xi. 18. But it is plain, by schisms in both places is meant, not any separation from the church, but uncharitable divisions in it. For the Corinthians continued to be one church ; and, notwithstanding all their strife and contention, there was no separation of any one party from the rest, with regard to external communion. It is in the same sense the word is used chap. xii. 25. And these are the only places in the New Testament where it occurs. Therefore, the indulging any unkind temper toward our fellow-Christians is the true scriptural schism.

Indeed, both heresies (which are also works of the flesh, and consequently damnable, if not repented of) and schisms are here mentioned by the Apostle, in very near the same sense ; unless by schisms he meant those inward animosities which occasioned heresies, that is, outward divisions and parties. So that while one said, "I am of Paul ; another, I am of Apollos ;" this implied both schism and heresy. So wonderfully have later ages distorted the words heresy and schism from their scriptural meaning ! Heresy is not in all the Bible taken for "an error in fundamentals," or in anything else ; nor schism for any separation made from the outward communion of others. Therefore, both heresy and schism, in the modern sense of the words, are sins that the Scripture knows nothing of.

6. But though I aver this, am I "quite indifferent as to any man's opinion in religion ?" Far, very far from it ; as I have declared again and again in the very sermon under consideration, in the "Character of a Methodist," in the "Plain Account," and twenty tracts besides. Neither do I "conceal my sentiments : " Few men less. I have written severally, and printed, against Deists, Papists, Mystics, Quakers, Anabaptists, Presbyterians, Calvinists, and Antinomians. An odd way of ingratiating myself with them, to strike at the apple of their eye ! Nevertheless, in all things indifferent, (but not at the expense of truth,) I rejoice to "please all men for their good to edification ;" if haply I may "gain more proselytes" to genuine, scriptural Christianity ; if I may prevail upon the more to love God and their neighbour, and to walk as Christ walked.

So far as I find them obstructive of this, I oppose wrong

opinions with my might; though even then, rather by guarding those who are yet free, than by disputing with those who are deeply infected. I need not dispute with many of these, to know there is no probability of convincing them. A thousand times have I found my father's words true: "You may have peace with the Dissenters, if you do not so humour them as to dispute with them. But if you do, they will outface and outlung you; and at the end you will be where you were at the beginning."

I have now, Sir, humoured you, so as to dispute with you a little. But with what probability of success? Suppose you have a single eye in this debate; suppose you aim, not at victory, but at truth only; yet what man of threescore (unless perchance one in an age) was ever convinced of anything? Is not an old man's motto, *Non persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris*?\* When we are past middle age, does not a kind of stiffness and inflexibility steal upon the mind as well as the body? And how does this bar the gate against all conviction! even before the eye of the soul too grows dim, and so less and less capable of discerning things which we are not already well acquainted with!

7. Yet on one point I must add a few words, because it is of the last importance: I said, "Orthodoxy, or right opinions, is never more than a slender part of religion; sometimes no part of it at all." And this I explained thus: "In a child of God, it is but a slender part of religion: It is no part at all in a child of the devil." The religion of a child of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Now, if orthodoxy be any part of this, (which itself might admit of a question,) it is a very slender part; though it is a considerable help both of love, peace, and joy. Religion is, in other words, the love of God and man, producing all holiness of conversation. Now, are right opinions any more (if they are so much) than a very slender part of this? Once more: Religion is the mind that was in Christ, and the walking as Christ walked. But how very slender a part of this are opinions, how right soever!

By a child of the devil, I mean, one who has no true religion at all; one who neither loves, nor fears, nor serves God. But it is certain, such a man may still be orthodox,

\* I will not be persuaded, even though you should convince me. —EDIT.

may entertain right opinions; and yet, it is equally certain, these are no part of religion in him that has no religion at all.

Permit me, Sir, to speak exceeding plainly. Are you not an orthodox man? Perhaps there is none more so in the diocese. And yet possibly you may have no religion at all. If it be true that you frequently drink to excess, you may have orthodoxy, but you can have no religion. If, when you are in a passion, you call your brother, "Thou fool," you have no religion at all. If you even curse, and take the name of God in vain, you can have no other religion than orthodoxy; a religion of which the devil and his angels may have full as much as you.

O Sir, what an idle thing is it for you to dispute about lay Preachers! Is not a lay Preacher preferable to a drunken Preacher? to a cursing, swearing Preacher? "Unto the ungodly saith God, Why takest thou my covenant in thy mouth, whereas thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee?" In tender compassion I speak this. May God apply it to your heart! Then you will not receive this as an affront, but as the highest instance of brotherly love from,

Rev. Sir,

Your truly affectionate servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

## A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

DEAR SIR,

*September 20, 1757.*

THE longer I am absent from London, and the more I attend the service of the Church in other places, the more I am convinced of the unspeakable advantage which the people called Methodists enjoy. I mean, even with regard to public worship, particularly on the Lord's day. The church where they assemble is not gay or splendid, which might be a hinderance on the one hand; nor sordid or dirty, which might give distaste on the other; but plain as well as clean. The persons who assemble there are not a

gay, giddy crowd, who come chiefly to see and be seen; nor a company of goodly, formal, outside Christians, whose religion lies in a dull round of duties; but a people most of whom do, and the rest earnestly seek to, worship God in spirit and in truth. Accordingly, they do not spend their time there in bowing and courtesying, or in staring about them; but in looking upward and looking inward, in hearkening to the voice of God, and pouring out their hearts before him.

It is also no small advantage that the person who reads Prayers (though not always the same, yet) is always one who may be supposed to speak from his heart, one whose life is no reproach to his profession; and one who performs that solemn part of divine service, not in a careless, hurrying, slovenly manner; but seriously and slowly, as becomes him who is transacting so high an affair between God and man.

Nor are their solemn addresses to God interrupted either by the formal drawl of a parish clerk, the screaming of boys, who bawl out what they neither feel nor understand, or the unseasonable and unmeaning impertinence of a voluntary on the organ. When it is seasonable to sing praise to God, they do it with the spirit, and with the understanding also; not in the miserable, scandalous doggerel of Hopkins and Sternhold, but in psalms and hymns which are both sense and poetry; such as would sooner provoke a critic to turn Christian, than a Christian to turn critic. What they sing is therefore a proper continuation of the spiritual and reasonable service; being selected for that end (not by a poor humdrum wretch who can scarce read what he drones out with such an air of importance, but) by one who knows what he is about, and how to connect the preceding with the following part of the service. Nor does he take just "two staves," but, more or less, as may best raise the soul to God; especially when sung in well-composed and well-adapted tunes, not by a handful of wild, unawakened striplings, but by a whole serious congregation; and these, not lolling at ease, or in the indecent posture of sitting, drawling out one word after another, but all standing before God, and praising him lustily and with a good courage.

Nor is it a little advantage as to the next part of the

service, to hear a Preacher whom you know to live as he speaks, speaking the genuine Gospel of present salvation through faith, wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost; declaring present, free, full justification, and enforcing every branch of inward and outward holiness. And this you hear done in the most clear, plain, simple, unaffected language; yet with an earnestness becoming the importance of the subject, and with the demonstration of the Spirit.

With regard to the last and most awful part of divine service, the celebration of the Lord's supper, although we cannot say that either the unworthiness of the Minister, or the unholiness of some of the communicants, deprives the rest of a blessing from God; yet do they greatly lessen the comfort of receiving. But these discouragements are removed from you: You have proof that he who administers fears God; and you have no reason to believe, that any of your fellow-communicants walk unworthy of their profession. Add to this, that the whole service is performed in a decent and solemn manner, is enlivened by hymns suitable to the occasion, and concluded with prayer that comes not out of feigned lips.

Surely then, of all the people in Great Britain, the Methodists would be the most inexcusable, should they let any opportunity slip of attending that worship, which has so many advantages, should they prefer any before it, or not continually improve by the advantages they enjoy! What can be pleaded for them, if they do not worship God in spirit and in truth; if they are still outward worshippers only, approaching God with their lips while their hearts are far from him? Yea, if, having known Him, they do not daily grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!

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## LETTER TO MR. N.

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MY DEAR BROTHER,                      KINGSWOOD, *September 3, 1756.*

In your letters of July, and August 27, you charge me, first, with self-inconsistency, in tolerating lay preaching, and not lay administering; and, secondly, with showing a spirit

of persecution, in denying my brethren the liberty of acting (as well as thinking) according to their own conscience.

As to the former charge, the fact alleged is true: I do tolerate unordained persons in preaching the Gospel; whereas I do not tolerate them in administering the sacraments. But it is not true, that I am self-inconsistent in so doing. I act on one and the same principle still. My principle (frequently declared) is this, "I submit to every ordinance of man, wherever I do not conceive there is an absolute necessity for acting contrary to it." Consistently with this, I do tolerate lay preaching, because I conceive there is an absolute necessity for it; inasmuch as were it not, thousands of souls would perish everlastingly. Yet I do not tolerate lay administering, because I do not conceive there is any such necessity for it; seeing it does not appear, that, if this is not at all, one soul will perish for want of it.

I am therefore so far from self-inconsistency in tolerating the former, and not the latter, that I really should be self-inconsistent were I to act otherwise: Were I to break, or allow others to break, an ordinance of man, where there is no necessity, I should contradict my own principle, as much as if I did not allow it to be broken where there is.

As to the latter charge, that "I deny my brethren the liberty of acting according to their own conscience, and therefore show a spirit of persecution;" I again allow the fact, but deny the consequence. I mean, I allow the fact thus far: Some of our Preachers, who are not ordained, think it quite right to administer the Lord's supper, and believe it would do much good. I think it quite wrong, and believe it would do much hurt. Hereupon I say, "I have no right over your conscience, nor you over mine: Therefore, both you and I must follow our own conscience. You believe, it is a duty to administer: Do so; and therein follow your own conscience. I verily believe it is a sin; which, consequently, I dare not tolerate; and herein I follow mine." Yet this is no persecution, were I to separate from our society (which I have not done yet) those who practise what I believe is contrary to the word, and destructive of the work, of God.

Last week I had a long letter from William Darney, who likewise wonders we should be of so persecuting a spirit as to deny him the liberty of thinking and speaking in our

societies according to his own conscience. How will you answer him, and excuse Ted and Charles Perronet from the charge of persecuting their brother? They then said, (as did all,) "Let him preach Calvinism elsewhere; (we have no right to hinder him;) but not among us, because we are persuaded it would do much hurt." Take the answer back: If it was good in one case, so was it in the other likewise.

If John Jones, my brother, or any other Preacher, has preached sharply on this head, I certainly am a stranger to it, and therefore not answerable for it. I persecute no man on this account, or any other; and yet I cannot consent, that any of our lay Preachers should either preach predestination, or administer the sacraments, to those who are under my care.

But is it immoral? It is immoral to think, speak, or act, contrary to the love which "thinketh no evil." Now of this, both Charles and you are palpably guilty, in thinking the body of the Methodists (either Preachers or people) are fallen from the simplicity and uprightness of the Gospel. Whatever seven or eight of the Preachers may be, who have warmly debated this point with you; whatever two or three hundred of the people may be, who have been hurt by the disputants on either side; the main body of the Methodists never were more simple or upright than at this day. Therefore your thinking so ill of both Preachers and people is a manifest breach of the law of love. And whoever is, or is not, fallen from the spirit of the Gospel, it is certain, you are, for one.

But after all this pother, what is this persecution, concerning which you make so loud an outcry? Why, some of our lay Preachers did what we thought was both ill in itself, and likely to do much harm among the people. Of this, complaint was made to me. And what did I do? Did I expel those Preachers out of our community? Not so. Did I forbid them to preach any more? Not so, neither. Did I degrade them from Itinerant to Local Preachers? Not so much as this. I told them, I thought the thing was wrong, and would do hurt, and therefore advised them to do it no more. Certainly this is a new species of persecution! I cannot but think you might as well call it murder.

"O, but you would have done more, if they had per-

sisted." That is, I would have persecuted. Whatever I would have done if things had been which were not, I have not done it yet. I have used no arbitrary, no coercive power; nay, no power at all in this matter, but that of love. I have given no man an ill word or an ill look on the account. I have not withdrawn my confidence or my conversation from any. I have dealt with every man, as, if the tables were turned, I should desire he would deal with me.

"But I would not dispute with you." Not for a time: Not till your spirits were a little evaporated. But you argue too fast, when you infer from hence, that I myself cannot confute your favourite notion. You are not sure of that. But come what will, you are resolved to try. Well then, move fair and softly. You and Charles Perronet aver, that you have a right to administer the Lord's supper; and that therefore you ought to administer it among the Methodists, or to separate from them. If the assertion were proved, I should deny the consequence. But first, I desire proof of the assertion.

Let him or you give the proof, only without any flourish or rhetorical amplifications, (which exceedingly abound in all C. P.'s letters to my brother on this subject,) and I will give you an answer, though we are not on even ground; for you have no business, and I have no leisure. And if you continue instant in prayer, particularly for a lowly and teachable spirit, I do not despair of your finding both that life and love which you have not lately enjoyed.

I am

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

I shall add a few remarks on C. P.'s letters, though the substance of them is contained in yours. "Some of the fundamentals of your constitution are wrong." Our fundamentals are laid down in the "Plain Account." Which of these is wrong, and yet "borne by you for eight years?"

"O inconsistency! O excuseless tyranny!" &c. Flourish. Set that down for nothing. "These very men who themselves break the laws of the State, deny us liberty of conscience." In plain terms, These very men who preach the Gospel contrary to law, do not approve of our administering the sacraments. They do not. They greatly dis-

approve of it; and that without any inconsistency at all: Because the case is not parallel. The one is absolutely necessary to the salvation of thousands; the other not.

"Your brother has to the last refused me liberty of conscience." Under what penalty? This heavy charge amounts in reality to this: I still think you have no right to administer the Lord's supper; in consequence of which, I advise you not to do it. Can I do less? Or have I done more?

"I wish I could say, that anything of wicked lewdness would have met with the same opposition!" Is not this pretty, brother Norton? Do you subscribe to this? I think you know us better. Do we not so much as advise our Preachers and people to abstain from wicked lewdness? "Can it be denied that known wantonness, that deceit and knavery, have been among us, and that little notice has been taken of it?" I totally deny it. Much notice has been taken, by me in particular, of what evil has been done by any Preacher. I have constantly examined all the parties; and have, in every instance, so far animadverted on the delinquent as justice joined with mercy required.

"My crime is, that I would worship Christ, as his word, his Spirit, and my own conscience teach me. Let God and man be witness that we part for this and nothing else." Namely, because I am of a different judgment, and cannot approve of what I judge to be wrong. So says W. Darney, "My crime is, that I would preach Christ, as His word, His Spirit, and my own conscience teach me." But he has far more ground for complaint than you: For we ourselves separated him from us; whereas you call God and man to witness, that you separate yourself for this and nothing else, that I cannot approve what I judge to be wrong.

But this is not all your crime: You have also drank into the spirit of James Wheatley; and you have adopted his very language: You are become, like him, an accuser of your brethren. O Charles, it was time you should separate from them; for your heart was gone from them before!

"Whatever motives of another kind might be blended with those that really belonged to conscience, in your rejecting what I laid before you," (not consenting that I should administer,) "God knows." I know of none. I have no other motive of acting, than the glory of God and

the good of souls. Here again you are become not only an accuser, but a false accuser, and an unjust judge, of your brother.

“You grant more to others. To my certain knowledge, both of you have been told for more than two years, that James Morris administered.” You may as well say, “To my certain knowledge, black is white.” I never was told it to this day, unless by C. Perronet. But whether he does or no, it is nothing to me. He never was in close connexion with us: He is now in no connexion at all. We have totally renounced him. So here is another instance of accusing, yea, falsely accusing, your brethren.

“A man may be circumcised, count his beads, or adore a cross, and still be a member of your society.” That is, may be a Papist or a Jew. I know no such instance in England or Ireland. We have many members in Ireland, that were Papists; but not one that continues so.

“Other reasons than those that could possibly relate to conscience have borne too much share in the late affair.” I say as before, I am not conscious of it. And who art thou that judgest another’s servant?

“You have allowed, we are called to this by the Holy Ghost, and that God was with us in what we did.” I allow! No more than I allow you to be archangels. I allow neither the one nor the other. I believe you felt joy, or power, so called; but I do not know that it was from God; and I said, “Supposing you were called of God to this,” (which is exceeding far from granting it,) “still you ought to wave that privilege out of tenderness to your brethren.” I do not grant, either that God calls you to do this, or that he ever blessed you in it.

That Methodism, (so called,) that is, vital religion, loving faith, in the hearts of those who are vulgarly termed Methodists, should seem to you, sitting snug at London or Bristol, to be “very much in its decline,” is no wonder. But I, who see things in every place with my own eyes, know it is very much in its increase. Many are daily added to them that believe; many more are continually awakened; so that the societies from east to west, from north to south, in both kingdoms, increase in grace, as well as number.

“I wish the argument” (which is no argument at all, as being grounded on a palpable mistake) “be not too home to

bear a dispute among honest men." Very well! Another clear proof of the love that thinketh no evil.

"If you had consented." This is the very point. I could not consent (which implies some degree of approbation) to what I judged to be totally wrong. Yet neither did I persecute. I inflicted no penalty of any kind on those whom I judged to have done wrong; because I believed they acted from conscience, though erroneous: I only mildly advised them to desist.

"I never will be again united with any who will not let others choose their own religion." Then you will never unite with any but knaves; for no honest men who preside over any community will let the members of it do what they judge to be wrong, and hurtful to that community, without endeavouring to prevent it, at least, by mild, loving, friendly advice.

"I go away, not of choice, but of necessity." So you must think, till God opens your eyes. "Your kindness at our first acquaintance, the Providence that brought us together, and the keeping up that acquaintance after so many snares of the enemy to destroy it, make it sacred, as well as dear, to me." And yet for such a reason as this,—because I advise you to abstain from doing what I think you have no right to do; what I judge to be both evil in itself, and productive of ill consequences; for this reason you burst all the bonds asunder, and cast away the cords from you.

The Lord God enlighten the eyes of your understanding, and soften and enlarge your heart!

JOHN WESLEY.

# REASONS

AGAINST

## A SEPARATION FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1753.

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1. WHETHER it be lawful or no, (which itself may be disputed, being not so clear a point as some may imagine,) it is by no means expedient, for us to separate from the established Church:—

(1.) Because it would be a contradiction to the solemn and repeated declarations which we have made in all manner of ways, in preaching, in print, and in private conversation.

(2.) Because (on this as well as on many other accounts) it would give huge occasion of offence to those who seek and desire occasion, to all the enemies of God and his truth.

(3.) Because it would exceedingly prejudice against us many who fear, yea, who love, God, and thereby hinder their receiving so much, perhaps any farther, benefit from our preaching.

(4.) Because it would hinder multitudes of those who neither love nor fear God from hearing us at all.

(5.) Because it would occasion many hundreds, if not some thousands, of those who are now united with us, to separate from us; yea, and some of those who have a deep work of grace in their souls.

(6.) Because it would be throwing balls of wild-fire among them that are now quiet in the land. We are now sweetly united together in love. We mostly think and speak the same thing. But this would occasion inconceivable strife and contention, between those who left, and those who remained in, the Church; as well as between those who left us, and those who remained with us; nay, and between those very persons who remained, as they were variously inclined one way or the other.

(7.) Because, whereas controversy is now asleep, and we in great measure live peaceably with all men, so that we are strangely at leisure to spend our whole time and strength in

enforcing plain, practical, vital religion, (O what would many of our forefathers have given, to have enjoyed so blessed a calm!) this would utterly banish peace from among us, and that without hope of its return. It would engage me, for one, in a thousand controversies, both in public and private; (for I should be in conscience obliged to give the reasons of my conduct, and to defend those reasons against all opposers;) and so take me off from those more useful labours which might otherwise employ the short remainder of my life.

(8.) Because to form the plan of a new church would require infinite time and care, (which might be far more profitably bestowed,) with much more wisdom and greater depth and extensiveness of thought than any of us are masters of.

(9.) Because from some having barely entertained a distant thought of this, evil fruits have already followed; such as prejudice against the Clergy in general, and aptness to believe ill of them; contempt (not without a degree of bitterness) of Clergymen, as such; and a sharpness of language toward the whole order, utterly unbecoming either gentlemen or Christians.

(10.) Because the experiment has been so frequently tried already, and the success never answered the expectation. God has since the Reformation raised up from time to time many witnesses of pure religion. If these lived and died (like John Arndt, Robert Bolton, and many others) in the churches to which they belonged, notwithstanding the wickedness which overflowed both the Teachers and people therein, they spread the leaven of true religion far and wide, and were more and more useful, till they went to paradise. But if, upon any provocation or consideration whatever, they separated, and founded distinct parties, their influence was more and more confined; they grew less and less useful to others, and generally lost the spirit of religion themselves in the spirit of controversy.

(11.) Because we have melancholy instances of this, even now before our eyes. Many have in our memory left the Church, and formed themselves into distinct bodies. And certainly some of them from a real persuasion that they should do God more service. But have any separated themselves and prospered? Have they been either more holy, or more useful, than they were before?

(12.) Because by such a separation we should not only

throw away the peculiar glorying which God has given us, that we do and will suffer all things for our brethren's sake, though the more we love them, the less we be loved; but should act in direct contradiction to that very end for which we believe God hath raised us up. The chief design of His providence in sending us out is, undoubtedly, to quicken our brethren. And the first message of all our Preachers is, to the lost sheep of the Church of England. Now, would it not be a flat contradiction to this design, to separate from the Church? These things being considered, we cannot apprehend (whether it be lawful in itself or no) that it is lawful for us; were it only on this ground, that it is by no means expedient.

2. It has indeed been objected, that till we do separate, we cannot be a compact, united body.

It is true, we cannot till then be "a compact, united body," if you mean by that expression, a body distinct from all others. And we have no desire so to be.

It has been objected, secondly, "It is mere cowardice and fear of persecution which makes you desire to remain united with them."

This cannot be proved. Let every one examine his own heart, and not judge his brother.

It is not probable. We never yet, for any persecution, when we were in the midst of it, either turned back from the work, or even slackened our pace.

But this is certain; that although persecution many times proves an unspeakable blessing to them that suffer it, yet we ought not wilfully to bring it upon ourselves. Nay, we ought to do whatever can lawfully be done, in order to prevent it. We ought to avoid it so far as we lawfully can; when persecuted in one city, to flee into another. If God should suffer a general persecution, who would be able to abide it we know not. Perhaps those who talk loudest might flee first. Remember the case of Dr. Pendleton.

3. Upon the whole, one cannot but observe how desirable it is, that all of us who are engaged in the same work should think and speak the same thing, be united in one judgment, and use one and the same language.

Do we not all now see ourselves, the Methodists (so called) in general, the Church and the Clergy, in a clear light?

We look upon ourselves, not as the authors or ringleaders

of a particular sect or party; (it is the farthest thing from our thoughts;) but as messengers of God to those who are Christians in name, but Heathens in heart and in life, to call them back to that from which they are fallen, to real genuine Christianity. We are therefore debtors to all these, of whatever opinion or denomination; and are consequently to do all that in us lies, to please all for their good, to edification.

We look upon the Methodists (so called) in general, not as any particular party; (this would exceedingly obstruct the grand design, for which we conceive God has raised them up;) but as living witnesses, in and to every party, of that Christianity which we preach; which is hereby demonstrated to be a real thing, and visibly held out to all the world.

We look upon England as that part of the world, and the Church as that part of England, to which all we who are born and have been brought up therein, owe our first and chief regard. We feel in ourselves a strong *στοργή*, a kind of natural affection for our country, which we apprehend Christianity was never designed either to root out or to impair. We have a more peculiar concern for our brethren, for that part of our countrymen to whom we have been joined from our youth up, by ties of a religious as well as a civil nature. True it is, that they are, in general, "without God in the world:" So much the more do our bowels yearn over them. They do lie "in darkness and the shadow of death:" The more tender is our compassion for them. And when we have the fullest conviction of that complicated wickedness which covers them as a flood, then do we feel the most (and we desire to feel yet more) of that inexpressible emotion with which our blessed Lord beheld Jerusalem, and wept and lamented over it. Then are we the most willing "to spend and to be spent" for them; yea, to "lay down our lives for our brethren."

We look upon the Clergy, not only as a part of these our brethren, but as that part whom God by His adorable providence has called to be watchmen over the rest, for whom therefore they are to give a strict account. If these then neglect their important charge, if they do not watch over them with all their power, they will be of all most miserable, and so are entitled to our deepest compassion. So that to feel, and much more to express, either contempt or bitterness.

towards them, betrays an utter ignorance of ourselves and of the spirit which we especially should be of.

Because this is a point of uncommon concern, let us consider it a little farther.

(1.) The Clergy, wherever we are, are either friends to the truth, or neutrals, or enemies to it.

If they are friends to it, certainly we should do everything, and omit everything, we can with a safe conscience, in order to continue, and, if it be possible, increase, their good-will to it.

If they neither further nor hinder it, we should do all that in us lies, both for their sakes and for the sake of their several flocks, to give their neutrality the right turn, that it may change into love rather than hatred.

If they are enemies, still we should not despair of lessening, if not removing, their prejudice. We should try every means again and again; we should employ all our care, labour, prudence, joined with fervent prayer, to overcome evil with good, to melt their hardness into love.

It is true, that when any of these openly wrest the Scriptures, and deny the grand truths of the Gospel, we cannot but declare and defend, at convenient opportunities, the important truths which they deny. But in this case especially we have need of all gentleness and meekness of wisdom. Contempt, sharpness, bitterness, can do no good. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Harsh methods have been tried again and again (by two or three unsettled railers) at Wednesbury, St. Ives, Cork, Canterbury. And how did they succeed? They always occasioned numberless evils; often wholly stopped the course of the Gospel. Therefore, were it only on a prudential account, were conscience unconcerned therein, it should be a sacred rule to all our Preachers,—“No contempt, no bitterness, to the Clergy.”

(2.) Might it not be another (at least, prudential) rule for every Methodist Preacher, not to frequent any Dissenting meeting? (Though we blame none who have been always accustomed to it.) But if we do this, certainly our people will. Now, this is actually separating from the Church. If, therefore, it is (at least) not expedient to separate, neither is this expedient. Indeed, we may attend our assemblies, and the church too; because they are at different hours. But

we cannot attend both the meeting and the church, because they are at the same hours.

If it be said, "But at the church we are fed with chaff, whereas at the meeting we have wholesome food;" we answer, (i.) The prayers of the Church are not chaff; they are substantial food for any who are alive to God. (ii.) The Lord's supper is not chaff, but pure and wholesome for all who receive it with upright hearts. Yea, (iii.) In almost all the sermons we hear there, we hear many great and important truths: And whoever has a spiritual discernment, may easily separate the chaff from the wheat therein. (iv.) How little is the case mended at the meeting! Either the Teachers are "new light" men, denying the Lord that bought them, and overturning His Gospel from the very foundations; or they are Predestinarians, and so preach predestination and final perseverance, more or less. Now, whatever this may be to them who were educated therein, yet to those of our brethren who have lately embraced it, repeated experience shows it is not wholesome food; rather, to them it has the effect of deadly poison. In a short time it destroys all their zeal for God. They grow fond of opinions, and strife of words; they despise self-denial and the daily cross; and, to complete all, wholly separate from their brethren.

(3.) Nor is it expedient for any Methodist Preacher to imitate the Dissenters in their manner of praying; either in his tone,—all particular tones both in prayer and preaching should be avoided with the utmost care; nor in his language,—all his words should be plain and simple, such as the lowest of his hearers both use and understand; or in the length of his prayer, which should not usually exceed four or five minutes, either before or after sermon. One might add, neither should we sing like them, in a slow, drawling manner: We sing swift, both because it saves time, and because it tends to awake and enliven the soul.

(4.) If we continue in the Church, not by chance, or for want of thought, but upon solid and well-weighed reasons, then we should never speak contemptuously of the Church, or anything pertaining to it. In some sense it is the mother of us all, who have been brought up therein. We ought never to make her blemishes matter of diversion, but rather of solemn sorrow before God. We ought never to talk

ludicrously of them; no, not at all, without clear necessity. Rather, we should conceal them, as far as ever we can, without bringing guilt upon our own conscience. And we should all use every rational and scriptural means, to bring others to the same temper and behaviour. I say, "all;" for if some of us are thus minded, and others of an opposite spirit and behaviour, this will breed a real schism among ourselves. It will of course divide us into two parties; each of which will be liable to perpetual jealousies, suspicions, and animosities against the other. Therefore, on this account likewise, it is expedient, in the highest degree, that we should be tender of the Church to which we belong.

(5.) In order to secure this end, to cut off all jealousy and suspicion from our friends, and hope from our enemies, of our having any design to separate from the Church, it would be well for every Methodist Preacher, who has no scruple concerning it, to attend the service of the Church as often as conveniently he can. And the more we attend it, the more we love it, as constant experience shows. On the contrary, the longer we abstain from it, the less desire we have to attend it at all.

(6.) Lastly. Whereas we are surrounded on every side by those who are equally enemies to us and to the Church of England; and whereas these are long practised in this war, and skilled in all the objections against it; while our brethren, on the other hand, are quite strangers to them all, and so, on a sudden, know not how to answer them; it is highly expedient for every Preacher to be provided with sound answers to those objections, and then to instruct the societies where he labours, how to defend themselves against those assaults. It would be therefore well for you carefully to read over the "Preservative against unsettled Notions in Religion," together with "Serious Thoughts concerning Perseverance," and "Predestination calmly considered." And when you are masters of them yourselves, it will be easy for you to recommend and explain them to our societies; that they may "no more be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine;" but, being settled in one mind and one judgment by solid scriptural and rational arguments, "may grow up in all things into Him who is our Head, even Jesus Christ."

JOHN WESLEY.

I THINK myself bound in duty to add my testimony to my brother's. His twelve reasons against our ever separating from the Church of England are mine also. I subscribe to them with all my heart. Only, with regard to the first, I am quite clear that it is neither expedient nor lawful for me to separate; and I never had the least inclination or temptation so to do. My affection for the Church is as strong as ever; and I clearly see my calling; which is, to live and to die in her communion. This, therefore, I am determined to do, the Lord being my Helper.

I have subjoined the Hymns for the lay Preachers; \* still farther to secure this end, to cut off all jealousy and suspicion from our friends, or hope from our enemies, of our having any design of ever separating from the Church. I have no secret reserve, or distant thought of it. I never had. Would to God all the Methodist Preachers were, in this respect, like-minded with

CHARLES WESLEY.

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## A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

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DEAR SIR,

*April 10, 1761.*

1. IN order to answer the question more clearly, which Mr. — has proposed to you, it may be well to look a little backward. Some years since, two or three Clergymen of the Church of England, who were above measure zealous for all her rules and orders, were convinced that religion is not an external thing, but “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;” and that this righteousness, and peace, and joy, are given only to those who are justified by faith. As soon as they were convinced of these great truths, they preached them; and multitudes flocked to hear. For these

\* The Hymns here referred to are seven in number, and most of them of considerable length. They were appended to Mr. Wesley's “Reasons” when published in a separate pamphlet; and are strongly descriptive of the fallen state of the Established Church, with regard to doctrine, discipline, and morals, and of that spirit of zeal, devotion, and self-denial by which the early Methodist Preachers were distinguished.—EDIT.

reasons, and no others, real or pretended, (for as yet they were strictly regular,) because they preached such doctrine, and because such multitudes followed them, they were forbid to preach in the churches. Not daring to be silent, they preached elsewhere, in a school, by a river-side, or upon a mountain; and more and more sinners forsook their sins, and were filled with peace and joy in believing.

2. But, at the same time, huge offence was taken at their "gathering congregations" in so irregular a manner: And it was asked,

(1.) "Do you judge that the Church, with the authority of the State, has power to enact laws for her own government?" I answer, If a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me, no Church has power to enjoin me silence. Neither has the State; though it may abuse its power, and enact laws whereby I suffer for preaching the Gospel.

(2.) "Do you judge it your duty to submit to the laws of the Church and State, as far as they are consistent with a good conscience?"

I do: But "woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel." This is not consistent with a good conscience.

(3.) "Is it a law of the Church and State, that none of her Ministers shall gather congregations, but by the appointment of the Bishop? If any do, does not she forbid her people to attend them? Are they not subversive of the good order of the Church? Do you judge there is anything sinful in such a law?"

I answer, (i.) If there is a law, that a Minister of Christ who is not suffered to preach the Gospel in the church should not preach it elsewhere, I do judge that law to be absolutely sinful. (ii.) If that law forbids Christian people to hear the Gospel of Christ out of their parish church, when they cannot hear it therein, I judge it would be sinful for them to obey it. (iii.) This preaching is not subversive of any good order whatever. It is only subversive of that vile abuse of the good order of our Church, whereby men who neither preach nor live the Gospel are suffered publicly to overturn it from the foundation; and, in the room of it, to palm upon their congregations a wretched mixture of dead form and maimed morality.

(4.) "If these premises be allowed"—They cannot be allowed. So from nothing, nothing follows,

3. It was objected farther,

(1.) "In every nation there must be some settled order of government, ecclesiastical and civil."

There must: But put civil out of the question. It only tends to puzzle the cause.

(2.) "The Scriptures likewise enjoin this." They do, that all things in the church be done in order.

(3.) "There is an ecclesiastical order established in England, and it is a lawful one."

I believe it is, in general, not only lawful, but highly commendable.

(4.) "But Mr. — tells you, 'You are born under this Establishment. Your ancestors supported it, and were ennobled on that account.' These points, I think, are not very material; but that which follows is. 'You have, by deliberate and repeated acts of your own, engaged yourself to defend it. Your very rank and station constitute you a formal and eminent guardian of it.'"

A guardian of what? What is it that you have "deliberately engaged yourself to defend?" The constitution of the Church of England. And is not her doctrine a main part of this constitution? a far more essential part thereof than any rule of external order? Of this, then, you are a formal guardian; and you have deliberately engaged yourself to defend it. But have you deliberately engaged to defend her orders to the destruction of her doctrine? Are you a guardian of this external circumstance, when it tends to destroy the substance of her constitution? And if you are engaged at all events, to defend her order, are you also to defend the abuse of it? Surely no. Your rank, your station, your honour, your conscience, all engage you to oppose this.

(5.) "But how can it consist with the duty arising from all these, to give encouragement, countenance, and support, to principles and practices that are a direct renunciation of the established constitution; and that, in their genuine issue," (or natural tendency,) "are totally subversive of it?"

Are the principles of those Clergymen a direct renunciation of the established constitution? Are their practices so? Are either the one or the other "totally subversive of it?" Not so: Their fundamental principles are the very

principles of the Established Church. So is their practice too; save in a very few points, wherein they are constrained to deviate. Therefore it is no ways inconsistent with your duty to encourage, countenance, and support them; especially seeing they have no alternative. They must either be thus far irregular, or destroy their own souls, and let thousands of their brethren perish for lack of knowledge.

(6.) Nay, but their "principles and practices are of this character. For, (i.) They gather congregations, and exercise their ministerial office therein, in every part of this kingdom, directly contrary to the restraint laid on them at their ordination, and to the design of that parochial distribution of duty settled throughout this nation. (ii.) They maintain it lawful for men to preach who are not Episcopally ordained, and thereby contradict the Twenty-third Article. (iii.) They disclaim all right in the Bishops to control them in any of these matters, and say that, rather than be so controlled, they would renounce all communion with this Church. (iv.) These principles they industriously propagate among their followers."

I answer, First, They do gather congregations everywhere, and exercise their ministerial office therein. But this is not contrary to any restraint which was laid upon them at their ordination; for they were not ordained to serve any particular parish. And it is remarkable that Lincoln College was founded *ad propagandam Christianam fidem, et extirpandas hæreses*.\* But were it otherwise, suppose a parish Minister to be either ignorant or negligent of his duty, and one of his flock adjures me, for Christ's sake, to tell him what he must do to be saved: Was it ever the design of our Church, that I should refuse to do it, because he is not of my parish? "Secondly. They maintain it lawful for men to preach who are not Episcopally ordained." In some circumstances they do; particularly where thousands are rushing into destruction, and those who are ordained, and appointed to watch over them, neither care for nor know how to help them. "But hereby they contradict the Twenty-third Article, to which they have subscribed." They subscribed it in the simplicity of their hearts, when they firmly believed none but Episcopal ordination valid.

\* For propagating the Christian faith, and extirpating heresies.—EDIT.

But Bishop Stillingfleet has since fully convinced them, this was an entire mistake. "Thirdly. They disclaim all right in the Bishops to control them in any of these matters." In every point of an indifferent nature they obey the Bishops, for conscience' sake: But they think Episcopal authority cannot reverse what is fixed by Divine authority. Yet they are determined never to renounce communion with the Church, unless they are cast out headlong. If it be said, "Nay, but if I varied from the Church at all, I would throw off my gown, and be a professed Dissenter:" What! would you profess to dissent when you did not? If you would, they dare not do it. They love the Church, and therefore keep to all her doctrine and rules, as far as possibly they can: And if they vary at all, it shall not be a hair's breadth farther than they cannot help. "Fourthly. These principles they industriously propagate among their followers." Indeed they do not: The bulk of their followers know just nothing of the matter. They industriously propagate among them nothing but inward and outward holiness.

(7.) "Now these are oppositions to the most fundamental principles and essentially constituent parts of our Establishment; and not of ours only, but of every ecclesiastical Establishment that is, or ever has been, in the Christian world."

"The most fundamental principles!" No more than the tiles are the most fundamental principles of a house. Useful, doubtless, they are; yet you must take them off, if you would repair the rotten timber beneath. "Essentially constituent parts of our Establishment!" Well, we will not quarrel for a word. Perhaps the doors may be essentially constituent parts of the building we call a church. Yet, if it were on fire, we might innocently break them open, or even throw them for a time off the hinges. Now this is really the case. The timber is rotten, yea, the main beams of the house; and they want to place that firm beam, salvation by faith, in the room of salvation by works. A fire is kindled in the Church, the house of the living God; the fire of love of the world, ambition, covetousness, envy, anger, malice, bitter zeal; in one word, of ungodliness and unrighteousness. O who will come and help to quench it? Under disadvantages and discouragements of every kind, a little handful of men have made a beginning; and I trust they

will not leave off till the building is saved, or they sink in the ruins of it.

4. To sum up the whole: A few irregular men openly witness those truths of God which the regular Clergy (a few excepted) either suppress, or wholly deny.

Their word is accompanied with the power of God, convincing and converting sinners. The word of those is not accompanied with power: It neither wounds nor heals.

The former witness the truth and the power of God, by their own life and conversation: Therefore the world, men who know not God, hate them, and speak all manner of evil against them falsely. The latter are of the world: Therefore the world loves its own, and speaks honourably of them.

Which of these ought you to hear? those who declare, or those who deny, the truth of God? that word which is the power of God unto salvation, or that which lulls men on to destruction? the men who live, as well as preach, the Gospel, or those whose lives are no better than their doctrine?

“But they are irregular.” I answer,

(1.) That is not their choice. They must either preach irregularly, or not at all. (2.) Is such a circumstance of weight to turn the scale against the substance of the Gospel? If it is, if none ought to speak or hear the truth of God, unless in a regular manner, then (to mention but one consequence) there never could have been any reformation from Popery. For here the entire argument for Church order would have stood in its full force. Suppose one had asked a German nobleman to hear Martin Luther preach; might not his Priest have said, (without debating whether he preached the truth or not,) “My Lord, in every nation there must be some settled order of government, ecclesiastical and civil. There is an ecclesiastical order established in Germany. You are born under this establishment. Your ancestors supported it, and your very rank and station constitute you a formal and eminent guardian of it. How, then, can it consist with the duty arising from all these, to give encouragement, countenance, and support to principles and practices that are a direct renunciation of the established constitution?” Had the force of this reasoning been allowed, what had become of the Reformation?

Yet it was right; though it really was a subversion of the

whole ecclesiastical constitution, with regard to doctrine as well as discipline. Whereas this is no such thing. The doctrine of the Established Church, which is far the most essential part of her constitution, these Preachers manifestly confirm, in opposition to those who subvert it. And it is the opposition made to them by those subverters which constrains them, in some respects, to deviate from her discipline; to which, in all others, they conform for conscience. O what pity, that any who preach the same doctrine, and whom those subverters have not yet been able to thrust out, should join with them against their brethren in the common faith, and fellow-witnesses of the common salvation!

I am, dear Sir,  
Your willing servant for Christ's sake,  
JOHN WESLEY.

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A LETTER

TO

THE REVEREND MR. VENN.

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*Birmingham, June 22, 1765.*

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

HAVING at length a few hours to spare, I sit down to answer your last, which was particularly acceptable to me, because it was wrote with so great openness. I shall write with the same. And herein you and I are just fit to converse together; because we both like to speak blunt and plain, without going a great way round about. I shall likewise take this opportunity of explaining myself on some other heads. I want you to understand me inside and out. Then I say, *Sic sum: Si placeo, utere.\**

Were I allowed to boast myself a little, I would say, I want no man living; I mean, none but those who are now connected with me, and who bless God for that connexion.

\* This quotation from Terence is thus translated by Colman:—

“It is my way:

So, if you like me, use me.”—EDIT.

With these I am able to go through every part of the work to which I am called. Yet I have laboured after union with all whom I believe to be united with Christ. I have sought it again and again; but in vain. They were resolved to stand aloof. And when one and another sincere Minister of Christ has been inclined to come nearer to me, others have diligently kept them off, as though thereby they did God service.

To this poor end the doctrine of perfection has been brought in, head and shoulders. And when such concessions were made as would abundantly satisfy any fair and candid man, they were no nearer,—rather farther off; for they had no desire to be satisfied. To make this dear breach wider and wider, stories were carefully gleaned up, improved, yea, invented and retailed, both concerning me and “the perfect ones.” And when anything very bad has come to hand, some have rejoiced as though they had found great spoils.

By this means chiefly, the distance between you and me has increased ever since you came to Huddersfield; and perhaps it has not been lessened by that honest, well-meaning man, Mr. Burnet, and by others, who have talked largely of my dogmaticalness, love of power, errors, and irregularities. My dogmaticalness is neither more nor less than a custom of coming to the point at once, and telling my mind flat and plain, without any preface or ceremony. I could indeed premise something of my own imbecility, littleness of judgment, and the like; but, first, I have no time to lose, I must dispatch the matter as soon as possible. Secondly, I do not think it frank or ingenuous. I think these prefaces are mere artifice.

The power I have, I never sought. It was the undesired, unexpected result of the work God was pleased to work by me. I have a thousand times sought to devolve it on others; but as yet I cannot. I therefore suffer it till I can find any to ease me of my burden.

If any one will convince me of my errors, I will heartily thank him. I believe all the Bible, as far as I understand it, and am ready to be convinced. If I am a heretic, I became such by reading the Bible. All my notions I drew from thence; and with little help from men, unless in the single point of justification by faith. But I impose my notions upon none: I will be bold to say, there is no man

living farther from it. I make no opinion the term of union with any man: I think and let think. What I want is, holiness of heart and life. They who have this are my brother, sister, and mother.

“But you hold perfection.” True, that is, loving God with all our heart, and serving him with all our strength. I teach nothing more, nothing less, than this. And whatever infirmity, defect, *ανομία*, is consistent with this, any man may teach, and I shall not contradict him.

As to irregularity, I hope none of those who cause it do then complain of it. Will they throw a man into the dirt, and beat him because he is dirty? Of all men living, those Clergymen ought not to complain, who believe I preach the Gospel as to the substance of it. If they do not ask me to preach in their churches, they are accountable for my preaching in the fields.

I come now directly to your letter, in hopes of establishing a good understanding between us. I agreed to suspend, for a twelvemonth, our stated preaching at Huddersfield, which had been there these many years. If this answered your end, I am glad: My end it did not answer at all. Instead of coming nearer to me, you got farther off. I heard of it from every quarter, though few knew that I did; for I saw no cause to speak against you, because you did against me. I wanted you to do more, not less, good, and therefore durst not do or say anything to hinder it. And lest I should hinder it, I will make a farther trial, and suspend the preaching at Huddersfield for another year.

1. To clear the case between us a little farther. I must now adopt your words: “I, no less than you, preach justification by faith only, the absolute necessity of holiness, the increasing mortification of sin, and rejection of all past experiences and attainments. I abhor, as you do, all Antinomian abuse of the doctrine of Christ, and desire to see my people walking even as he walked. Is it then worth while, in order to gratify a few bigoted persons, or for the sake of the minute differences between us, to encourage all the train of evils which follow contention for opinions, in little matters as much as in great?”

2. If I was as strenuous with regard to perfection on one side, as you have been on the other, I should deny you to be a sufficient Preacher; but this I never did. And yet I

assure you, I can advance such reasons for all I teach as would puzzle you and all that condemn me to answer; but I am sick of disputing. Let them beat the air, and triumph without an opponent.

3. "None," you say, "preach in your houses, who do not hold the very same doctrine with you." This is not exactly the case. You are welcome to preach in any of those houses; as I know we agree in the main points; and whereinsoever we differ, you would not preach there contrary to me. "But would it not give you pain to have any other Teacher come among those committed to your charge, so as to have your plan disconcerted, your labours depreciated, and the affections of your flock alienated?" It has given me pain when I had reason to fear this was done, both at Leeds, Birstal, and elsewhere. And I was "under a temptation of speaking against you;" but I refrained even among my intimate friends. So far was I from publicly warning my people against one I firmly believed to be much better than myself.

4. Indeed I trust "the bad blood is now taken away." Let it return no more. Let us begin such a correspondence as has never been yet; and let us avow it before all mankind. Not content with not weakening each other's hands, or speaking against each other, directly or indirectly, (which may be effectually done under the notion of exposing this and that error,) let us defend each other's characters to the uttermost against either ill or well meaning evil speakers. I am not satisfied with, "Be very civil to the Methodists, but have nothing to do with them." No: I desire to have a league offensive and defensive with every soldier of Christ. We have not only one faith, one hope, one Lord, but are directly engaged in one warfare. We are carrying the war into the devil's own quarters, who therefore summons all his hosts to war. Come then, ye that love Him, to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty! I am now well-nigh *miles emeritus senex, sexagenarius*;\* yet I trust to fight a little longer. Come and strengthen the hands, till you supply the place, of

Your weak, but affectionate brother,  
JOHN WESLEY.

\* A veteran warrior, who has seen his sixtieth year, and is entitled to his discharge.—EDIT.

## ADDRESS TO THE TRAVELLING PREACHERS.

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MY DEAR BRETHREN,

*August 4, 1769.*

1. It has long been my desire that all those Ministers of our Church who believe and preach salvation by faith might cordially agree between themselves, and not hinder but help one another. After occasionally pressing this in private conversation, wherever I had opportunity, I wrote down my thoughts upon the head, and sent them to each in a letter. Out of fifty or sixty, to whom I wrote, only three vouchsafed me an answer. So I give this up: I can do no more. They are a rope of sand; and such they will continue.

2. But it is otherwise with the Travelling Preachers in our Connexion. You are at present one body. You act in concert with each other, and by united counsels. And now is the time to consider what can be done in order to continue this union. Indeed, as long as I live, there will be no great difficulty. I am, under God, a centre of union to all our Travelling as well as Local Preachers.

They all know me, and my communication. They all love me for my work's sake; and, therefore, were it only out of regard to me, they will continue connected with each other. But by what means may this connexion be preserved when God removes me from you?

3. I take it for granted, it cannot be preserved, by any means, between those who have not a single eye. Those who aim at anything but the glory of God, and the salvation of men; who desire or seek any earthly thing, whether honour, profit, or ease; will not, cannot, continue in the Connexion: It will not answer their design. Some of them, perhaps a fourth of the whole number, will secure preferment in the Church. Others will turn Independents, and get separate congregations, like John Edwards and Charles Skelton. Lay your accounts with this, and be not surprised if some you do not suspect be of this number.

4. But what method can be taken to preserve a firm union between those who choose to remain together?

Perhaps you might take some such steps as these:—

On notice of my death, let all the Preachers in England and Ireland repair to London within six weeks.\*

Let them seek God by solemn fasting and prayer.

Let them draw up articles of agreement, to be signed by those who choose to act in concert.

Let those be dismissed who do not choose it in the most friendly manner possible.

Let them choose, by votes, a committee of three, five, or seven, each of whom is to be Moderator in his turn.

Let the Committee do what I do now; propose Preachers to be tried, admitted, or excluded; fix the place of each Preacher for the ensuing year, and the time of the next Conference.

5. Can anything be done now in order to lay a foundation for this future union? Would it not be well, for any that are willing, to sign some articles of agreement before God calls me hence? Suppose something like these:—

“WE, whose names are under-written, being thoroughly convinced of the necessity of a close union between those whom God is pleased to use as instruments in this glorious work, in order to preserve this union between ourselves, are resolved, God being our Helper,—

“I. *To devote ourselves entirely to God; denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, steadily aiming at one thing,—to save our own souls, and them that hear us.*

“II. *To preach the old Methodist doctrines, and no other, contained in the Minutes of the Conferences.*

“III. *To observe and enforce the whole Methodist discipline laid down in the said Minutes.*”

\* This proposal was afterwards superseded by the “Deed of Declaration,” which constituted one hundred of the Preachers the legal Conference.—EDIT.

# SOME THOUGHTS

UPON

## AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.

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1. FOR many years I have earnestly advised, both in public and in private, all in connexion with me, who have been brought up in the Established Church, to continue therein; and of consequence to attend the public service of the church at all opportunities; and my reasons for so doing I published to all the world more than twenty years ago.

2. But a few months ago, I was favoured with a letter, which required me to review my sentiments. It is signed by several members of our society, men of a loving spirit, and of an unblamable conversation; and it is worthy of the greater regard, as they speak not only in their own name, but in the name of many who wish to have a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man.

3. Part of it runs thus:—

“Having read many of your books, and heard many of your Preachers, and being in connexion with you, we have from time to time been advised by them and you, constantly to attend the church. But we find that neither you nor your Preachers have given any countenance to the doctrines of Calvinism. This induces us humbly to ask the following questions:—

“First. Whether you would have us to go to that church where the doctrines of Calvinism are continually inculcated; and where the doctrines taught by you, Christian perfection in particular, are continually exploded.

“Secondly. Whether you think we shall be profited, in any degree, by hearing such preaching.

“Thirdly. Whether it is not a means of filling our hearts with prejudice either against those Preachers or against the truth.

“Fourthly. Whether hearing them does not expose us to temptation from those who continually ask, ‘How did you like the sermon to-day?’ We cannot dissemble; and if we do not, we offend them.

“If you please, you may give us your sentiments in the ‘Arminian Magazine.’

“JOHN W——,

“FRANCIS B——.

“NATHAN O——,

“JOSEPH B——.

“JOHN R——,

“BAILDON, *near* BRADFORTH,

“July 24, 1781.”

4. It is a delicate, as well as important, point, on which I hardly know how to answer. I cannot lay down any general rule. All I can say at present is, If it does not hurt you, hear them; if it does, refrain. Be determined by your own conscience. Let every man in particular act “as he is fully persuaded in his own mind.”

JOHN WESLEY.

November 19, 1781.

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## ON HEARING MINISTERS WHO OPPOSE THE TRUTH.

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1. LAST summer I received a letter from Yorkshire, signed by several serious men, who proposed a difficulty they were under, wherein they knew not how to act. And, indeed, I did not well know how to advise them. So I delayed giving them a determinate answer, till I could lay the matter before our brethren at the ensuing Conference.

2. Their difficulty was this: “You advise all the members of our societies constantly to attend the service of the Church. We have done so for a considerable time. But very frequently Mr. R., our Minister, preaches not only what we believe to be false, but dangerously false, doctrine. He asserts, and endeavours to prove, that we cannot be saved from our sins in this life; and that we must not hope to be

perfected in love on this side eternity. Our nature is very willing to receive this; therefore, it is very liable to hurt us. Hence we have a doubt, whether it is our duty to hear this preaching, which experience shows to weaken our souls."

3. This letter I laid before the Conference, and we easily perceived, the difficulty therein proposed concerned not only the society at Baildon, but many others in various parts of the kingdom. It was therefore considered at large; and all our brethren were desired to speak their sentiments freely. In the conclusion, they unanimously agreed, first, that it was highly expedient, all the Methodists (so called) who had been bred therein should attend the service of the Church as often as possible: But that, secondly, if the Minister began either to preach the absolute decrees, or to rail at and ridicule Christian perfection, they should quietly and silently go out of the church; yet attend it again the next opportunity.

4. I have since that time revolved this matter over and over in my own mind; and the more I consider it, the more I am convinced, this was the best answer that could be given. I still advise all our friends, when this case occurs, quietly and silently to go out. Only I must earnestly caution them not to be critical; not to make a man an offender for a word; no, nor for a few sentences, which any who believe the decrees may drop without design. But if such a Minister should at any time deliberately, and of set purpose, endeavour to establish absolute predestination, or to confute scriptural perfection; then I advise all the Methodists in the congregation quietly to go away.

JOHN WESLEY.

LEWISHAM,

*January 9, 1782.*

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## OF ATTENDING THE CHURCH.

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"REVEREND SIR,

*" February 13, 1782.*

"I AM, as you are, an Arminian. I am well acquainted with your religious tenets, and have read most, if not all,

of your Works ; and though I do not entirely fall in with you in every article of your creed, yet I have much respect to your character, great reverence for your principles in general, and an entire affection for your person. Depending upon the acknowledged candour of your disposition, and your uniform zeal for the truth, I expect your attention and answers to the following questions :—

“ Is it your wish that the people called Methodists should be, or become, a body entirely separate from the Church ? ”

Answer. No.

“ If not, when, that is, how often, and where, I mean, upon what description of Teachers of the Establishment, are they to attend ? ”

A. I advise them to go to church.

“ More particularly, if the fall, the corruption, and natural impotence of man, his free and full redemption in Christ Jesus, through faith working by love, should be taught and inculcated, and offered to the attention of all, at the church of the parish where they reside, are they then, in your opinion, bound in conscience to hear, or may they, at their own option, forbear ? ”

A. I do not think they are bound in conscience to attend any particular church.

“ Or, if they are at liberty to absent themselves, are they at liberty, that is, have they a Christian privilege, to censure this doctrine in the gross, to condemn such Teachers, and boldly to pronounce them ‘ blind leaders of the blind ? ’ ”

A. No ; by no means.

“ Lastly. Whenever this happens, is it through prejudice, or rational piety ? Is it through bigotry, or a catholic spirit ? Is it consistent with Christian charity ? Is it compatible with a state of justification ? Or is it even allowable in the high habit of evangelical perfection ? ”

A. I think it is a sin.

“ Your unequivocal answers to these interesting queries in the ‘ Arminian Magazine,’ will oblige,

Reverend Sir,

“ A RESPECTFUL READER.”

I have answered simply to your questions, whether they be proposed out of good or ill will.

JOHN WESLEY.

February 23, 1782.

# THOUGHTS

UPON

## SOME LATE OCCURRENCES.

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1. IN JUNE, 1744, I desired my brother and a few other Clergymen to meet me in London, to consider how we should proceed to save our own souls and those that heard us. After some time, I invited the lay Preachers that were in the house to meet with us. We conferred together for several days, and were much comforted and strengthened thereby.

2. The next year I not only invited most of the Travelling Preachers, but several others, to confer with me in Bristol. And from that time for some years, though I invited only a part of the Travelling Preachers, yet I permitted any that desired it, to be present, not apprehending any ill consequences therefrom.

3. But two ill consequences soon appeared : One, that the expense was too great to be borne ; the other, that many of our people were scattered while they were left without a shepherd. I therefore determined, (1.) That for the time to come, none should be present but those whom I invited ; and, (2.) That I would only invite a select number out of every Circuit.

4. This I did for many years, and all that time the term *Conference* meant not so much the conversation we had together, as the persons that conferred ; namely, those whom I invited to confer with me from time to time. So that all this time it depended on me alone, not only what persons should constitute the Conference,—but whether there should be any Conference at all : This lay wholly in my own breast ; neither the Preachers nor the people having any part or lot in the matter.

5. Some years after, it was agreed, that after the decease of my brother and me, the Preachers should be stationed by the Conference. But ere long a question arose, What does

that term mean? Who are the Conference? It appeared difficult to define the term. And the year before last all our brethren who were met at Bristol desired me to fix the determinate meaning of the word.

6. Hitherto, it had meant (not the whole body of Traveling Preachers, it never bore that meaning at all; but) those persons whom I invited yearly to confer with me. But to this there was a palpable objection,—Such a Conference would have no being after my death. And what other definition of it to give, I knew not; at least I knew none that would stand good in law. I consulted a skilful and honest Attorney; and he consulted an eminent Counsellor, who answered, “There is no way of doing this but by naming a determinate number of persons. The deed which names these must be enrolled in Chancery: Then it will stand good in law.”

7. My first thought was to name a very few, suppose ten or twelve persons. Count Zinzendorf named only six who were to preside over the community after his decease. But on second thoughts, I believed there would be more safety in a greater number of counsellors, and therefore named a hundred; as many as I judged could meet without too great an expense, and without leaving any Circuit naked of Preachers while the Conference met.

8. In naming these Preachers, as I had no adviser, so I had no respect of persons; but I simply set down those that, according to the best of my judgment, were most proper. But I am not infallible. I might mistake, and think better of some of them than they deserved. However, I did my best; and if I did wrong, it was not the error of my will, but of my judgment.

9. This was the rise, and this is the nature, of that famous Deed of Declaration,\* that vile, wicked Deed, concerning which you have heard such an outcry! And now, can any one tell me how to mend it, or how it could have been made better? “O yes. You might have inserted two hundred, as well as one hundred, Preachers.” No; for then the expense of meeting would have been double, and all the Circuits would have been without Preachers. “But you might have named other Preachers instead of these.”

\* See Vol. IV., page 503, of the present edition of Mr. Wesley's Works.—EDIT.

True, if I had thought as well of them as they did of themselves. But I did not; therefore I could do no otherwise than I did, without sinning against God and my own conscience.

10. "But what need was there for any deed at all?" There was the utmost need of it: Without some authentic deed fixing the meaning of the term, the moment I died the Conference had been nothing. Therefore any of the proprietors of the land on which our preaching-houses were built might have seized them for their own use; and there would have been none to hinder them; for the Conference would have been nobody, a mere empty name.

11. You see then in all the pains I have taken about this absolutely necessary Deed, I have been labouring, not for myself, (I have no interest therein,) but for the whole body of Methodists; in order to fix them upon such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure. That is, if they continue to walk by faith, and to show forth their faith by their works; otherwise, I pray God to root out the memorial of them from the earth.

JOHN WESLEY.

*Plymouth-Dock,*  
*March 3, 1785.*

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## LETTER TO THE METHODIST CONFERENCE.

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MY DEAR BRETHREN, *Chester, April 7, 1785.*

SOME of our Travelling Preachers have expressed a fear, that, after my decease, you would exclude them either from preaching in connexion with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent such inconvenience, than to leave these my last words with you.

I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the Deed of Declaration to assume any superiority over your brethren; but let all things go on, among those Itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.

In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if

you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons in stationing the Preachers, in choosing children for Kingswood school, in disposing of the Yearly Contribution, and the Preachers' Fund, or any other public money: But do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end.

JOHN WESLEY.\*

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LETTER TO DR. COKE, MR. ASBURY, AND  
OUR BRETHREN IN NORTH AMERICA.†

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*Bristol, September 10, 1784.*

1. By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from their mother-country, and erected into independent States. The English Government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the States of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress, partly by the provincial Assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these States desire my advice; and in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

2. Lord King's "Account of the Primitive Church" convinced me many years ago, that Bishops and Presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our Travelling Preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined as little as possible

\* This letter was read at the first Conference after Mr. Wesley's death; when it was unanimously resolved, "That all the Preachers who are in full connexion with them shall enjoy every privilege that the members of the Conference enjoy, agreeably to the above-written letter of our venerable deceased father in the Gospel."—EDIT.

† This document is introduced by Mr. Wesley in the following manner:—"What is the state of our societies in North America? A. It may best appear by the following letter. If any one is minded to dispute concerning diocesan Episcopacy, he may: But I have better work."—EDIT.

to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belonged.

3. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are Bishops who have a legal jurisdiction: In America there are none, neither any parish Ministers. So that for some hundred miles together, there is none, either to baptize, or to administer the Lord's supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

4. I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint Superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as Elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's supper. And I have prepared a Liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England, (I think, the best constituted national Church in the world,) which I advise all the Travelling Preachers to use on the Lord's day, in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the Elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.

5. If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present, I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

6. It has, indeed, been proposed to desire the English Bishops to ordain part of our Preachers for America. But to this I object, (1.) I desired the Bishop of London to ordain only one; but could not prevail. (2.) If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. (3.) If they would ordain them now, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! (4.) As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State, and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

JOHN WESLEY.

## ON THE CHURCH:

IN

A LETTER TO THE REV. ———.

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REV. SIR,

*Plymouth-Dock, August 19, 1785.*

I WILL tell you my thoughts with all simplicity, and wait for better information. If you agree with me, well; if not, we can (as Mr. Whitefield used to say) agree to disagree.

For these forty years I have been in doubt concerning that question: "What obedience is due to heathenish Priests and mitred infidels?"

I have from time to time proposed my doubts to the most pious and sensible Clergymen I knew. But they gave me no satisfaction; rather they seemed to be puzzled as well as me. Some obedience I always paid to the Bishops, in obedience to the laws of the land. But I cannot see, that I am under any obligation to obey them farther than those laws require.

It is in obedience to those laws, that I have never exercised in England the power which I believe God has given me. I firmly believe, I am a scriptural *Επισκοπος*, as much as any man in England or in Europe. (For the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove.) But this does in nowise interfere with my remaining in the Church of England; from which I have no more desire to separate than I had fifty years ago. I still attend all the ordinances of the Church, at all opportunities. And I constantly and earnestly desire all that are connected with me so to do. When Mr. Smyth pressed us to "separate from the Church," he meant, "Go to church no more." And this was what I meant seven-and-twenty years ago, when I persuaded our brethren, "Not to separate from the Church." But here another question occurs, "What is the Church of England?" It is not "all the people of England." Papists and Dissenters are no part thereof. It is not all the people of England except Papists and Dissenters. Then we should

have a glorious Church indeed! No; according to our Twentieth Article, a particular church is “a congregation of faithful people,” (*cætus credentium*, the words in our Latin edition,) “among whom the word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered.” Here is a true logical definition, containing both the essence and the properties of a church. What then, according to this definition, is the Church of England? Does it mean “all the believers in England (except the Papists and Dissenters) who have the word of God and the sacraments duly administered among them?” I fear this does not come up to your idea of “the Church of England.” Well, what more do you include in that phrase? “Why, all the believers that adhere to the doctrine and discipline established by the Convocation under Queen Elizabeth.” Nay, that discipline is well nigh vanished away, and the doctrine both you and I adhere to.

All those reasons against a separation from the Church in this sense, I subscribe to still. What then are you frightened at? I no more separate from it now, than I did in the year 1758. I submit still (though sometimes with a doubting conscience) to mitred infidels. I do indeed vary from them in some points of doctrine, and in some points of discipline; by preaching abroad, for instance, by praying extempore, and by forming societies; but not a hair's breadth further than I believe to be meet, right, and my bounden duty. I walk still by the same rule I have done for between forty and fifty years. I do nothing rashly. It is not likely I should. The high-day of my blood is over. If you will go hand in hand with me, do. But do not hinder me, if you will not help. Perhaps, if you had kept close to me, I might have done better. However, with or without help, I creep on. And as I have been hitherto, so I trust I shall always be,

Your affectionate friend and brother,  
JOHN WESLEY.

## OF SEPARATION FROM THE CHURCH.

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1. EVER since I returned from America, it has been warmly affirmed, "You separate from the Church." I would consider how far, and in what sense, this assertion is true.

2. Whether you mean by that term the building so called, or the congregation, it is plain I do not separate from either; for wherever I am, I go to the church, and join with the congregation.

3. Yet it is true that I have in some respects varied, though not from the doctrines, yet from the discipline, of the Church of England; although not willingly, but by constraint. For instance, above forty years ago, I began preaching in the fields; and that for two reasons,—first, I was not suffered to preach in the churches; secondly, no parish-church in London or Westminster could contain the congregation.

4. About the same time, several persons who were desirous to save their souls, prayed me to meet them apart from the great congregation. These little companies (societies they were called) gradually spread through the three kingdoms. And in many places they built houses in which they met, and wherein I and my brethren preached. For a few young men, one after another, desired to serve me, as sons in the Gospel.

5. Some time after, Mr. Deleznot, a Clergyman, desired me to officiate at his chapel, in Wapping. There I read Prayers, and preached, and administered the Lord's supper to a part of the society. The rest communicated either at St. Paul's, or at their several parish-churches. Meantime, I endeavoured to watch over all their souls, as one that was to give an account; and to assign to each of my fellow-labourers the part wherein I judged he might be most useful.

6. When these were multiplied, I gave them an invitation to meet me together in my house at London; that we might consider, in what manner we could most effectually save our own souls, and them that heard us. This we called a Con-

ference ; meaning thereby, the persons, not the conversation they had. At first I desired all the Preachers to meet me ; but afterwards only a select number.

7. Some years after, we were strongly importuned by our brethren in America to go over and help them. Several Preachers willingly offered themselves for the service ; and several went from time to time. God blessed their labours in an uncommon manner. Many sinners were converted to God ; and many societies formed, under the same rules as were observed in England ; insomuch, that at present the American societies contain more than eighteen thousand members.

8. But since the late revolution in North America, these have been in great distress. The Clergy, having no sustenance, either from England, or from the American States, have been obliged almost universally to leave the country, and seek their food elsewhere. Hence those who had been members of the Church, had none either to administer the Lord's supper, or to baptize their children. They applied to England over and over ; but it was to no purpose. Judging this to be a case of real necessity, I took a step which, for peace and quietness, I had refrained from taking for many years ; I exercised that power which I am fully persuaded the great Shepherd and Bishop of the church has given me. I appointed three of our labourers to go and help them, by not only preaching the word of God, but likewise by administering the Lord's supper and baptizing their children, throughout that vast tract of land, a thousand miles long, and some hundreds broad.

9. These are the steps which, not of choice, but necessity, I have slowly and deliberately taken. If any one is pleased to call this separating from the Church, he may. But the law of England does not call it so ; nor can any one properly be said so to do, unless out of conscience he refuses to join in the service, and partake of the sacraments administered therein.

JOHN WESLEY.

CAMELFORD,  
*August 30, 1785.*

After Dr. Coke's return from America, many of our friends begged I would consider the case of Scotland, where

we had been labouring so many years, and had seen so little fruit of our labours. Multitudes indeed have set out well, but they were soon turned out of the way; chiefly by their Ministers either disputing against the truth, or refusing to admit them to the Lord's supper, yea, or to baptize their children, unless they would promise to have no fellowship with the Methodists. Many who did so, soon lost all they had gained, and became more the children of hell than before. To prevent this, I at length consented to take the same step with regard to Scotland, which I had done with regard to America. But this is not a separation from the Church at all. Not from the Church of Scotland; for we were never connected therewith, any further than we are now: Nor from the Church of England; for this is not concerned in the steps which are taken in Scotland. Whatever then is done, either in America or Scotland, is no separation from the Church of England. I have no thought of this: I have many objections against it. It is a totally different case. "But for all this, is it not possible there may be such a separation after you are dead?" Undoubtedly it is. But what I said at our first Conference, above forty years ago, I say still, "I dare not omit doing what good I can while I live, for fear of evils that may follow when I am dead."

BRISTOL, *July 22, 1786.*

PERHAPS there is one part of what I wrote some time since which requires a little further explanation. In what cases do we allow of service in church hours? I answer,

1. When the Minister is a notoriously wicked man.
2. When he preaches Arian, or any equally pernicious, doctrine.
3. When there are not churches in the town sufficient to contain half the people; and,
4. When there is no church at all within two or three miles. And we advise every one who preaches in the church hours to read the Psalms and Lessons, with part of the Church Prayers; because we apprehend this will endear the Church service to our brethren, who probably would be prejudiced against it, if they heard none but extemporary prayer.

## THOUGHTS UPON METHODISM.

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1. I AM not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.

2. What was their fundamental doctrine? That the Bible is the whole and sole rule both of Christian faith and practice. Hence they learned, (1.) That religion is an inward principle; that it is no other than the mind that was in Christ; or, in other words, the renewal of the soul after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. (2.) That this can never be wrought in us, but by the power of the Holy Ghost. (3.) That we receive this, and every other blessing, merely for the sake of Christ: And, (4.) That whosoever hath the mind that was in Christ, the same is our brother, and sister, and mother.

3. In the year 1729 four young students in Oxford agreed to spend their evenings together. They were all zealous members of the Church of England, and had no peculiar opinions, but were distinguished only by their constant attendance on the church and sacrament. In 1735 they were increased to fifteen; when the chief of them embarked for America, intending to preach to the heathen Indians. Methodism then seemed to die away; but it revived again in the year 1738; especially after Mr. Wesley (not being allowed to preach in the churches) began to preach in the fields. One and another then coming to inquire what they must do to be saved, he desired them to meet him all together; which they did, and increased continually in number. In November, a large building, the Foundery, being offered him, he began preaching therein, morning and evening; at five in the morning, and seven in the evening, that the people's labour might not be hindered.

4. From the beginning the men and women sat apart, as they always did in the primitive church; and none were

suffered to call any place their own, but the first comers sat down first. They had no pews; and all the benches for rich and poor were of the same construction. Mr. Wesley began the service with a short prayer; then sung a hymn and preached, (usually about half an hour,) then sang a few verses of another hymn, and concluded with prayer. His constant doctrine was, salvation by faith, preceded by repentance, and followed by holiness.

5. But when a large number of people was joined, the great difficulty was, to keep them together. For they were continually scattering hither and thither, and we knew no way to help it. But God provided for this also, when we thought not of it. A year or two after, Mr. Wesley met the chief of the society in Bristol, and inquired, "How shall we pay the debt upon the preaching-house?" Captain Foy stood up and said, "Let every one in the society give a penny a week, and it will easily be done." "But many of them," said one, "have not a penny to give." "True," said the Captain; "then put ten or twelve of them to me. Let each of these give what they can weekly, and I will supply what is wanting." Many others made the same offer. So Mr. Wesley divided the societies among them; assigning a class of about twelve persons to each of these, who were termed Leaders.

6. Not long after, one of these informed Mr. Wesley that, calling on such a one in his house, he found him quarrelling with his wife. Another was found in drink. It immediately struck into Mr. Wesley's mind, "This is the very thing we wanted. The Leaders are the persons who may not only receive the contributions, but also watch over the souls of their brethren." The society in London, being informed of this, willingly followed the example of that in Bristol; as did every society from that time, whether in Europe or America. By this means, it was easily found if any grew weary or faint, and help was speedily administered. And if any walked disorderly, they were quickly discovered, and either amended or dismissed.

7. For those who knew in whom they had believed, there was another help provided. Five or six, either married or single men, met together at such an hour as was convenient, according to the direction of St. James, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, and ye shall

be healed." And five or six of the married or single women met together for the same purpose. Innumerable blessings have attended this institution, especially in those who were going on to perfection. When any seemed to have attained this, they were allowed to meet with a select number, who appeared, so far as man could judge, to be partakers of the same "great salvation."

8. From this short sketch of Methodism, (so called,) any man of understanding may easily discern, that it is only plain, scriptural religion, guarded by a few prudential regulations. The essence of it is holiness of heart and life; the circumstantial all point to this. And as long as they are joined together in the people called Methodists, no weapon formed against them shall prosper. But if even the circumstantial parts are despised, the essential will soon be lost. And if ever the essential parts should evaporate, what remains will be dung and dross.

9. It nearly concerns us to understand how the case stands with us at present. I fear, wherever riches have increased, (exceeding few are the exceptions,) the essence of religion, the mind that was in Christ, has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore do I not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality; and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches.

10. How, then, is it possible that Methodism, that is, the religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay-tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently, they increase in goods. Hence they proportionably increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away.

11. Is there no way to prevent this? this continual declension of pure religion? We ought not to forbid people to be diligent and frugal: We must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich! What way, then, (I ask again,) can we take, that our money may not sink us to the nethermost hell? There is one way, and there is no other under heaven. If

those who "gain all they can," and "save all they can," will likewise "give all they can;" then, the more they gain, the more they will grow in grace, and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven.

LONDON, *August 4, 1786.*

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AN ANSWER  
TO  
AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.

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DEAR SIR,

ARMAGH, *June 18, 1787.*

You ask, "Why do not the Clergy, whether in England or Ireland, avail themselves of the Methodist Preachers?" You say, you wonder they do not thankfully accept of their assistance, who desire no pay for their service, in repressing error and wickedness of every kind, and propagating truth and religion. You inquire, "Upon what rational principles can this be accounted for?"

To give a complete answer to this question would require a whole treatise. I have not leisure for this; but I will give as full an answer as my time will permit.

Only, before I answer, I must observe, that many both of the English and Irish Clergy are entirely out of the question. They are not only learned, but truly religious men; and, as such, are an honour to their profession. I speak only of those that are of a different character, be they many or few. Let them wear the cap whom it fits. That is no concern of mine.

This premised, I think it easy to be accounted for, even upon heathen principles. Horace observed long ago,—

*Oderunt hilarem tristes, tristemque jocos, &c.\**

\* Thus translated by Francis:—

"The grave a gay companion shun;  
Far from the sad the jovial run;  
The gay, the witty, and sedate,  
Are objects of each other's hate;  
And they who quaff the midnight glass  
Scorn them who dare the bumper pass."—EDIT.

Accordingly, grave and solemn men (though too few are guilty of this fault) dislike many of the Methodist Preachers, for having nothing of that gravity or solemnity about them. Jocose Clergymen, on the other hand, cannot but dislike those who are steadily serious; and those that love to take a cheerful glass are not fond of such as are strictly temperate. You need go no farther than this consideration to have a clear answer to the question, "Why do many of the Clergy refuse to receive any assistance from the Methodist Preachers?"

But this may be more fully accounted for upon Christian principles. What says our Lord to the first Preachers of the Gospel, and in them to all their successors?—"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me, before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you. These things will they do unto you, because they know not Him that sent me." (John xv. 18, *et seq.*)

Does not this give us sufficient reason to expect, that, if we are not of the world, all the world, all who know not God, whether Clergy or laity, will be so far from accepting our assistance, that they will sincerely hate us, and openly or privately persecute us, so far as God permits? We have, therefore, reason to wonder, not that they do not desire any union or coalition with us, but that they bear with, yea, and on many occasions treat us with courtesy and civility. This is a peculiar instance of the providence of God, causing, in some measure, the scandal of the cross to cease.

"But do not many Clergymen, who are not pious men, acknowledge that the Methodists do good, and encourage them to persevere therein?" They do; but observe how far they would have them go. They wish them to repress outward sin; to reclaim the people from cursing, and swearing, and drunkenness, and Sabbath-breaking, unless the Squire gains by it. They are well pleased, that their parishioners grow more diligent and honest, and are constant attendants on the church and sacrament. Nay, they are glad that they are brought to practise both justice and mercy; in a word, to be moral men.

But the truth is, the Methodists know and teach that all this is nothing before God; that whoever goes thus far and

no farther is building upon the sand; that he who would worship God to any purpose, must worship him "in spirit and in truth;" that true religion is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" even giving God our heart; the seeking and finding happiness in Him. Here, then, they divide from the Methodists, whom they judge to be going too far. They would have their parishioners moral men; that is, in plain terms, honest Heathens; but they would not have them pious men, men devoted to God, Bible Christians. If, therefore, the Methodist Preachers would stop here, would preach outward religion and no more, many Clergymen would not only encourage them therein, but likewise cordially join them. But when they persuade men, not to be almost, but altogether, Christians; to maintain a constant "fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ;" to be transformed into that "image of God wherein they were created," and thenceforth to live that "life which is hid with Christ in God;" let them not expect that any will give them the right hand of fellowship, but those God hath "chosen out of the world."

I am

Yours, &c.,

JOHN WESLEY.

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## THOUGHTS

ON

## SEPARATION FROM THE CHURCH.

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MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE question properly refers (when we speak of a separation from the Church) to a total and immediate separation. Such was that of Mr. Ingham's people first, and afterwards that of Lady Huntingdon's; who all agreed to form themselves into a separate body without delay, to go to church no more, and to have no more connexion with the Church of England than with the Church of Rome,

Such a separation I have always declared against; and certainly it will not take place (if ever it does) while I live. But a kind of separation has already taken place, and will inevitably spread, though by slow degrees. Those Ministers, so called, who neither live nor preach the Gospel, I dare not say are sent of God. Where one of these is settled, many of the Methodists dare not attend his ministry; so, if there be no other church in that neighbourhood, they go to church no more. This is the case in a few places already, and it will be the case in more; and no one can justly blame me for this, neither is it contrary to any of my professions.

JOHN WESLEY.

BRISTOL,

September 20, 1788.

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### THOUGHTS UPON A LATE PHENOMENON.

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1. A GLORIOUS work of God began upon the earth on the day of the descent of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost; which so swiftly increased, that, in a very short time, in Jerusalem alone thousands of sinners were brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Those were effectually changed from all vice to all holiness: Indeed, being all filled with the Holy Ghost, they were all of one heart and one mind. And their life was suitable thereto: "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, in the breaking of bread, in prayers; and having all things in common, there was none among them that lacked; but distribution was made to every one as he had need."

2. But in the mean time, the god of this world was not idle: He did not fail to sow tares among the wheat. The mystery of iniquity began to work almost as soon as the mystery of godliness. This grew up to a considerable height, even in the days of the Apostles; insomuch that, before St. John had finished his course, the fine gold was become dim; and iniquity had overspread the Christian church, as well as the heathen world: Although it did not come to its height till the fatal time when Constantine called himself a Christian.

3. Yet God never left himself without witness. In every age, and in every nation, there were a few that truly feared God and wrought righteousness; and these were raised up, in their several generations, that they might be lights shining in a benighted world. But few of them answered the design of Providence for any considerable time. In every age, most of the excellent ones of the earth, being weary of the contradiction of sinners, separated from them, and retired, if not into deserts, yet into distinct churches or religious bodies. So their light no longer shone among men, among those that needed them most; but they contentedly gave up the world to the service of its old master.

4. Again and again this has been the case, for fifteen or sixteen hundred years; and it has chiefly been by this means that many revivals of religion have been of so short a continuance, seldom lasting (as Martin Luther observes) longer than a generation, that is, thirty years. Generally in that time a considerable number of men, being awakened, thought they could stand alone. So they formed themselves into a distinct body, and left the world to themselves. Hence the world received no more benefit from them; and by degrees their own love waxed cold, till either their memorial perished from the earth, or they remained a dry, cold sect.

5. But between fifty and sixty years ago, a new phenomenon appeared in the world. Two or three young men, desiring to be scriptural Christians, met together for that purpose. Their number gradually increased. They were then all scattered. But fifty years ago, two of them met again; and a few plain people joined them, in order to help one another in the way to heaven. Since then they increased to many thousands, both in Europe and America. They are still increasing in number, and, as they humbly hope, in the knowledge and love of God; yea, and in what they neither hoped for nor desired, namely, in worldly substance.

6. All of these were, when they first set out, members of the Established Church; and a great majority of them, probably nine in ten, continue such at this day. But they have been solicited again and again, from time to time, to separate from it, and to form themselves into a distinct body, independent of all other religious societies. Thirty years ago, this was seriously considered among them at a general Conference. All the arguments urged on one side and the

other were considered at large; and it was determined, without one dissenting voice, that they "ought not to separate from the Church."

7. This is a new thing in the world: This is the peculiar glory of the people called Methodists. In spite of all manner of temptations, they will not separate from the Church. What many so earnestly covet, they abhor: They will not be a distinct body. Now, what instance of this have we before, either in ancient or modern history; of a body of people, in such circumstances, who will not be a distinct party, but choose to remain in connexion with their own Church, that they may be more effectually the servants of all?

8. This, I say again, is an utterly new phenomenon. I never saw, heard, or read of anything like it. The Methodists will not separate from the Church, although continually reproached for doing it; although it would free them from abundance of inconveniences, and make their path much smoother and easier; although many of their friends earnestly advise and their enemies provoke them to it, the Clergy in particular; most of whom, far from thanking them for continuing in the Church, use all the means in their power, fair and unfair, to drive them out of it.

9. One circumstance more is quite peculiar to the people called Methodists; that is, the terms upon which any person may be admitted into their society. They do not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions whatever. Let them hold particular or general redemption, absolute or conditional decrees; let them be Churchmen or Dissenters, Presbyterians or Independents, it is no obstacle. Let them choose one mode of baptism or another, it is no bar to their admission. The Presbyterian may be a Presbyterian still; the Independent or Anabaptist use his own mode of worship. So may the Quaker; and none will contend with him about it. They think, and let think. One condition, and one only, is required,—a real desire to save their soul. Where this is, it is enough: They desire no more: They lay stress upon nothing else: They ask only, "Is thy heart herein as my heart? If it be, give me thy hand."

10. Is there any other society in Great Britain or Ireland that is so remote from bigotry? that is so truly of a catholic spirit? so ready to admit all serious persons without distinction? Where, then, is there such another society in

Europe? in the habitable world? I know none. Let any man show it me that can. Till then let no one talk of the bigotry of the Methodists.

NOTTINGHAM, *July 13, 1788.*

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TO CERTAIN PERSONS IN DUBLIN.

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WHITEFRIAR-STREET, DUBLIN, *March 31, 1789.*

MY DEAR BRETHREN,

I MUCH approve of the manner and spirit wherein you write concerning these tender points. I explained myself upon them, in some measure, on Sunday: I will do it more fully now.

At present, I have nothing to do with Dr. Coke: But I answer for myself. I do not separate from the Church, nor have any intention so to do. Neither do they that meet on Sunday-noon separate from the Church, any more than they did before: Nay, less; for they attend the church and sacrament oftener now than they did two years ago.

“But this occasions much strife.” True; but they make the strife who do not attend the service. Let them quietly either come or stay away, and there will be no strife at all.

“But those that attend say, those that do not are fallen from grace.” No, they do not give them a bad word: But they surely will fall from grace, if they do not let them alone who follow their own consciences.

But you “fear this will make way for a total separation from the Church.” You have no ground for this fear. There can be no such separation while I live. Leave to God what may come after.

But, to speak plainly, do not you separate from the Church? Yea, much more than those you blame? Pray, how often have you been at church since Christmas? twelve times in twelve weeks? And how long have you been so fond of the Church? Are you fond of it at all? Do not you go oftener to a Dissenting meeting than either to St. Patrick’s or your parish-church? My dear brethren, you and I have but a short time to stay together. “My race

of glory is run, and race of shame; and I shall shortly be with those that rest." Therefore, as one that loves you well, and has loved you long, I advise you, in the presence and in the fear of God, 1. Either quietly attend the Sunday service, or quietly refrain from it; then there will be no strife at all. Now you make the strife of which you complain. 2. Make not this a pretence for being weary of well-doing. Do not, for so poor a reason, withdraw your subscription from the School or the Preachers. What a miserable revenge would this be! Never let it be said that my friend A—— K——, that brother D——, or B——, were capable of this! From this hour, let this idle strife be buried in eternal oblivion. Talk not of it any more. If it be possible, think not of it any more. Rather think, "The Judge standeth at the door;" let us prepare to meet our God!

JOHN WESLEY.

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TO

THE PRINTER OF THE DUBLIN CHRONICLE.

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SIR,

LONDONDERRY, *June 2, 1789.*

1. As soon as I was gone from Dublin, the "Observer" came forth, only with his face covered. Afterwards he came out under another name, and made a silly defence for me, that he might have the honour of answering it. His words are smoother than oil, and flow (who can doubt it?) from mere love both to me and the people.

2. But what does this smooth, candid writer endeavour to prove, with all the softness and good humour imaginable? Only this point, (to express it in plain English,) that I am a double-tongued knave, an old crafty hypocrite, who have used religion merely for a cloak, and have worn a mask for these fifty years, saying one thing and meaning another.

A bold charge this, only it happens that matter of fact contradicts it from the beginning to the end.

3. In my youth I was not only a member of the Church of England, but a bigot to it, believing none but the mem-

bers of it to be in a state of salvation. I began to abate of this violence in 1729. But still I was as zealous as ever, observing every point of Church discipline, and teaching all my pupils so to do. When I was abroad, I observed every rule of the Church, even at the peril of my life. I knew not what might be the consequence of repelling the first Magistrate's niece from the sacrament, considering, on the one hand, the power lodged in his hands, on the other, the violence of his temper, shown by his declaration, "I have drawn the sword, and I will never sheathe it till I have satisfaction."

4. I was exactly of the same sentiment when I returned from America. I attended St. Paul's church, and advised all our society either to attend there every Sunday, or at their several parish-churches. In the year 1743 I published the Rules of the Society; one of which was, that all the members thereof should constantly attend the church and sacrament. We had then a large society at Newcastle-upon-Tyne; but one of the members totally left it after a few months, "Because," said he, "they are mere Church-of-England men."

5. About the year 1744 a Clergyman offered me a chapel in West-street, Seven Dials, (formerly a French church,) and I began to officiate there on Sunday mornings and evenings: We did the same (my brother and I alternately) soon after at the French church in Spitalfields, as soon as it came into our hands. This we continued from that time; and no one in England ever thought or called it leaving the Church. It was never esteemed so by Archbishop Potter, with whom I had the happiness of conversing freely; nor by Archbishop Secker, who was thoroughly acquainted with every step we took; as was likewise Dr. Gibson, then Bishop of London; and that great man, Bishop Lowth. Nor did any of these four venerable men ever blame me for it, in all the conversations I had with them. Only Archbishop Potter once said, "Those gentlemen are irregular; but they have done good, and I pray God to bless them."

6. It may be observed, that all this time, if my brother or I were ill, I desired one of our other Preachers, though not ordained, to preach in either of the chapels, after reading part of the Church Prayers. This both my brother and I judged would endear the Church Prayers to them; whereas,

if they were used wholly to extemporary prayer, they would naturally contract a kind of contempt, if not aversion, to forms of prayer: So careful were we, from the beginning, to prevent their leaving the Church.

7. It is true, Bishop Gibson once said, (but it was before I had ever seen him,) "Why do not these gentlemen leave the Church?" The answer was very ready: "Because they dare not: They do not leave the Church, because they believe it is their duty to continue therein."

8. When the Rev. Mr. Edward Smyth came to live in Dublin, he earnestly advised me to leave the Church; meaning thereby, (as all sensible men do,) to renounce all connexion with it, to attend the service of it no more, and to advise all our societies to take the same steps. I judged this to be a matter of great importance, and would therefore do nothing hastily; but referred it to the body of Preachers, then met in Conference. We had several meetings, in which he proposed all his reasons for it at large. They were severally considered and answered, and we all determined not to leave the Church.

9. A year ago, Dr. Coke began officiating at our chapel in Dublin. This was no more than had been done in London for between forty and fifty years. Some persons immediately began to cry out, "This is leaving the Church, which Mr. Wesley has continually declared he would never do." And I declare so still. But I appeal to all the world, I appeal to common sense, I appeal to the "Observer" himself, could I mean hereby, "I will not have service in church hours," when I was doing it all the time? Could I, even then, deny that I had service in church hours? No; but I denied, and do deny still, that this is leaving the Church, either in the sense of Bishop Gibson, or of Mr. Smyth at the Dublin Conference! Yet by this outcry many well-meaning people were frightened well-nigh out of their senses.

10. But see the consequences of having Sunday service here. See the confusion this occasioned! Some time since, while a popular Preacher was preaching at Leeds, one cried out, "Fire! fire!" The people took fright,—some leaped over the gallery; and several legs and arms were broken. But upon whom were these consequences to be charged? Not on the Preacher, but on him that made the outcry. Apply this to the present case. I have kindled no more

fire in Dublin, than I did in London. It is the "Observer" and a few other mischief-makers who fright the people out of their senses; and they must answer to God for the consequence.

11. This is my answer to them that trouble me, and will not let my grey hairs go down to the grave in peace. I am not a man of duplicity: I am not an old hypocrite, a double-tongued knave. More than forty years I have frequented Ireland. I have wished to do some good there. I now tell a plain tale, that "the good which is in me may not be evil spoken of." I have no temporal end to serve. I seek not the honour that cometh of men. It is not for pleasure that, at this time of life, I travel three or four thousand miles a year. It is not for gain.

No foot of land do I possess,  
 No cottage in this wilderness;  
 A poor way-faring man,  
 I lodge awhile in tents below,  
 Or gladly wander to and fro,  
 Till I my Canaan gain.

JOHN WESLEY.

P.S. At the desire of a friend, I add a few words in answer to one or two other objections.

First. When I said, "I believe I am a scriptural Bishop," I spoke on Lord King's supposition, that Bishops and Presbyters are essentially one order.

Secondly. I did desire Mr. Myles to assist me in delivering the cup. Now, be this right or wrong, how does it prove the point now in question,—that I leave the Church? I ask, 2. What law of the Church forbids this? and, 3. What law of the primitive church? Did not the Priest, in the primitive church, send both the bread and wine to the sick by whom he pleased, though not ordained at all?

Thirdly. The "Observer" affirms, "To say you will not leave the Church, meaning thereby all the true believers in England, is trifling." Certainly; but I do not mean so when I say, "I will not leave the Church." I mean, unless I see more reason for it than I ever yet saw, I will not leave the Church of England as by law established while the breath of God is in my nostrils

## FARTHER THOUGHTS

ON

### SEPARATION FROM THE CHURCH.

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1. FROM a child I was taught to love and reverence the Scripture, the oracles of God ; and, next to these, to esteem the primitive Fathers, the writers of the three first centuries. Next after the primitive church, I esteemed our own, the Church of England, as the most scriptural national Church in the world. I therefore not only assented to all the doctrines, but observed all the rubric in the Liturgy ; and that with all possible exactness, even at the peril of my life.

2. In this judgment, and with this spirit, I went to America, strongly attached to the Bible, the primitive church, and the Church of England, from which I would not vary in one jot or tittle on any account whatever. In this spirit I returned, as regular a Clergyman as any in the three kingdoms ; till, after not being permitted to preach in the churches, I was constrained to preach in the open air.

3. Here was my first irregularity ; and it was not voluntary, but constrained. The second was extemporary prayer. This, likewise, I believed to be my bounden duty, for the sake of those who desired me to watch over their souls. I could not in conscience refrain from it ; neither from accepting those who desired to serve me as sons in the Gospel.

4. When the people joined together, simply to help each other to heaven, increased by hundreds and thousands, still they had no more thought of leaving the Church than of leaving the kingdom. Nay, I continually and earnestly cautioned them against it ; reminding them that we were a part of the Church of England, whom God had raised up, not only to save our own souls, but to enliven our neighbours, those of the Church in particular. And at the first meeting of all our Preachers in Conference, in June, 1744,

I exhorted them to keep to the Church; observing, that this was our peculiar glory,—not to form any new sect, but, abiding in our own Church, to do to all men all the good we possibly could.

5. But as more Dissenters joined with us, many of whom were much prejudiced against the Church, these, with or without design, were continually infusing their own prejudices into their brethren. I saw this, and gave warning of it from time to time, both in private and in public; and in the year 1758 I resolved to bring the matter to a fair issue. So I desired the point might be considered at large, whether it was expedient for the Methodists to leave the Church. The arguments on both sides were discussed for several days; and at length we agreed, without a dissenting voice, “It is by no means expedient that the Methodists should leave the Church of England.”

6. Nevertheless, the same leaven continued to work in various parts of the kingdom. The grand argument (which in some particular cases must be acknowledged to have weight) was this: “The Minister of the parish wherein we dwell neither lives nor preaches the Gospel. He walks in the way to hell himself, and teaches his flock to do the same. Can you advise them to attend his preaching?” I cannot advise them to it. “What, then, can they do on the Lord’s day, suppose no other church be near? Do you advise them to go to a Dissenting meeting, or to meet in their own preaching-house?” Where this is really the case, I cannot blame them if they do. Although, therefore, I earnestly oppose the general separation of the Methodists from the Church, yet I cannot condemn such a partial separation in this particular case. I believe, to separate thus far from these miserable wretches, who are the scandal of our Church and nation, would be for the honour of our Church, as well as to the glory of God.

7. And this is no way contrary to the profession which I have made above these fifty years. I never had any design of separating from the Church: I have no such design now. I do not believe the Methodists in general design it, when I am no more seen. I do, and will do, all that is in my power to prevent such an event. Nevertheless, in spite of all that I can do, many of them will separate from it: Although I am apt to think, not one half, perhaps not a third, of them.

These will be so bold and injudicious as to form a separate party; which, consequently, will dwindle away into a dry, dull, separate party. In flat opposition to these, I declare once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England; and that none who regard my judgment or advice will ever separate from it.

JOHN WESLEY.

LONDON,  
*December 11, 1789.*

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## THE CASE OF BIRSTAL HOUSE.

RECOMMENDED TO THE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE  
PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS.

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1. As many persons have spoke much upon this subject without well understanding it, I believe it is my duty to throw all the light upon it that I can. And in order to this, I will,

First, Endeavour to state the case;

Secondly, Argue a little upon it.

2. In order to state the case fully, I must look back to ancient times. As soon as the heat of persecution was over, and Christians increased in goods, some built preaching-houses, afterwards called churches. In following times those that built them were termed Patrons, and appointed whom they pleased to preach in them. And when they annexed lands to them, they disposed of house and lands together.

3. At the Reformation many rich men built new churches, and disposed of them at their pleasure. And when many Presbyterians and Independents in England built preaching-houses, they placed in them whom they pleased; which power they left to their heirs.

4. I built the first Methodist preaching-house, so called, at Bristol, in the year 1739. And knowing no better, I suffered the deed of trust to be drawn up in the Presbyterian form. But Mr. Whitefield, hearing of it, wrote me a

warm letter, asking, "Do you consider what you do? If the Trustees are to name the Preachers, they may exclude even you from preaching in the house you have built! Pray let this deed be immediately cancelled." To this the Trustees readily agreed. Afterwards I built the preaching-houses in Kingswood, and at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. But none beside myself had any right to appoint the Preachers in them.

5. About this time a preaching-house was built at Birstal, by contributions and collections. And John Nelson, knowing no better, suffered a deed to be drawn in the Presbyterian form, giving twelve or thirteen persons power not only of placing, but even of displacing, the Preachers at their pleasure. Had Mr. Whitefield or I known this, we should have insisted on its either being cancelled, like that at Bristol, or so altered as to insure the application of the house to the purpose for which it was built, without giving so dangerous a power to any Trustees whatever.

6. But a considerable difficulty still remained. As the houses at Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle were my property, a friend reminded me, that they were all liable to descend to my heirs. (Pray let those consider this, who are so fond of having preaching-houses vested in them and their heirs for ever!) I was struck, and immediately procured a form to be drawn up by three of the most eminent Counsellors in London, whereby not only these houses, but all the Methodist houses hereafter to be built, might be settled on such a plan, as would secure them, so far as human prudence could, from the heirs of the proprietors, for the purpose originally intended.

7. In process of time the preaching-house at Birstal became abundantly too small for the congregation. It was then proposed to build a new one. And a new deed was prepared, which, like the old, gave a few persons the power of placing and displacing the Preachers at their pleasure. This was brought and read to me at Daw-green. As soon as ever I heard it, I vehemently objected to it, and positively refused to sign it. I now thought I had done with it: But in the evening, several persons came again, and importunately urged me to sign it; averring that it was the same in effect with the old deed, and the old deed could not be altered. Not adverting, that it was altered in the new one, I at length unwillingly complied.

But, observe: Whether I did right or wrong herein, or in any other instance, it does not affect the merits of the cause. The dwelling upon this is mere finesse, to divert us from the one question, "Is that deed right or wrong?"

8. These things were mentioned at the ensuing Conference; and it was asked, "What can be done?" The answer was, "If the Trustees still refuse to settle it on the Methodist plan; if they still insist, that they will have the right of placing and displacing the Preachers at their pleasure, then,

"First, Let a plain state of the case be drawn up.

"Secondly, Let a collection be made throughout England, in order to purchase ground, and build another preaching-house, as near the present as may be."

9. This I take to be a plain state of the case, separating it from all unimportant circumstances, of what this or the other person said or did, all which only puzzle the cause. Now this, neither more nor less, being the naked fact, I proceed, secondly, to argue a little upon it.

If it be asked, "Why should not the Birstal preaching-house, or any other, be settled according to that deed?" I answer, Because whenever the Trustees exert their power of "placing and displacing Preachers," then,

1. Itinerant preaching is no more. When the Trustees in any place have found and fixed a Preacher they like, the rotation of Preachers is at an end; at least, till they are tired of their favourite Preacher, and so turn him out.

2. While he stays, is not the bridle in his mouth? How dares he speak the full and the whole truth, since, whenever he displeases the Trustees, he is liable to lose his bread? How much less will he dare to put a Trustee, though ever so ungodly, out of the society?

If you say, "But though they have this power, they will not exert it. They never have exerted it at Birstal." Reason good; because they have it not till my death. And if they had, prudence, if not gratitude, would restrain them till I am out of the way. But it does not follow, that neither they nor their heirs will exert it by and by.

3. But suppose any beside the Conference (who as long as they subsist, will be the most impartial judges) name the Preachers, should it be thirty or forty men, or the whole society? Nay, why not the entire congregation; or at least all the subscribers?

4. The power of the Trustees is greater than that of any nobleman; yea, or of the King himself. Where he is Patron, he can put in a Preacher, but he cannot put him out.

But you ask, "Since this power will not commence till your death, why should you oppose it? Why should not you keep yourself out of the broil, and let them fight it out when you are at rest? Why should you pull an old house upon your own head, when you are just going out of the world? Peace be in your days. Why should you take upon yourself the burden which you may leave to your successors?"

I answer, In this very respect I have an advantage which my successors cannot have. Every one sees, I am not pleading my own cause; I have already all that I contend for. No; I am pleading for Mr. Taylor, Mr. Bradburn, Mr. Benson, and for every other Travelling Preacher, that you may be as free, after I am gone hence, as you are now I am at your head; that you may never be liable to be turned out of any or all of our houses, without any reason given, but that so is the pleasure of twenty or thirty men.

I say, "any;" for I see no sufficient reason for giving up any house in England. Indeed, if one were given up, more would follow: It would be "as the letting out of the water."

I insist upon that point, and let everything else go: No Methodist Trustees, if I can help it, shall, after my death, any more than while I live, have the power of placing and displacing the Preachers.

Observe: "Placing and displacing the Preachers!" This is the one point. Do not ramble from the question. Do not puzzle it by a multitude of words. If the Trustees will not give it up, we must proceed according to the Minute of the Conference.

"But why should we not wait till another Conference?"

First. Because that will not alter the merits of the cause. To lodge the power of placing and displacing the Preachers in Trustees, would be as wrong then as it is now.

Secondly. Because you cannot insure my life till another Conference. Therefore, whatever is done, should be done quickly.

"But then," it is said, "you occasion endless strife, animosity, confusion, and destroy the work of God." No; not I. It is these Trustees that occasion all the strife,

animosity, and confusion, by insisting upon a right to place and displace Preachers. I go on in the old way, as I did at Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle. It is they, that by obstinately going out of it hinder, yea, destroy, the work of God. And I charge them with the blood of all those souls that are destroyed by this contention. It is they that do the wrong, that will place and displace Preachers, who bawl and pour out bitter words. But let them take care; for God heareth. And He will arise and maintain His own cause!

LONDON,

JOHN WESLEY.

*Reprinted, January 12, 1788.*

## A LETTER TO THE METHODIST PREACHERS.

(CIRCULAR.)

REDRUTH, *August 23, 1789.*

SOME years since, Mr. Valton wrote to me from Yorkshire, informing me there was great want of a larger preaching-house at Dewsbury, and desiring leave to make subscriptions and collections, in order to build one. I encouraged him to make them. Money was subscribed and collected, and the house built, which the Trustees promised to settle in the usual form. But when it was finished, they refused to settle it, unless a power was given them to displace any Preacher they should object to.

After all possible means had been used to bring them to a better mind, the case was referred to the Conference; and it was unanimously agreed to build another house, as soon as possible, that the flock might not be scattered.

I therefore entreat every one that wishes well to Methodism, especially to the itinerant plan, to exert himself on this important occasion, that a work so absolutely necessary may be finished as soon as possible. I say, absolutely necessary; for if the Trustees of houses are to displace Preachers, then itinerancy is at an end.

I am, my dear brother,

Your affectionate brother and servant for Christ's sake,

JOHN WESLEY.

N.B. Make this collection immediately. Lose not one day.

# THE CASE OF DEWSBURY HOUSE.

RECOMMENDED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE PEOPLE  
CALLED METHODISTS.

[PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1790.]

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1. WHEN, about fifty years ago, one and another young man offered to serve me as sons in the Gospel, it was on these terms,—that they would labour where I appointed; otherwise, we should have stood in each other's way. Here began itinerant preaching with us. But we were not the first itinerant Preachers in England: Twelve were appointed by Queen Elizabeth, to travel continually, in order to spread true religion through the kingdom; and the office and salary still continues, though their work is little attended to. Mr. Milner, late Vicar of Chipping in Lancashire, was one of them.

2. As the number of Preachers increased, it grew more and more difficult to fix the places where each should labour from time to time. I have often wished to transfer this work of stationing the Preachers once a year, to one or more of themselves. But none were willing to accept of it: So I must bear the burden till my warfare shall be accomplished.

3. When preaching-houses were built, they were vested immediately in Trustees, who were to see that those preached in them whom I sent, and none else; this, we conceived, being the only way whereby itinerancy could be regularly established. But lately, after a new preaching-house had been built at Dewsbury, in Yorkshire, by the subscriptions and contributions of the people, (the Trustees alone not contributing one quarter of what it cost,) they seized upon the house, and, though they had promised the contrary, positively refused to settle it on the Methodist plan; requiring, that they should have a power of refusing any Preacher whom they disliked. If so, I have no power of stationing the Dewsbury Preachers; for the Trustees may object to whom they please. And themselves, not I, are finally to judge of those objections.

4. Observe, here is no dispute about the right of houses at all. I have no right to any preaching-house in England. What I claim is, a right of stationing the Preachers. This these Trustees have robbed me of in the present instance. Therefore, only one of these two ways can be taken; either to sue for this house, or to build another: We prefer the latter, being the most friendly way.

I beg therefore, my brethren, for the love of God; for the love of me, your old and well-nigh worn-out servant; for the love of ancient Methodism, which, if itinerancy is interrupted, will speedily come to nothing; for the love of justice, mercy, and truth, which are all so grievously violated by the detention of this house; that you will set your shoulders to the necessary work. Be not straitened in your own bowels. We have never had such a cause before. Let not then unkind, unjust, fraudulent men, have cause to rejoice in their bad labour. This is a common cause. Exert yourselves to the utmost. I have subscribed fifty pounds. So has Dr. Coke. The Preachers have done all they could. O let them that have much give plenteously! Perhaps this is the last labour of love I may have occasion to recommend to you: Let it then stand as one more monument of your real gratitude to,

My dear brethren,  
Your old, affectionate brother,  
JOHN WESLEY.

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FOUR LETTERS TO MR. JOHN ATLAY.\*

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MY DEAR BROTHER, PEMBROKE, *August 23, 1788.*

IF you are persuaded that such a promise (which is the whole and sole cause of the breach at Dewsbury) is binding, &c., you must follow your persuasion. You will have blame enough from other persons: My hand shall not

\* After labouring as an Itinerant Preacher about nine years, Mr. Atlay was appointed Mr. Wesley's Book-Steward in London; and when he had sustained that office fifteen years he renounced his connexion with Mr. Wesley, and became the Minister of the chapel at Dewsbury, which had been unjustly alienated by the Trustees from the Methodist body.—EDIT.

be upon you. If I can do you good, I will; but shall certainly do you no harm. George Whitfield is the person I choose to succeed you: I wish you would teach him as much as you can without delay.

I am, with kind love to S. Atlay,  
Your affectionate brother.

BRISTOL, *August 31, 1788.*

I PRAY, brother Atlay, do not serve me so. If you will not serve me yourself, do not hinder others from serving me: Do not fright George Whitfield from it; but encourage him to it; and instruct him as quick as possible. My death is nothing to the purpose. I have now nothing to do with the Dewsbury people: Go with them, and serve them; but I am still

Your affectionate brother.

MY DEAR BROTHER, BRISTOL, *September 4, 1788.*

I WAS once afraid that you had dissuaded George Whitfield from taking charge of the books; but I can take your word. Now I am fully satisfied that you did not; and I believe you will teach him everything relating to that charge. But one thing is much upon my mind: I wish you would hire one or two proper persons, and take an inventory of all the books that are either in the shop or under the chapel. This will be worth all the pains: Then George will know what he has to do.

I am  
Your affectionate brother.

MY DEAR BROTHER, *September 24, 1788.*

FROM the time that you gave me warning of quitting my service, and informed me you was determined to stay no longer with me (unless upon impossible conditions) than the 25th instant, I resolved to say nothing more or less about it, but to let the matter go as it would go. Whether you made a wise choice in preferring your present to your former station, we shall see, if you and I should live two or three years longer. Meantime,

I am, as ever,  
Your affectionate brother,  
JOHN WESLEY.

P.S. I say nothing about you to the people of Bristol.

## A WORD TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

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IN August, 1788, Mr. Atlay wrote me word I must look out for another servant, for he would go to Dewsbury on September the 25th. So far was I from bidding him go, that I knew nothing of it till that hour. But I then told him, "Go and serve them;" seeing I found he would serve me no longer.

He sent me word that I had in London, £13,751. 18s. 5d. stock in books. Desiring to know exactly, I employed two booksellers to take an account of my stock. The account they brought in, October 31, 1788, was,

"Value of stock, errors excepted, . . . £4,827. 10s. 3½d.

"JOHN PARSONS,  
"THOMAS SCOLLICK."

Why did John Atlay so wonderfully overrate my stock? Certainly to do me honour in the eyes of the world.

I never approved of his going to Dewsbury; but I submitted to what I could not help.

With regard to Dewsbury house, there never was any dispute about the property of preaching-houses,—that was an artful misrepresentation; but merely the appointing of Preachers in them.

If John Atlay has a mind to throw any more dirt upon me, I do not know I shall take any pains to wipe it off.\* I have but a few days to live; and I wish to spend those in peace.

JOHN WESLEY.

LONDON,  
CITY-ROAD, *February 25, 1790.*

\* This appears to refer to a weak and disingenuous pamphlet published by Mr. Atlay, about two months before, on the subject of his separation from his old friends; and in which he introduced some unjust reflections upon Mr. Wesley.—EDIT.

# A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF

## THE SCHOOL IN KINGSWOOD, NEAR BRISTOL.

[PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1768.]

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1. OUR design is, with God's assistance, to train up children in every branch of useful learning.

2. We teach none but boarders. These are taken in, being between the years of six and twelve, in order to be taught reading, writing, arithmetic, English, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, history, geography, chronology, rhetoric, logic, ethics, geometry, algebra, physics, music.

3. The school contains eight classes.

In the first class the children read "Instructions for Children," and "Lessons for Children;" and begin learning to write.

In the second class they read "The Manners of the Ancient Christians;" go on in writing; learn the "Short English Grammar;" the "Short Latin Grammar;" read "*Prælectiones Pueriles*;" translate them into English, and the "Instructions for Children" into Latin; part of which they transcribe and repeat.

In the third class they read Dr. Cave's "Primitive Christianity;" go on in writing; perfect themselves in the English and Latin Grammar; read "*Corderii Colloquia Selecta*," and "*Historiæ Selectæ*;" translate "*Historiæ Selectæ*" into English, and "Lessons for Children" into Latin; part of which they transcribe and repeat.

In the fourth class they read "The Pilgrim's Progress;" perfect themselves in writing; learn Dilworth's Arithmetic; read Castello's Kempis, and Cornelius Nepos; translate Castello into English, and "Manners of the Ancient Christians" into Latin; transcribe and repeat select portions of "Moral and Sacred Poems."

In the fifth class they read "The Life of Mr. Halibur-

ton ;" perfect themselves in arithmetic ; read Select Dialogues of Erasmus, Phædrus, and Sallust ; translate Erasmus into English, and " Primitive Christianity " into Latin ; transcribe and repeat select portions of " Moral and Sacred Poems."

In the sixth class they read " The Life of Mr. De Renty," and Kennet's " Roman Antiquities ;" they learn Randal's Geography ; read Cæsar, select parts of Terence and Velleius Paterculus ; translate Erasmus into English, and " The Life of Mr. Haliburton " into Latin ; transcribe and repeat select portions of " Sacred Hymns and Poems."

In the seventh class they read Mr. Law's " Christian Perfection," and Archbishop Potter's " Greek Antiquities ;" they learn "*Bengelii Introductio ad Chronologiam*," with Marshall's " Chronological Tables ;" read Tully's Offices, and Virgil's *Æneid* ; translate Bengelius into English, and Mr. Law into Latin ; learn (those who have a turn for it) to make verses, and the " Short Greek Grammar ;" read the Epistles of St. John ; transcribe and repeat select portions of Milton.

In the eighth class they read Mr. Law's " Serious Call," and Lewis's " Hebrew Antiquities ;" they learn to make themes, and to declaim ; learn Vossius's Rhetoric ; read Tully's Tusculan Questions, and "*Selecta ex Ovidio, Virgilio, Horatio, Juvenale, Persio, Martiale* ;" perfect themselves in the Greek Grammar ; read the Gospels, and six books of Homer's *Iliad* ; translate Tully into English, and Mr. Law into Latin ; learn the " Short Hebrew Grammar," and read Genesis ; transcribe and repeat "*Selecta ex Virgilio, Horatio, Juvenale*."

4. It is our particular desire, that all who are educated here may be brought up in the fear of God ; and at the utmost distance, as from vice in general, so in particular from idleness and effeminacy. The children therefore of tender parents, so called, (who are indeed offering up their sons and their daughters unto devils,) have no business here ; for the rules will not be broken in favour of any person whatsoever. Nor is any child received unless his parents agree, (1.) That he shall observe all the rules of the house ; and, (2.) That they will not take him from school, no, not a day, till they take him for good and all.

5. The general rules of the house are these :—

First. The children rise at four, winter and summer, and spend the time till five in private; partly in reading, partly in singing, partly in self-examination or meditation, (if capable of it,) and partly in prayer. They at first use a short form, (which is varied continually,) and then pray in their own words.

Secondly. At five they all meet together. From six they work till breakfast; for as we have no play-days, (the school being taught every day in the year but Sunday,) so neither do we allow any time for play on any day: He that plays when he is a child, will play when he is a man.

On fair days they work, according to their strength, in the garden; on rainy days, in the house. Some of them also learn music; and some of the larger will be employed in philosophical experiments. But particular care is taken that they never work alone, but always in the presence of a Master.

We have three Masters: One for teaching reading, and two for the languages.

Thirdly. The school begins at seven, in which languages are taught till nine; and then writing, &c., till eleven. At eleven the children walk or work. At twelve they dine, and then work or sing till one. They diet nearly thus:—

*Breakfast.*—Milk-porridge and water-gruel, by turns.

*Supper.*—Bread and butter or cheese, and milk, by turns.

*Dinner.*—SUNDAY.—Cold roast beef.

MONDAY.—Hashed meat and apple-dumplings.

TUESDAY.—Boiled mutton.

WEDNESDAY.—Vegetables and dumplings.

THURSDAY.—Boiled mutton or beef.

FRIDAY.—Vegetables and dumplings. And so in Lent.

SATURDAY.—Bacon and greens, apple-dumplings.

They drink water at meals: Nothing between meals. On Friday, if they choose it, they fast till three in the afternoon. Experience shows, this is so far from impairing health, that it greatly conduces to it.

Fourthly. From one to four, languages are taught; and then writing, &c., till five. At five begins the hour of private prayer; from six they walk or work till supper; a little before seven the public service begins; at eight they go to bed, the youngest first,

Fifthly. They lodge all in one room, (now in two,) in which a lamp burns all night. Every child lies by himself. A Master lies at each end of the room. All their beds have mattresses on them, not feather-beds.

Sixthly. On Sunday, at six, they dress and breakfast; at seven, learn hymns or poems; at nine, attend the public service; at twelve, dine and sing; at two, attend the public service; and at four, are privately instructed.

6. The method observed in the school is this:—

*The First Class.*

Morning, 7. Read. 10. Write till eleven.  
Afternoon, 1. Read. 4. Write till five.

*The Second Class.*

Morn. 7. Read "The Manners of the Ancient Christians."  
8. Learn the English Grammar; when that is ended, the Latin Grammar. 10. Learn to write.

Aftern. 1. Learn to construe and parse *Prælectiones Pueriles*. 4. Translate into English and Latin alternately.

*The Third Class.*

Morn. 7. Read "Primitive Christianity." 8. Repeat English and Latin Grammar alternately. 9. Learn Corderius; and when that is ended, *Historiæ Selectæ*. 10. Write.

Aftern. 1. Learn Corderius, and *Historiæ Selectæ*. 4. Translate.

*The Fourth Class.*

Morn. 7. Read "The Pilgrim's Progress." 8. Repeat the Grammar. 9. Learn Castellio's Kempis; and when that is ended, Cornelius Nepos. 10. Write; and learn arithmetic.

Aftern. 1. Learn Kempis, and Cornelius Nepos. 4. Translate.

*The Fifth Class.*

Morn. 7. Read Mr. Haliburton's Life. 8. Repeat the Grammars. 9. Learn Erasmus; afterwards Phædrus; then Sallust. 10. Learn arithmetic.

Aftern. 1. Learn Erasmus, Phædrus, Sallust. 4. Translate.

*The Sixth Class.*

Morn. 7. Read Mr. De Renty's Life. 8. Repeat the Grammars. 9. Learn Cæsar; afterwards Terence; then Velleius Paterculus. 10. Learn geography.

Aftern. 1. Learn Cæsar, Terence, Paterculus. 3. Read Roman Antiquities. 4. Translate.

*The Seventh Class.*

Morn. 7. Read Mr. Law's "Christian Perfection." 8. MON., WED., FRI.—Learn the Greek Grammar; and read the Greek Testament. TUES., THURS., SAT.—Learn Tully; afterwards Virgil. 10. Learn chronology.

Aftern. 1. Learn Latin and Greek alternately, as in the morning. 3. Read Grecian Antiquities. 4. Translate and make verses alternately.

*The Eighth Class.*

Morn. 7. Read Mr. Law's "Serious Call." 8. MON., THURS.—Latin. TUES., FRI.—Greek. WED., SAT.—Hebrew; and so at one in the afternoons. 10. Learn rhetoric.

Aftern. 3.—Read "Hebrew Antiquities." 4. MON., THURS.—Translate. TUES., FRI.—Make verses. WED.—Make a theme. SAT.—Write a declamation.

All the other classes spend Saturday afternoon in arithmetic, and in transcribing what they learn on Sunday, and repeat on Monday morning.

The price for the board and teaching of a child, including his books, pens, ink, and paper, is fourteen pounds a year, while he is in the school: After he has gone through the school, twenty; and he is then to find his own books.

N.B. The following method may be observed by those who design to go through a course of academical learning:—

## FIRST YEAR.

Read Lowth's English Grammar; Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French Grammars; Cornelius Nepos; Sallust; Cæsar; Tully's Offices; Terence; Phædrus; Æneid; Dilworth; Randal; Bengel; Vossius; Aldrich and Wallis's Logic; Langbaine's Ethics; Hutchinson on the Passions; Spanheim's "Introduction to Ecclesiastical History;" Puffen-

dorf's "Introduction to the History of Europe;" "Moral and Sacred Poems;" Hebrew Pentateuch, with the Notes; Greek Testament,—Matthew to the Acts, with the Notes; Xenophon's Cyrus; Homer's Iliad; Bishop Pearson on the Creed; ten volumes of the "Christian Library;" *Telemaque*.

## SECOND YEAR.

Look over the Grammars; read Velleius Paterculus; Tusculan Questions; *Excerpta*; "*Vidæ Opera*;" "*Lusus Westmonasteriensis*;" Chronological Tables; Euclid's Elements; Wells's Tracts; Newton's "*Principia*;" Mosheim's "Introduction to Church History;" Usher's "Annals;" Burnet's "History of the Reformation;" Spencer's "Fairy Queen;" Historical Books of the Hebrew Bible; Greek Testament, *ad finem*; *Κυρὸς Ἀναβάσις*; Homer's Odyssey; twelve volumes of the "Christian Library;" Ramsay's Cyrus; Racine.

## THIRD YEAR.

Look over the Grammars; Livy; Suetonius; Tully "*De Finibus*;" "*Musæ Anglicanæ*;" Dr. Burton's "*Poemata*;" Lord Forbes's Tracts; Abridgment of Hutchinson's Works; "Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation;" Rollin's "Ancient History;" Hume's "History of England;" Neal's "History of the Puritans;" Milton's Poetical Works; Hebrew Bible,—Job to the Canticles; Greek Testament; Plato's Dialogues; Greek Epigrams; twelve volumes of the "Christian Library;" Pascal; Corneille.

## FOURTH YEAR.

Look over the Grammars; Tacitus; "*Grotii Historia Belgica*;" Tully "*De Naturâ Deorum*;" "*Prædium Rusticum*;" "*Carmina Quadragesimalia*;" "Philosophical Transactions abridged;" Watts's Astronomy, &c.; "*Compendium Metaphysicæ*;" Watts's Ontology; Locke's Essay; Malebranche; Clarendon's History; Neal's "History of New-England;" Antonio Solis's "History of Mexico;" Shakspeare; rest of the Hebrew Bible; Greek Testament; Epictetus; Marcus Antoninus; *Poetæ Minores*; end the "Christian Library;" "*La Fausseté de les Vertues Humaines*;" *Quesnel sur les Evangiles*.

Whoever carefully goes through this course will be a better scholar than nine in ten of the graduates at Oxford or Cambridge.

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## A PLAIN ACCOUNT OF KINGSWOOD SCHOOL.

[PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1781.]

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1. It was remarked concerning one of our poets, "Whenever he wrote, he seemed to take it for granted, that whatever he understood himself all his readers would understand." But this mistake is not peculiar to Mr. Dryden: I have fallen into it abundance of times; supposing, because the thing was so plain to me, it must be so to all mankind. I have fallen into it particularly with regard to the school some time since begun in Kingswood. I have long taken it for granted, that it would be quite sufficient to publish the bare rules of that school, and to set down simply the method therein pursued, in as few words as possible. I supposed the reasons whereon those rules were grounded were not only so strong, but so obvious, that every person of common understanding must discern them as well as myself. However, after above twenty years' trial, I am convinced this was a supposition not to be made. What is as clear to me as the sun at noon-day, is not so clear to every one. At length, therefore, I judged it needful to enlarge a little upon the nature of that institution; to lay down the grounds of those rules, and the reasons of what is peculiar in our method.

2. About forty years ago, one or two tracts upon education fell into my hands, which led me to consider the methods pursued in that great school wherein I had been educated, and in such others as were in the highest repute, particularly those in and near London. I spent many thoughts on the subject, and frequently conversed upon it with some of the most sensible men I knew. A few years after, I had an opportunity of inquiring concerning some of the most celebrated schools in Holland and Germany. But in these, as well as our own, I found a few particulars which I could not approve of.

3. One regarded the situation of them, which itself seemed a circumstance of some importance. The very most of them were placed in a great town; perhaps in the principal town in that country. The inconveniences which naturally attended this were more easy to be discovered than removed. The children, whenever they went abroad, had too many things to engage their thoughts, which ought to be diverted as little as possible from the objects of their learning. And they had too many other children round about them, some of whom they were liable to meet every day, whose example (perhaps their advice too) would neither forward them in learning nor religion. I say, "neither learning nor religion." For if we have any religion ourselves, we certainly desire that our children should have some too. But this they are not likely to have, or retain, if they converse promiscuously with the children in a great town.

4. The promiscuous admission of all sorts of children into a great school, was another circumstance I did not admire. Are children likely (suppose they had it) to retain much religion in a school where all that offer are admitted, however corrupted already, perhaps in principle (though that is not quite so frequent) as well as practice? And what wonder, when, as frequently happens, the parents themselves have no more religion than their ungodly offspring? It may be, they do not desire to have any of their family infected with the plague of virtue. A gentleman removed his son, then at Westminster School, from boarding with my eldest brother, for teaching him the Catechism; telling him, "Sir, I do not want my son to learn religion, but Latin and Greek."

5. But this is no common fault: Generally, heathen parents may meet with heathen schoolmasters. A third inconvenience in many schools is, the Masters have no more religion than the scholars. And if they have little or no religion themselves, we may be well assured they will give themselves little trouble about the religion of the children that are committed to their care. Every part of the nation abounds with Masters of this kind; men who are either uninstructed in the very principles of Christianity, or quite indifferent as to the practice of it, "caring for none of these things." Consequently, they are nothing concerned, whether their scholars are Papists or Protestants, Turks or Christians:

They look upon this as no part of their business ; they take no thought about it.

6. But it is not only with regard to instruction in religion, that most of our great schools are defective. They are defective likewise (which is a fourth objection) with regard to learning ; and that in several respects. In some, the children are taught little or no arithmetic ; in others, little care is taken even of their writing. In many, they learn scarce the elements of geography, and as little of chronology. And even as to the languages, there are some schools of note wherein no Hebrew at all is taught ; and there are exceeding few wherein the scholars are thoroughly instructed even in the Latin and Greek tongues. They are not likely to be ; for there is a capital mistake in their very method of teaching. The books which they read are not well chosen, not so much as with regard to language. The language of them is not standard ; not even in the Latin. Were even this circumstance duly considered, would *Eutropius* or *Lucius Florus* have any place among them ? “ O, but I want to give a sketch of the Roman history.” And cannot you do this much better by English authors ? Cannot you give the marrow of Roman history without ruining their style by bad Latin ?

But the sense too of the authors read in many schools is as imperfect as their language. And this betrays an inexcusable negligence in those who teach these empty books. For there is no necessity for it. It is well known there are excellent both Greek and Roman authors, who excel them as much in strength of understanding, as in purity and elegance of style.

Again : In most schools little judgment is shown in the order of the books that are read. Some very difficult ones are read in the lower classes, “ *Phædrus’s Fables* ” in particular : And some very easy ones are read long after, in utter defiance of common sense.

7. Another fault common in almost all our schools is, the Masters not only take no care to train up their scholars in true religion, but they themselves teach them what is utterly destructive of all religion whatever : They put authors into their hands, that, with all the beauty of language, all the sweetness of expression, instil into their tender minds both obscenity and profaneness ;—Virgil’s *Alexis*, the lewd

Epigrams of Martial, and the shameless Satires of Juvenal, (even the sixth,) so earnestly recommending sodomy as well as adultery !

*Nonne putas melius, quod tecum pusio dormit ?*

Here you see is the blessed moral ! Nay, in spite of the loud complaint made by St. Austin, fourteen hundred years ago, we read there still of the great god,

*Qui templa cæli summa sonitu concùtit,*

coming down from heaven upon that blessed errand,

*Fucum factum mulieri !*

And to this day we retain, for the edification of our children,

*Tonantem et fornicantem Jovem !*

8. After long inquiring, but inquiring in vain, for a school free from these palpable blemishes, at last a thought came into my mind, of setting up a school myself. The first point was, to find a proper situation ; not too far from a great town ; which I saw would be highly inconvenient for a large family : Nor yet too near, and much less in it ; which would have been attended with greater evils. After mature consideration, I chose a spot in the middle of Kingswood, three miles from Bristol. It was quite private, remote from all high roads, on the side of a small hill sloping to the west, sheltered from the east and north, and affording room for large gardens. I built the house capable of containing fifty children, besides Masters and servants ; reserving one room, and a little study, for my own use.

9. I then set myself to procure Masters. And in this respect I had such an advantage as few besides have, in being acquainted with every part of the nation : And yet I found it no easy thing to procure such as I desired ; for I was not satisfied that they had learning sufficient for their several departments, unless they had likewise the fear of God, producing an unblamable conversation. I saw none would answer my intention, but men who were truly devoted to God ; who sought nothing on earth, neither pleasure, nor ease, nor profit, nor the praise of men ; but simply to glorify God, with their bodies and spirits, in the best manner they were capable of.

10. I next considered how to procure proper scholars ;

not any that came to hand, but, if possible, such as had some thoughts of God, and some desire of saving their souls; and such whose parents desired they should not be almost, but altogether, Christians. This was proposed to them before their children came; and, to prevent future misunderstandings, they were desired attentively to read, and seriously to consider, the rules of the school; being assured they would be punctually observed, without any favour or affection. One of these rules was, that "no child shall be admitted after he is twelve years old." The ground of this rule was, a child could not well before that age be rooted either in bad habits or ill principles. But, notwithstanding the strictness of the rules, I had soon as many scholars as I desired; nay, considerably more; for I was afraid of having too many at once, knowing how difficult it was to govern a large number; children being so apt, when many of them are together, to hinder and corrupt one another.

11. Having procured proper Masters, and a sufficient number of children, most of whom were as well inclined as could be expected, our first point was, to answer the design of Christian education, by forming their minds, through the help of God, to wisdom and holiness, by instilling the principles of true religion, speculative and practical, and training them up in the ancient way, that they might be rational, scriptural Christians. This design was expressly mentioned in the "Short Account of the School in Kingswood, near Bristol:"—"It is our particular desire, that all who are educated here may be brought up in the fear of God, and at the utmost distance, as from vice in general, so in particular from softness and effeminacy. The children therefore of tender parents, so called, have no business here; for the rules will not be broken in favour of any person whatever. Nor is any child received, unless his parents agree, (1.) That he shall observe all the rules of the house. And, (2.) That they will not take him from school, no, not for a day, till they take him for good and all." The reasonableness of this uncommon rule is shown by constant experience: For children may unlearn as much in one week, as they have learned in several; nay, and contract a prejudice to exact discipline, which never can be removed.

12. "The general rules of the house are these: The children rise at four, winter and summer." This I know, by constant observation, and by long experience, to be of admirable use, either for preserving a good, or improving a bad, constitution. It is of peculiar service in almost all nervous complaints, both in preventing and in removing them. "They spend the time till five in private; partly in reading, partly in singing, partly in prayer; and in self-examination and meditation, those that are capable of it.

"At five they are all together with the Master. Then till seven they breakfast, and walk or work: For as we have no play-days, the school being taught every day in the year but Sundays, so neither do we allow any time for play on any day. It is a wise German proverb, 'He that plays when he is a boy, will play when he is a man.' If not, why should he learn now what he must unlearn by and by?

"On fair days they work, according to their strength, in the garden; on rainy days, in the house. But particular care is taken that they never work alone, but always in the presence of a Master." This circumstance I adopted from the great school at Jena, in Germany. It lays much labour upon the Masters; but the advantage is worth all the labour. It prevents abundance of evil; (and it is far better to prevent evils, than to punish them;) not only rudeness and ill manners, but many sins that children would easily teach each other.

"The school-hours are from seven to eleven, and from one to five. They drink water at their meals:" (And why do not all wise parents teach their children so to do from their infancy, seeing it is universally allowed to be the best diluter of food which is to be found on earth?) "Nothing between meals," lest they should insensibly contract habits which are neither good for body nor mind. Their food is as simple as possible; two days in a week it is wholly vegetable; every day, at breakfast and supper; if we allow, with Dr. Cheyne, milk to come under that appellation.

"At eight they go to bed, the youngest first. They all lodge in one room, (every child having a bed to himself,) in which a lamp burns all night. A Master lies in the same room." The propriety of these circumstances is so manifest, that it needs not to be enlarged upon. "All their beds have mattresses on them, not feather-beds;" both because they

are more healthy, and because we would keep them at the utmost distance from softness and effeminacy.

13. The things taught here are reading, writing, arithmetic, English, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, history, geography, chronology, rhetoric, logic, ethics, geometry, algebra, natural philosophy, and metaphysics.

In teaching the languages, care is taken to read those authors, and those only, who join together the purity, the strength, and the elegance of their several tongues. In particular, no Roman author is read who lived later than the Augustan age. Only to these are added proper *Excerpta* from Juvenal, Persius, and Martial. To supply the place of bad Latin writers of antiquity, a few of the moderns are added. And indeed their writings are not unworthy of the Augustan age; being little inferior, either in purity and beauty of diction, to the best writers of that period.

14. Particular care is taken that nothing immodest or profane be found in any of our authors. One of the most immodest wretches that ever defiled paper, has, nevertheless, stumbled upon this caution:—

*Nil dictu fædum visuque hæc limina tangat,  
Intra quæ puer est.\**

But this is not all. We take care that our books be not only inoffensive, but useful too; that they contain as much strong, sterling sense, and as much genuine morality, as possible; yea, and Christian morality. For what good reason can be assigned why we should leave this out of the account? Why should not even children be taught, so far as they are capable, the oracles of God?

15. Another point which has been carefully considered is, the order in which the books are read. The harder are never learned before the easier: We begin with the plainest of all; next read such as are a little more difficult; and gradually rise to those that are hardest of all, that is, of all those which are read in the classes that belong to the school. The most difficult are reserved for those who have gone through the school, and are employed in academical exercises.

\* This quotation from Juvenal is thus translated by Gifford:—

“Swift from the roof where youth, Fuscinus, dwell,  
Immodest sights, immodest sounds, expel;  
The place is sacred.”—EDIT.

16. It is true, I have for many years suspended the execution of this part of my design. I was indeed thoroughly convinced, ever since I read Milton's admirable "Treatise on Education," that it was highly expedient for every youth to begin and finish his education at the same place. I was convinced nothing could be more irrational and absurd, than to break this off in the middle, and to begin it again at a different place, and in a quite different method. The many and great inconveniences of this, I knew by sad experience. Yet I had so strong a prejudice in favour of our own Universities, that of Oxford in particular, that I could hardly think of any one's finishing his education without spending some years there. I therefore encouraged all I had any influence over, to enter at Oxford or Cambridge; both of which I preferred, in many respects, to any University I had seen abroad. Add to this, that several of the young persons at Kingswood had themselves a desire of going to the University. I cannot say I am yet quite clear of that prejudice. I love the very sight of Oxford; I love the manner of life; I love and esteem many of its institutions. But my prejudice in its favour is considerably abated: I do not admire it as I once did. And whether I did or not, I am now constrained to make a virtue of necessity. The late remarkable occurrence of the six young students expelled from the University, and the still more remarkable one of Mr. Seagar, refused the liberty of entering into it, (by what rule of prudence, I cannot tell, any more than of law or equity,) have forced me to see, that neither I, nor any of my friends, must expect either favour or justice there. I am much obliged to Dr. Nowell, and the other gentlemen who exerted themselves on either of those transactions, for not holding me longer in suspense, but dealing so frankly and openly. And, blessed be God, I can do all the business which I have in hand without them. Honour or preferment I do not want, any more than a feather in my cap; and I trust most of those who are educated at our school are, and will be, of the same mind. And as to the knowledge of the tongues, and of arts and sciences, with whatever is termed academical learning; if those who have a tolerable capacity for them do not advance more here in three years, than the generality of students at Oxford or Cambridge do in seven, I will bear the blame for ever.

17. It may be objected, "But they cannot have many advantages here which they have at the University: There the Professors are men of eminent learning; and so are also many of the Tutors. There they have public exercises of various kinds; and many others in their several Colleges. Above all, they have there such choice of company as is not to be found elsewhere in all the kingdom."

This is most true. But may I be permitted to ask, (and let calm, sensible men give the answer,) What is the real, intrinsic worth of all these advantages? As to the Professors, how learned soever they are, (and some of them I verily believe yield to none in Europe,) what benefit do nine in ten of the young gentlemen reap from their learning? Truly, they do them neither harm nor good; for they know just nothing about them. They read now and then an ingenious lecture, perhaps three or four times a year. They read it in the public schools: But who hears? Often *vel duo vel nemo*.\* And if two hundred out of two or three thousand students hear, how much are they edified? What do they learn, or what are they likely to learn, which they may not learn as well or better at home? For about fourteen years, except while I served my father's cure, I resided in the University. During much of this time, I heard many of those lectures with all the attention I was master of. And I would ask any person of understanding, considering the manner wherein most of those lectures are read, and the manner wherein they are attended, what would be the loss if they were not read at all? I had almost said, what would be the loss if there were no Professorships in the University? "What! Why, Dr. — would lose three hundred a year!" That is a truth: It cannot be denied.

18. "But the Tutors," you say, "in the several Colleges, supply what is wanting in the Professors." A few of them do: And they are worthy of all honour; they are some of the most useful persons in the nation. They are not only men of eminent learning, but of piety and diligence. But are there not many of another sort, who are utterly unqualified for the work they have undertaken? who are far from being masters even of Latin or Greek? who do not understand the very elements of the sciences; who know no more

\* Either two persons, or none at all.—EDIT.

of logic or metaphysics than of Arabic, or even of that odd thing, religion? Perhaps, if a person who knew this were to examine therein the famous gentleman of Edmund-Hall, who made such a pother with the young men for their want of learning, he might be found as very an ignoramus as Mr. Middleton.

And even with regard to many of those Tutors that have learning, how little are their pupils the better for it? Do they use all diligence to instil into them all the knowledge which they have themselves? Do they lecture them constantly? every day, either in the languages or sciences? Do they instruct them regularly and thoroughly, in logic, ethics, geometry, physics, and metaphysics? Are there not some who, instead of once a day, do not lecture them once a week? perhaps not once a month, if once a quarter? Are not these precious instructors of youth? Indeed, when I consider many of the Tutors who were my contemporaries, (and I doubt they are not much mended since,) I cannot believe the want of such instructors to be an irreparable loss.

19. "Well, but they lose also the advantage of the public exercises, as well as of those in their several Colleges." Alas, what are these exercises? Excuse me if I speak with all simplicity. I never found them any other than an idle, useless interruption of my useful studies. Pray, of what use are the stated disputations for degrees? Are they not mere grimace? trifling beyond expression? And how little preferable to these are most of the disputations in our several Colleges! What worthy subjects are usually appointed for the scholars to dispute upon! And just suitable to the importance of the subject is the management of it. What are the usual examinations for the degree of a Bachelor or Master of Arts? Are they not so horribly, shockingly superficial as none could believe if he did not hear them? What is that, which should be the most solemn exercise we perform, for a Master of Arts' degree? The reading six lectures in the schools, three in natural, and three in moral, philosophy. Reading them to whom? To the walls: It being counted an affront for any one that has ears to hear them. This is literally true: You know it is. But what an execrable insult upon common sense! These are the public exercises: And is it a loss to have nothing to do

with them? to spend all our time in what directly tends to improve us in the most useful knowledge.

20. "However, there is no such choice of company elsewhere as there is at Oxford or Cambridge." That is most true; for the moment a young man sets his foot either in one or the other, he is surrounded with company of all kinds,—except that which would do him good; with loungers and triflers of every sort; (*nequid gravius dicam* ;\*) with men who no more concern themselves with learning than with religion ;

who waste away  
In gentle inactivity the day,

to say the best of them ; for it is to be feared they are not always so innocently employed. It cannot be denied, there is too much choice of this kind of company in every College. There are likewise gentlemen of a better kind : But what chance is there, that a raw young man should find them ? seeing the former will everywhere obtrude themselves upon him, while the latter naturally stand at a distance. Company, therefore, is usually so far from being an advantage to those who enter at either University, that it is the grand nuisance, as well as disgrace, of both ; the pit that swallows unwary youths by thousands. I bless God we have no such choice of company at Kingswood ; nor ever will till my head is laid. There is no trifler, no loungeur, no drone there ; much less any drunkard, Sabbath-breaker, or common swearer. Whoever accounts this a disadvantage, may find a remedy at any College in Oxford or Cambridge.

21. "Be this as it may, there are other advantages of which no other place can boast. There are exhibitions, scholarships, studentships, fellowships, canonries ; to say nothing of headships, and professorships, which are not only accompanied with present honour and large emoluments, but open the way to the highest preferments both in Church and State."

All this is indisputably true : I know not who can deny one word of it. Therefore, if any of these advantages, if honour, if money, if preferment in Church or State, be the point at which a young man aims, let him by all means go to the University. But there are still a few, even young

\* Not to mention persons of a still viler description.—EDIT.

men, in the world, who do not aim at any of these. They do not desire, they do not seek, either honour, or money, or preferment. They leave Collegians to dispute, and bite, and scratch, and scramble for these things. They believe there is another world; nay, and they imagine it will last for ever. Supposing this, they point all their designs and all their endeavours towards it. Accordingly, they pursue learning itself, only with reference to this. They regard it, merely with a view to eternity; purely with a view to know and teach, more perfectly, the truth which God has revealed to man, "the truth which is after godliness," and which they conceive men cannot be ignorant of without hazarding their eternal salvation. This is the only advantage which they seek; and this they can enjoy in as high a degree, in the school or academy at Kingswood, as at any College in the universe.

22. "But whatever learning they have, if they acquired it there, they cannot be ordained;" (you mean, Episcopally ordained; and indeed that ordination we prefer to any other, where it can be had;) "for the Bishops have all agreed together not to ordain any Methodist." O that they would all agree together not to ordain any drunkard, any Sabbath-breaker, any common swearer, any that makes the very name of religion stink in the nostrils of infidels, any that knows no more of the grounds of religion than he does of Greek or Hebrew! But I doubt that fact. I cannot easily believe that all the Bishops have made such an agreement. Could I be sure they had, I should think it my duty to return them my sincerest thanks. Pity they had not done it ten years ago, and I should not have lost some of my dearest friends. However, I am extremely obliged, if they have agreed to prevent my losing any more the same way; if they have blocked up the door through which several others were likely to run away from me.

23. I should not wonder if there was a general agreement against those who have been so often described as both knaves and madmen. Meantime, I can only say, as a much greater man said, *Hier stehe ich: Gott hilf mir!* By His help I have stood for these forty years, among the children of men, whose tongues are set on fire, who shoot out their arrows, even bitter words, and think therein they do God service. Many of these are already gone to give an

account to the Judge of quick and dead. I did not expect to have stayed so long behind them ; but “ good is the will of the Lord.” If it were possible, I should be glad, for my few remaining days, to live peaceably with all men : I do as much as lieth in me, in order to this. I do not willingly provoke any man. I go as quietly on my way as I can. But, quietly or unquietly, I must go on ; for a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me ; and woe is me if I preach not the Gospel. I am convinced that I am a debtor to all men, and that it is my bounden duty

To rush through every open door,  
And cry, “ Sinners, behold the Lamb.”

Now, especially, I have no time to lose : If I slacked my pace, my grey hairs would testify against me. I have nothing to fear, I have nothing to hope for, here ; only to finish my course with joy.

Happy, if with my latest breath  
I might but gasp His name,  
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,  
“ Behold, behold the Lamb ! ”

JOHN WESLEY.

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## REMARKS

ON

### THE STATE OF KINGSWOOD SCHOOL.

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1783.

My design in building the house at Kingswood was, to have therein a Christian family ; every member whereof, children excepted, should be alive to God, and a pattern of all holiness.

Here it was that I proposed to educate a few children according to the accuracy of the Christian model. And almost as soon as we began, God gave us a token for good ; four of the children receiving a clear sense of pardon.

But at present the school does not in anywise answer the design of the institution, either with regard to religion or learning.

The children are not religious. They have not the power, and hardly the form, of religion. Neither do they improve in learning better than at other schools: No, nor yet so well.

Insomuch that some of our friends have been obliged to remove their children to other schools.

And no wonder that they improve so little either in religion or learning; for the rules of the school are not observed at all.

All in the house ought to rise, take their three meals, and go to bed, at a fixed hour. But they do not.

The children ought never to be alone, but always in the presence of a Master. This is totally neglected; in consequence of which they run up and down the wood, and mix, yea, fight, with the colliers' children.

They ought never to play. But they do, every day; yea, in the school.

Three maids are sufficient. Now there are four; and but one, at most, truly pious.

How may these evils be remedied, and the school reduced to its original plan? It must be mended, or ended; for no school is better than the present school.

Can any be a Master that does not rise at five, observe all the rules, and see that others observe them?

There should be three Masters, and an Usher, chiefly to be with the children out of school.

The Head Master should have nothing to do with temporal things.