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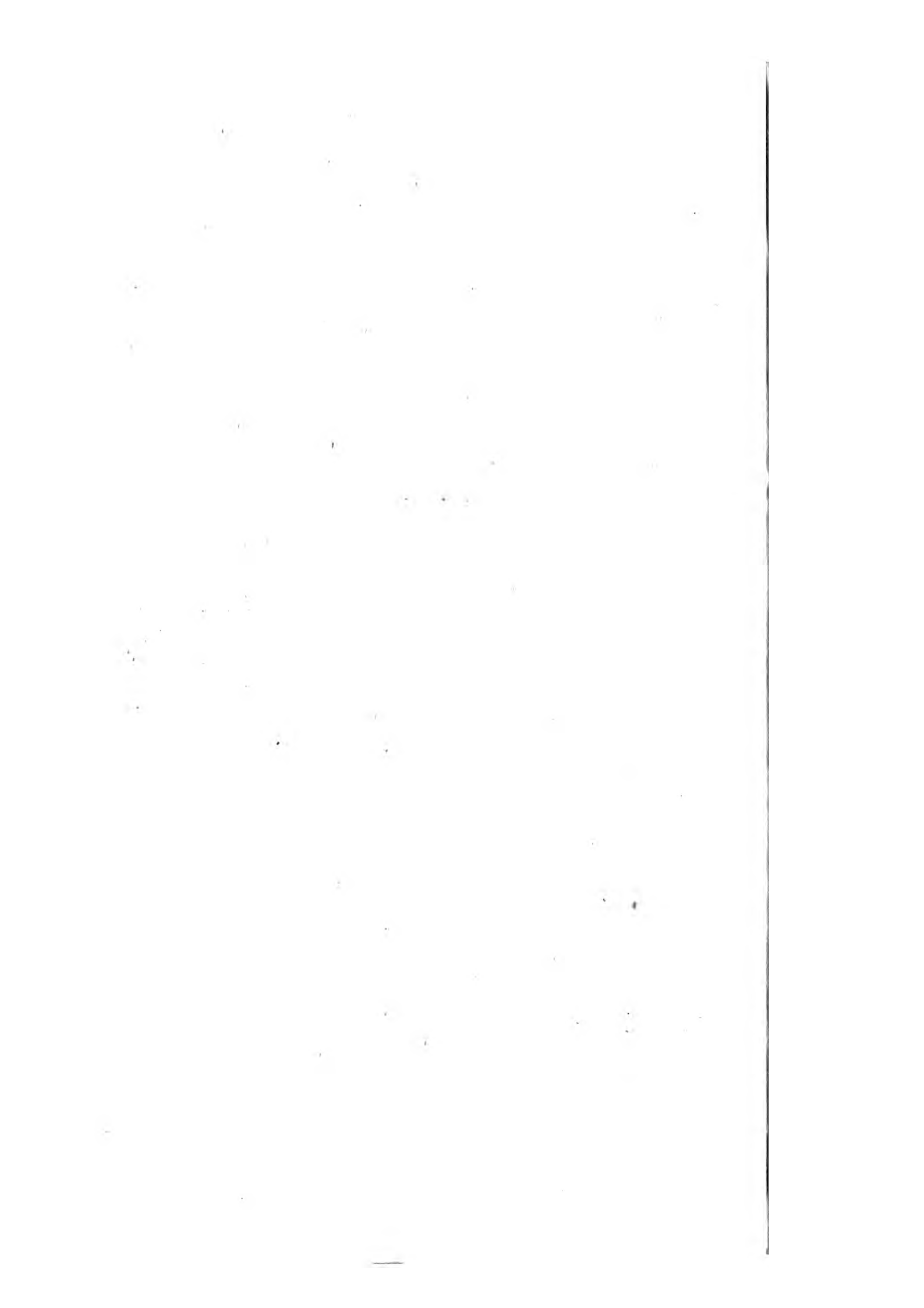
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ORIGINAL
LETTERS,

BY

The Rev. JOHN WESLEY,

AND HIS FRIENDS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

HIS EARLY HISTORY,

WITH

OTHER CURIOUS PAPERS,

Communicated by

The late Rev. S. Badcock.



TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

AN ADDRESS TO THE METHODISTS.

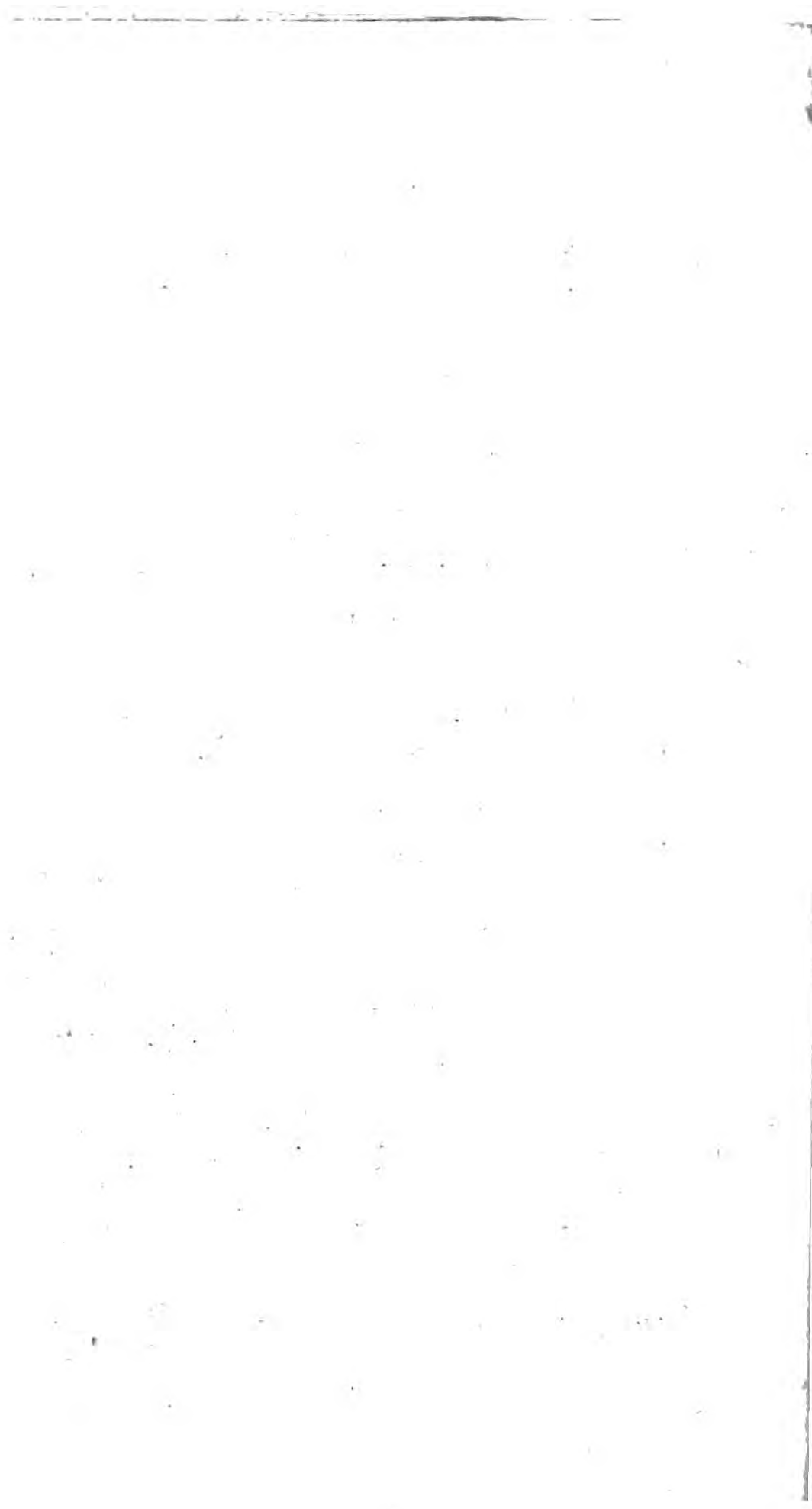
By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L.L.D. F.R.S. &c.

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M D C C X C I.



T H E

P R E F A C E.

THE following letters were given to me by the late Mr. Badcock, as great curiosities of their kind, with a view to their publication after the death of Mr. John Wesley. They were given to him by the grand-daughter of Mr. Samuel Wesley, the eldest brother of John, and I believe with the same view. Mr. John Wesley, as I learned from Mr. Badcock, was very desirous of getting these letters into his possession, but the daughter and grand-daughter of Mr. Samuel, being offended at his conduct, would never deliver them to him. It was taken for granted that he would have suppressed them ; nor should I have thought it right to publish them, if they had been merely private papers, unconnected with any

public concern. But Mr. Wesley being the founder of a numerous sect of christians, of considerable, and of growing importance in this country, the public is interested in every thing that can throw light upon his character and principles ; and the perusal of these letters will satisfy any person that they will be of eminent use for this purpose.

In these letters, never intended for the public eye, but only written as a justification of himself to his nearest friends, we see, from the best authority, the real principles and conduct of Mr. Wesley, the opinions he entertained, and the reasons he was able to allege for them, when he began his religious course ; and the conclusion to be drawn from the whole, is by no means to his discredit, as he appears to have been unquestionably an honest man, whose sole object it was to secure his own salvation, and promote that of others, though he will appear to have been strongly tinged with enthusiasm, from the effect of false notions of religion very early imbibed.

We

T H E P R E F A C E.

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We see here the marks of that ardent and determined mind, which nothing could shake from its purpose, and that principle of the appropriation of the whole of his time to one great object, from which nothing was ever able afterwards to divert him, *leisure* and *he*, as he somewhere says, having for ever taken leave of each other. Perhaps no man ever trifled less, or gave less time to any thing that could be called *amusement*, than Mr. Wesley. His whole life was one scene of serious business, of one kind or other, and of almost unremitting exertion; but which use made perfectly easy to him, so that one employment served to relieve another. With these extraordinary qualities, nothing was wanting to make him one of the first of human characters, but a well informed mind, and rational principles of religion. But for want of these, how miserably do we, in these letters, find him bewildered and distressed.

His state of mind was little better than that of Paschal, and of thousands in the church

of Rome, who made a merit of mere *suffering* and *labour*; thinking that the less they enjoyed here, the more was reserved for them hereafter. There is even an advantage in favour of *this* system above that of Mr. Wesley. For to judge of a man's state, and future prospects, by his *sufferings*, is much clearer, and leads to a more certain conclusion, than to judge by *internal feelings*. Mr. Wesley, after acting for many years with the best intentions that man could have, and after persevering in well doing, in the midst of difficulties, which to most persons would have been absolutely insurmountable, still considered himself as in *an unconverted state*; and at last imagined that the *new birth*, for which he had so long laboured in vain, and for which he might have laboured in vain through his whole life, came to him, as it also did to his brother Charles, in a moment.

In what unspeakable distress have the doctrines of original sin, the corruption of human nature, and the consequent necessity of a miraculous new birth, involved thousands.

I myself

I myself have felt, but am unable to describe it. Of what unspeakable value, then, are rational principles of religion; and how happy should that man think himself who has never known any other; and yet the scriptures teach them in the plainest manner, and uniformly instruct us to judge of ourselves and others, not by uncertain and undescribable *feelings*, but by evident *actions*. As our Saviour says, *By their fruits shall ye know men*. For where a man's conduct is, not only occasionally, but uniformly, right, the principle upon which he acts must be good. Indeed, the only reason why we value good principles, is on account of their uniform operation in producing good conduct. This is the *end*, and the principle is only the *means*,

Notwithstanding these plain considerations, how many well meaning persons bewilder and distress themselves in the application of a rule which is extremely obscure, and with respect to which they can never arrive at any certainty; overlooking what is most

obvious, with respect to which neither themselves nor others could well make any mistake at all. Such is the consequence of leaving out common sense in matters of religion. Besides, to judge by internal feelings, or emotions of the heart, which are the springs or causes of our conduct, is to invade the province of God, who alone knows, and judges by, the heart; whereas our actions are open to the inspection of all men. Men perpetually deceive even themselves, with respect to the real *motives* of their own conduct, though they are, no doubt, more accessible to themselves than to others; but about the uniform tenor of their *actions*, there can be no mistake.

Notions of an immediate intercourse with the Deity, had their beginning among christians with the Montanists, who, on this account, and that of their austerities and rigid discipline, were exceedingly popular. Similar ideas were prevalent among many orders of monks, and the Romish saints, and they were the sole foundation of mysticism.

myfticism. They were not, however, confined to the Catholics, but infected many Proteftants. Indeed few of the denominations of them have been entirely exempt from ideas of this kind. The whole of quakerifm is evidently founded upon them; they took deep root in the old puritans, and are ftill to be found among the Calviniftic difsenters. Many phrafes which are ftill in ufe among them, fuch as *the gift of prayer*, and of preaching, being *carried out in prayer*, &c. are proofs of it.

Many of the more rational chriftians ftill contend for a real divine influence upon the mind, and fuch as, being only *occasional*, comes under the description of *supernatural*, and *miraculous*. But this fubject I have confidered at large in my *Discourfe on super-natural Influence*, to which I muft content myfelf with referring my readers. It is a doctrine that will not ftand the teft of fober examination. But it is only a juft knowledge of the human mind, and the nature of its operations, together with an attention to the phrafeology of fcripture,

ture, that can radically cure this species of enthusiasm; though the evidence of there being no superior excellence in the characters and manners of the pretenders to divine communications, will likewise contribute to explode the notion.

In the mean time, authentic narratives of the rise and progress of these illusions, such as this of the early life of Mr. Wesley, cannot fail to have a good effect. His case, indeed, is particularly striking, as it shews that neither the best natural understanding, with much acquired knowledge, nor the best disposition, cultivated with the greatest care, are sufficient guards against this species of enthusiasm. Just notions of religion carefully formed, can alone answer the purpose; and it is of particular importance that they be formed in early life, before the imagination has been led astray by false notions.

These letters I communicated to the Rev. Mr. Hampson, who was many years in connection with Mr. Wesley, on his informing me of his intention to write his life. This
work

work is now executed by his son, from the collections and observations of the father, and I wish to recommend it, as thinking it to be in all respects excellent. Well knowing Mr. Hampson, I am satisfied that the account is just and impartial. But though in this life of Mr. Wesley, he has made use of the *facts* to be collected from these letters, and has published some of them, it did not seem to him, or to me, to supersede the use of printing them all at large, which I have done in the order of their dates.

To the letters which illustrate the early history of Mr. Wesley, I have subjoined (as part of the papers delivered to me by Mr. Badcock, in the hand writing of Mr. Samuel Wesley, and as being amusing in their way) an account of some strange noises, &c. which were never clearly accounted for, in the house of old Mr. Wesley. It consists of extracts from the old gentleman's journal, and various letters, written by several persons in the family at the time, some of them exceedingly lively and entertaining; so that this is perhaps the best authenticated, and
the

the best told story of the kind, that is any where extant; on which account, and to exercise the ingenuity of some speculative persons, it seemed to me and others, not undeserving of being published.

Mr. John Wesley himself, in the *Arminian Magazine*, for October, November, and December, 1784, published an account of the same disturbances, as collected by him, when he visited the family in the year 1720; but it is by no means so satisfactory, or so pleasing an account as this. He had no doubt of the noises being super-natural, and seems inclined to ascribe them to the judgment of God upon his father, for not observing a rash and ridiculous vow, made thirteen years before this event, in consequence of his wife's refusing to say *amen*, to the prayers for King William, as believing him to be nothing more than the Prince of Orange, and no lawful King of England*. It is a-

* It is something remarkable that Mrs. Wesley, the daughter to Dr. Samuel Annelley, a celebrated nonconformist (see Mr. Hampson's life of Mr. Wesley, vol. i. p. 5.) should be so violent a Jacobite. Her husband also, and all the sons, were high churchmen, though their grandfather

musing to observe, in how very weak a manner men of unquestionable good sense can sometimes reason.

In favour of this story, it may be said, that all the parties seem to have been sufficiently void of fear, and also free from credulity, except the general belief that such things were super-natural. But with respect to every thing of this nature, it is to be observed, that, though the narratives of the most honest witnesses imply something supernatural, we are not to conclude that the facts cannot be accounted for in a natural way. Because the observers, being particularly struck with what appears most extraordinary, are apt to overlook the most important circumstances, the connexion of which with the principal appearances they were not aware of. If any person, not in the

grandfather was one of the ejected ministers. The difference above mentioned, occasioned a separation between Mr. and Mrs. Wesley, which continued more than a year and a half, and terminated after the accession of Queen Ann. Mr. John Wesley was their first child after the separation, and was born June 21, 1703. Ibid, vol. i. p. 66.

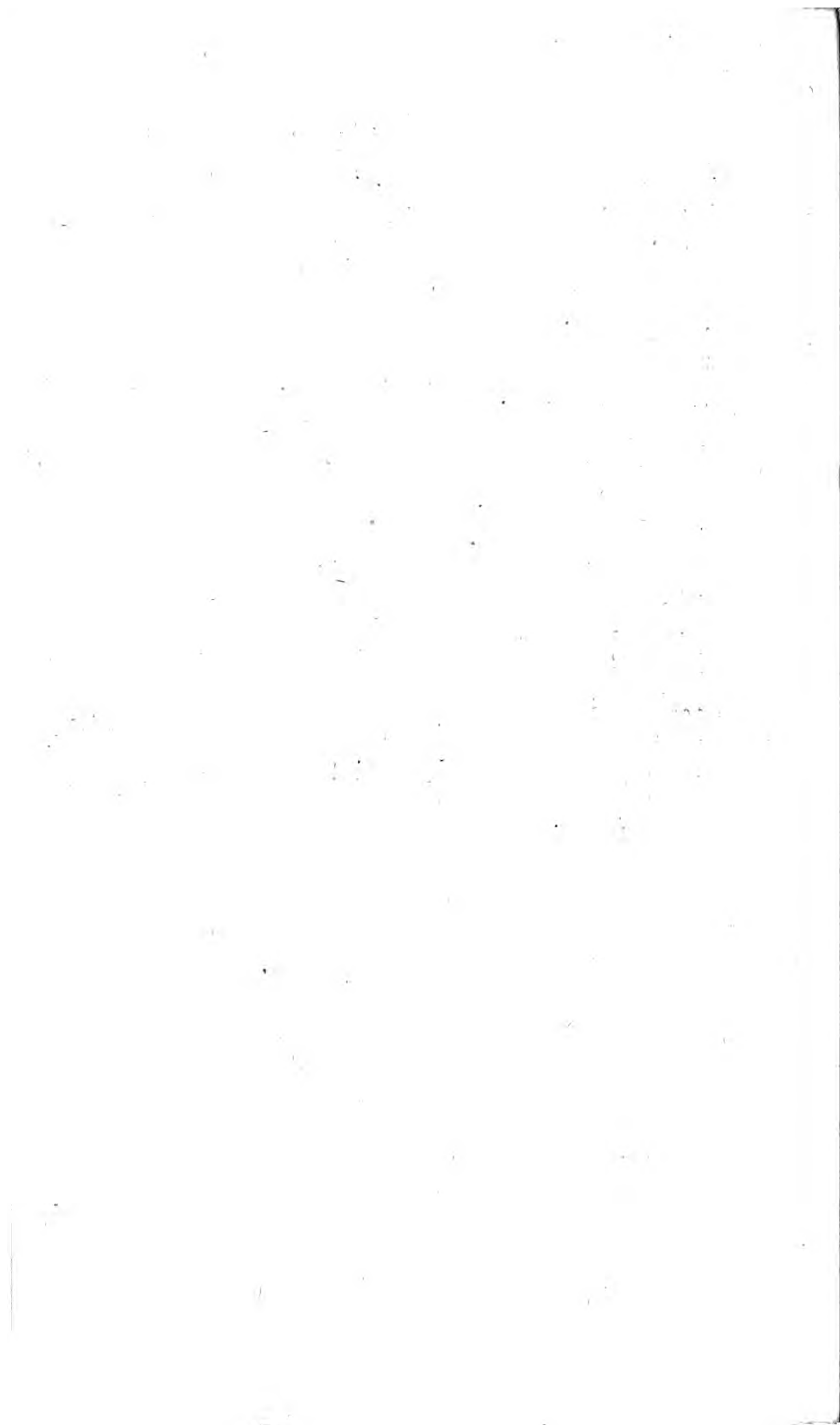
secret,

secret, were to relate what he himself saw done by Breslaw and others, who amuse the world with tricks of legerdemain, he would tell the story in such a manner as to imply a real miracle, merely in consequence of his not having seen, or not having attended to, some particulars in the exhibition, which might either have served to explain the whole, or have sufficiently shewn that, extraordinary as it appeared, it *might*, at least, have been produced in a natural way.

In all cases of this kind, and also that of apparitions, witchcraft, prophetic dreams, &c. though the witnesses be ever so honest, it is sufficient to suspend our belief, that we find no *good end* to be answered by them. When there is no *Nodus deo vindice dignus*, we may safely conclude that no miracle was wrought. What appears most probable at this distance of time, in the present case, is that it was a trick of the servants, assisted by some of their neighbours, and that nothing was meant by it, besides puzzling the family, and amusing themselves; and that
such

such a secret should be kept, so that the truth was never discovered, is not at all to be wondered at. No person acquainted with the nature of human testimony, and the motives of human actions, will ever compare the evidence of the miracles recorded in scripture with that of such stories as these.

I have also added, as part of this collection of papers, a private letter of Mr. Pope, another of Lord Oxford, to Mr. Samuel Wesley, and a copy of verses by Bishop Atterbury, as curiosities in their way. All the letters that I have here published, are in the hand writing of the authors, except such as were copied by Mr. Samuel Wesley.



AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
METHODISTS.

MY CHRISTIAN BROTHERS,

I Take the liberty to address you by this interesting appellation, though I am well aware that few of you will return it to me; and while you retain your present views of things, and of *me*, you will think yourselves sufficiently justified in refusing it. But I receive as a brother every man who believes the divine mission of Christ, in whatever light he may consider him personally, and who labours, as you do, to promote the great end of his gospel, which was the reformation of the world. In this your zeal is abundant, and highly meritorious, far beyond what most professors of christianity can pretend to. By you chiefly is the gospel preached to the *poor* in this country, and to you is the civilization, the industry, and sobriety, of great numbers
a of

of the labouring part of the community owing; though you are a body unknown to government, and look not for your reward from men. It was the lamentable defect of attention to the condition and wants of the poor, both in the ministers of the established church, and in the dissenters also, that led Mr. Wesley, and his early associates, to open this new and extensive field of usefulness, for which thousands, and ten thousands, will hereafter *rise up and call him blessed.*

In the full persuasion of the great good which you are instrumental in the hands of God (for all is of him) of rendering to your country, and to the world, I truly rejoice; and I make no account whatever of the dislike which you have unhappily conceived of myself, and of all those whose views of christianity are the same with mine. This is mere ignorance. Your *principle* and *motives* are good; and therefore whenever it shall please God to give you farther light, you are ready, like the apostle Paul, to act up to it; and then you will receive, and love, as brethren, those whom you now regard as enemies. I only wish, therefore, that to the zeal of apostles, you had what I conceive to be wanting among you, more knowledge.

There

There is great reason, however, to hope that in this, as well as in other respects, your minds are opening, and your general system in a state of improvement. This very publication will convince you that you who are now called *methodists*, are a very different set of people, and much more rational, than those who were first distinguished by that name. At least, we do not now hear of those sudden and miraculous conversions, attended with convulsions, falling down, and rolling on the ground, and with frantic cries and gestures, with accounts of which Mr. Wesley's early Journals abound; nor will many of you, I presume, at this day pretend to date your new birth, with as much precision as your natural birth. But you will here find the day, the hour, and the minute, when both Mr. John and Mr. Charles Wesley first received, or imagined they first received, their divine light; and, as they say, *became christians*, from being before that moment *no christians*. And this you will find to have been some years after they had wholly devoted themselves to the service of God and of man, and when Mr. John Wesley, had not only lived that strict and exemplary life at Oxford, which procured him and his associates the title of *Methodists*, but after he had made a voyage to North America, with no other view than to convert and teach others.

You cannot suppose, that there has been since that time any change in the divine proceedings, that sinners were converted, their hearts changed, and their lives reformed, in one way at that time, and in quite another way now. As, therefore, there has been no change in God, or in his mode of operation, the change must have been in yourselves; and consequently those instantaneous conversions, of which you boasted so much formerly, could only have been the effects of enthusiasm and delusion.

We do not read of the hearers of Christ, or of the apostles, being affected in the sudden and violent manner in which the early disciples of Mr. Wesley are said to have been. All their discourses, like those of Mr. Wesley in the latter part of his life, were solely calculated to make men think, and reflect; to shew them the error of their ways, and the necessity of reformation, as they hoped for the favour of God here, and happiness hereafter. And certainly it is quite sufficient for any reasonable man, to be shewn that he has done wrong, and that he may and ought to do better, and especially that it is his interest so to do. When he is once fully persuaded of this, nothing farther is necessary to induce him to change his conduct, and to become what is called *another man*. He is then possessed of

a fixed principle of reformation, which will not only make him *cease to do evil and learn to do well*, but will enable him to persevere in a course of good conduct through life. When, like David, a man has been brought properly to *think on his ways*, he will of his own accord *turn his feet to God's testimonies*. There is nothing supernatural, but what is perfectly rational, in this,

But when men look to nothing *within themselves*, but wait for impulses from *without*, they are not only open to every delusion, fancying that to come from God if it be good, or from the devil if it be bad, which is all the while nothing more than the workings of their own imagination. But when the good impressions, whatever they have been, have left them, all their religion is gone with them; so that they often become worse men than ever they were before, and with accounts of this nature the history of methodism abounds. There was no root, or rational principle of reformation in them, and therefore the cares of the world, and other temptations, prevailed.

In the rational views of religion above mentioned, which you will find very sensibly and forcibly urged by the friends of Mr. Wesley, in this publication,

cation, you will now, I doubt not, very generally agree with me. You will lament as much as I do, the wild extravagance of your predecessors, and will conduct yourselves by very different maxims. Now, as you find you have got more light than you formerly had, be persuaded to think that you may still get more; and together with more light and knowledge, you cannot fail, I am persuaded, to get more charity; so as to be brought to think better than you now do of those who have the same great object with yourselves, but who take a different method to obtain it, and who are your fellow labourers in the same great harvest, though they are occupied in a different part of the same extensive field. In this great field there is much and various work to be done, for some of which I readily acknowledge, that you are better qualified than I am; but then there may be other work for which I am better qualified than you.

Mr. Wesley himself has often declared in the most public manner, and in my own hearing, that methodism had nothing to do with any particular opinions in religion, that the end of all religion was good morals, and that every man who had this object was his friend. To be consistent in this, is all that I wish of you, and that you will think better of myself

myself and others, who have not, in fact, any other object than yourselves. We equally wish to lead men from the practice of vice to that of virtue. The end of all our writing and preaching is to make men better members of society, better in all the relations in life, whether husbands or wives, parents or children, masters or servants, &c. in order to their being happy in heaven after death. What then should hinder our mutual good will, and good wishes? You have mine; and though I may not be so happy as to obtain yours, I will deserve it; and yet I have no particular reason for wishing it, except the general one, that the enemies of our common christianity may see that, though its friends differ in forms and names, they are agreed in every thing that is essential, and especially in what is most of all essential, and the proper badge of our relation to Christ, *brotherly love*.

This great end would be more easily obtained, if we all attended more to the great things in which all christians agree, and less to those in which any of them differ; and the former are of infinitely more moment than the latter. All christians, of every denomination, believe that whatever Christ himself was, his mission was *divine*, and that whatever he taught was from God. They all believe that he

wrought unquestionable miracles, that he died, and rose again from the dead, and that he will come again to raise all the dead, and to give unto every man according to his works.

Compared to these great articles of our common faith, every thing else is of little consequence; because this is the faith which alone has any great tendency to reform the world, operating as a direct motive to a good life; and what a good life is, is soon learned, if we be not acquainted with it already; as it is barely possible for any person to grow up to man's estate without knowing it, or at least the most important articles of it.

Besides this general agreement, all Mr. Wesley's followers agree with me in having the same idea of the just and equitable moral government of God. We do not, with the Calvinists, believe that the Divine Being has, without any regard to men's future characters and good works, predestinated some to everlasting life, and others to everlasting condemnation; but that it depends upon men themselves, whether they will be entitled to the favour of God, and future happiness, or not; and therefore, with the ancient prophets, and with the apostles, we entreat and persuade men to turn from their
evil

evil ways, and to be *reconciled to God*, believing that he is always disposed to be reconciled to them, and that proper motives cannot fail to have a real influence on men's conduct. At this time, also, I hope there are none of you who believe, as Mr. Wesley originally did, in a miraculous new birth, depending on the sole will of God, and altogether independent of yourselves, and that original sin has taken such hold upon men, that without supernatural grace, they cannot so much as think a good thought, or do any thing towards turning from a life of sin to a life of virtue. We are agreed, that all the exhortations of scripture necessarily suppose, that all men have this power, and that whenever they please they can exert it, and therefore that it is not in vain that we preach to them for this purpose.

In what then, my Brethren, do we differ. Hardly in any thing, except in our opinion about *who Christ was*, not with respect to what he *taught*, or *did*, or *will do*, which, however, is all that particularly interests us; and though we differ in this respect, we are, I doubt not, equally influenced by the love of truth, by a desire to understand the scriptures, and to build our faith upon them.

Moreover,

Moreover, we all profess to hold the great doctrine of the *divine unity*. We all say, that there is no other God than ONE. This is the first of all the commandments, and is solemnly confirmed by our Saviour. But we have a greater dread of infringing upon this doctrine, than you seem to have; and, judging by appearances, every departure from it has been attended with dreadful consequences. When the Jews of old abandoned it, they gave themselves up to the worship of the host of heaven, and to many absurd, obscene, and cruel practices, connected with that idolatrous worship; and when christians departed from it, by the worship of Jesus Christ, they did not stop there, but naturally proceeded to the worship of the Virgin Mary, and as many other saints, and objects of worship, as the heathens ever looked up to; and thus the one true God was almost entirely neglected and forgotten.

We think it is as clearly taught in the New Testament, as in the old, that the one true God is that great Being who is exclusively stiled *Jehovah*, and who is said to be the sole maker and governor of all things; and that he is *the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, as well as our God and father. Jesus himself repeatedly declared, that *of himself he could do nothing*, but that *the father who was in him*,
(not

(not any divinity of his own) *did the works*; and when he died, it was God who raised him from the dead, and *gave him glory*.

If you dread to withhold worship from a Being who may be entitled to it, is it not equally dreadful, and as expressly forbidden, to give that glory to a creature which the supreme Being has appropriated to himself? You cannot deny that the scriptures contain the most earnest and repeated admonitions against worshipping any other than the one true God; but shew me, if you can, a single admonition against not worshipping Christ as God.

Consult also your reason and common sense (which you ought never to abandon in matters of religion, unless you give up every guard against delusion, and be as ready to receive the religion of Mahomet as that of Christ) and say whether it be possible for you to believe that Christ is God, and the Holy Ghost also God, as well as the supreme Father himself, and not believe that there are more Gods than one, which you cannot deny to be expressly contrary to the scriptures. If neither Christ nor the Holy Ghost want any thing that is necessary to constitute them *truly God*, you certainly make *three Gods*, and not *one* only; and if all the three persons

persons be necessary to make one God, not any one of the three, not even the Father himself, can be more than a part of God. Can you believe that there can be any thing in the scriptures contrary to such plain common sense as this? Reason and religion can never be so much at variance. But I do not mean to argue at large with you on this subject in this place. Read with candour what I have written upon it, especially *my Appeal to the serious and candid professors of Christianity*, and *my General view of arguments against the divinity or pre-existence of Christ, from reason, from the scriptures, and from history*, and also my *Familiar illustration of certain passages of scripture*, relating to this and other subjects. When you have read these tracts, which are neither large nor expensive, judge whether I have not reason and the scriptures on my side. You will at least be convinced that I have so persuaded myself; and you cannot but respect a real love of truth, and a desire to bring others into it, even in the man who is unfortunately in an error.

Should you, upon mature consideration, such as I myself (who once thought as you now do) have given to the subject, come to think as I do with respect to it, it does not need to make any change in your general system, which in several respects I think

to be excellent. Continue to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel wherever it is wanted ; and this, alas, is still the case with the great mass of the common people of this country ; and form separate societies, with whatever rules you think proper, and find to be expedient for that purpose ; and by your zeal and liberality, shew that religion requires no aid from the civil magistrate ; that places of worship can be built, and salaries of teachers provided, without any tax enforced by law. Let any person, whom you think qualified, teach and exhort others, whether he be in *holy orders*, as it is called, or not ; and if they be qualified to teach, they are certainly qualified to administer all the ordinances of the gospel, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. I know of no exclusive right that any men, or body of men, have to this privilege.

But call no man *master* upon earth, not even Mr. Wesley ; for one is our master, even Christ, as one is our father, or the author of our being, even God. Keep your minds open to the investigation of truth, and get from every quarter as much light and knowledge as you can. As you are, I rejoice in your success and increasing numbers ; but I certainly should rejoice much more, if to your just zeal, you
could,

XXX

AN ADDRESS, &c.

could, laying aside your prejudices, add more knowledge, and more charity.

I am,

My Christian Brethren,

Your sincere well wisher,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Birmingham, June 1, 1791.

THE

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LETTERS

LETTERS
ILLUSTRATING
THE EARLY HISTORY
OF THE
Rev. J. WESLEY.

LETTER I.

From Mr. J. Wesley to his brother Samuel.

Lincoln Coll. Oxen, April 4, 1726.

DEAR BROTHER,

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

B

I be-

I believe, I have given Mr. Leybourn, at different times, five or six short copies of verses; the latest were a translation of part of the second Georgic, and an imitation of the 65th Psalm. If he has lost them, as it is likely he has, in so long a time, I can write them over in less than an hour, and send them by the post.

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

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

By

By a cool fountain's flow'ry side,
 The fair Celinda lay ;
 Her looks encreas'd the summer's pride,
 Her eyes the blaze of day.

Quick through the air to this retreat,
 A bee industrious flew ;
 Prepar'd to rise every sweet,
 Under the balmy dew,

Drawn by the fragrance of her breath,
 Her rosy lips he found ;
 There in full transport suck'd in death,
 And dropt upon the ground.

Enjoy blest bee, enjoy thy fate,
 Nor at thy fall repine ;
 Each God would quit his blissful state,
 To share a death like thine.

The seven former Verses of the 46th Psalm.

On God supreme our hope depends,
 Whose omnipresent fight ;
 Even to the pathless realms extends,
 Of uncreated night.

Plung'd in th' abyfs of deep distress,
 To him we raise our cry ;
 His mercy bids our sorrows cease,
 And fills our tongue with joy.

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

LETTERS RELATING TO

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

What tho' th' ungovern'd, wild abyfs
 His fires tumultuous pours ;
 What tho' the wat'ry legion's rife,
 And lash th' affrighted shores ;

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

The God most high on Sion's hill,
 Has fix'd his sure abode :
 Nor dares th' impetuous waves assail,
 The city of our God.

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

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

Mr. Le-hunte and Mr. Sherman send their service. I am,

Your loving Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

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

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

To the Rev. Mr. Wesley,
in Great Dean's Yard, Westminster.

L E T T E R . II.

From J. Wesley to his brother Samuel.

DEAR BROTHER *,

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

* This letter is without a date, but it appears to have been written from Oxford.

The reasons why I conceive the Samaritans to have been idolaters, are, 1st. Because our Saviour says of them, "Ye worship ye know not what," which seems to refer plainly to the object of their worship; and 2dly. Because the old inhabitants of Samaria, who succeeded the Israelites, were undoubtedly so, and I never heard that they were much amended in after times: "These nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children and their children's children." 2 Kings. c. xvii. v. 41.

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

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

No

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

What you understand as spoken of *rulers*, I expressly say of private men: "As well every ruler as every private man must act in a legal way; and the latter might with equal reason apply the civil sword himself, as use violent means" (by which I here mean reviling, studiously and unnecessarily defaming, or handing about ill stories of wicked men) "to preserve the church."

I believe it to be more especially the duty of governors, to try to amend scandalous offenders. 2. That flagrant immorality is a sufficient reason to shun any one. 3. That to the weak and private christian, it is an unanswerable reason for so doing. 4. That in many cases a private christian, in some, a clergyman is not obliged to admonish more than once. But this being allowed, still the main argument stands, that the scripture no where authorises a private person to do more than to shun an heretic, or (which I expressly mention) an obstinate offender. I had not the least thought of any retrospect in them, neither when I wrote or spoke those words: "If Providence has pointed you out, &c."

My mother's reason for my cutting off my hair, is because she fancies it prejudices my health. As to my looks, it would doubtless mend my complexion

ion to have it off, by letting me get a little more colour, and perhaps it might contribute to my making a more genteel appearance. But these till ill health is added to them, I cannot persuade myself to be sufficient grounds for losing two or three pounds a year. I am ill enough able to spare them.

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

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

Your loving Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

My love and service to my sister.

To Mr. Wesley,
Great Dean's-yard, Westminster }
}

LETTER III.

Mr. J. Wesley to his brother Samuel.

Lincoln College, Nov. 17, 1731.

DEAR BROTHER,

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

enables me to do, is according to the scripture, than I am that the length of it is contrary to it.

I have often thought of a saying of Dr. Hayward's, when he examined me for priest's orders: "Do you know what you are about? You are bidding defiance to all mankind. He that would live a christian priest ought to know that, whether his hand be against every man or no, he must expect every man's hand should be against him." It is not strange that every man's hand who is not a christian, should be against him that endeavours to be so. But is it not hard, that even those that are with us should be against us; that a man's enemies (in some degree) should be those of the same household of faith? Yet so it is. From the time that a man sets himself to his business, very many, even of those who travel the same road, many of those who are before, as well as behind him, will lay stumbling blocks in his way. One blames him for not going fast enough, another for having made no greater progress; another for going too far, which perhaps, strange as it is, is the more common charge of the two. For this comes from people of all sorts; not only infidels, not only half-christians, but some of the best of men are very apt to make this reflection, "He lays unnecessary burthens upon himself; he is too precise; he does what God has nowhere required to be done." True, he has not required it
of

of those that are perfect; and even as to those who are not, all men are not required to use all means; but every man is required to use those which he finds most useful to himself. And who can tell better than himself, whether he finds them so or no? "Who knoweth the things of a man better than the spirit of a man that is in him?"

This being a point of no common concern, I desire to explain myself upon it once for all, and to tell you freely and clearly, those general positions on which I ground (I think) all those practices, for which (as you would have seen, had you read that paper through) I am generally accused of singularity. 1st. As to the end of my being, I lay it down for a rule, that I cannot be too happy, or therefore too holy, and thence infer that the more steadily I keep my eye upon the prize of our high calling, the better, and the more of my thoughts, and words, and actions, are directly pointed at the attainment of it. 2d. As to the instituted means of attaining it, I likewise lay it down for a rule, that I am to use them every time I may. 3d. As to prudential means, I believe this rule holds, of things indifferent in themselves; whatever I know to do me hurt, that to me is not indifferent, but resolutely to be abstained from; whatever I know to do me good, that to me is not indifferent, but resolutely to be embraced.

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

I have but one thing to add, and that is, as to my being *formal*. If by that be meant, that I am not easy and unaffected enough in my carriage: It is very true; but how shall I help it? I cannot be genteelly behaved by instinct; and if I am to try after it by experience and observation of others, that is not the work of a month, but of years. If by *formal* be meant that I am serious, this too is very true; but why should I help it? Mirth, I grant, is fit for you; but does it follow that it is fit for me? Are the same tempers, any more than the same words or actions, fit for all circumstances? If you are to “rejoice evermore,” because you have put your enemies to flight, am I to do the same, while they continually assault me? You are glad, because
you

you are *passed from death to life* : Well ; but let him be afraid who knows not whether he is to live or die. Whether this be my condition or no, who can tell better than myself. Him who can, whoever he be, I allow to be a proper judge, whether I do well to be generally as serious as I can.

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

DEAR BROTHER,

Your's, and my sifter's,

affectionate Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

To the Rev. Mr. Wesley, }
Great Dean's-yard, Westminster. }

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

LET-

LETTER IV.

From Charles Wesley to his brother Samuel.

Christ Church, July 31, 1734.

DEAR BROTHER,

MANY things have concurred to hinder my sooner thanking you for your last letter, strictly so called (such as end in the first or second pages, I cannot allow to be more than notes). You went as far towards satisfying all my queries, as your paper would well permit. I am heartily glad to hear my sister and you are so much mended (in health, the main temporal concern) and that your trouble is less than it was at Westminster. Let things happen how they can (as you say) what has already *happened* (to use a Heathenish word) has, I think, sufficiently justified your friends in giving, and yourself in taking, advice. I should be glad to know what your physicians in the West, if you have any there, say to you. I hope you find others as much better than you expected, as the second master, and congratulate you upon your disappointment in finding him no drunkard. By your description of my sister in her gardens—*Accendis, quam cupiam magis illi proximus esse*—I must come and make her an arbour, I see. There is no help for it, but
want

want of time and money. This is no hint, take notice; for when need be, you can bear witness to my proficiency in begging explicitly. I am not sorry to hear of the offence your regulations are likely to give, for I am more and more convinced, that none escape being evil-spoken of, but those that deserve not to escape it.

I cannot excuse my brother's mentioning nothing of Epworth, when he was just come from it. Taciturnity as to family affairs, is his infirmity, but not his fault, for I dare say there is no *malice pro-pense* in it. It was much he told me they were all well there; for he does not use to be so communicative. It was by mere accident I heard of John Whitlamb's having written, for though my brother had been there, I had known nothing of it till this day, but for my journey to London. My father, they say, is a little dissatisfied at my aunt Nancy's leaving the thousand pounds (where it can be got) to my mother during life, and as afterward S. Kezzy made a considerable conquest when my brother was there; of Mr. Hall, I mean, who accompanied him. All parties are pleased with the match, but Mr. Hall's mother; and for want of her consent, there it rests. My brother has been much mauled, and threatened more for his Jacobite Sermon on the 11th June: But he was wise enough to get the Vice Chancellor to read and approve it before he preached it, and
may

may therefore bid Wadham, Merton, Exeter, and Christ Church, do their worst. The last week he passed at London, chiefly in consulting Mr. Law about one of his pupils; but he found time, notwithstanding, to dispatch three sheets of Job while there, and still goes on with much more expedition than my father did while upon the spot. I very happily find I have a love left for Dean's-yard; and yet it is all derived to Tiverton, which I hope it will not be impossible for me to see before the Palace is quite finished. Mr. and Mrs. Crew complained when they were here lately, of your writing to every body but them. Mr. Morgan is in a fairer way of becoming a christian than we ever yet knew him. Dick Smith, I hope, continues one still, that is, is better and better every day. Pray give our love to my sifter and Phill. I am,

Your affectionate Brother,

CHARLES WESLEY.

The Rev. Mr. Wesley, School-master, }
Tiverton, Devon. }

LET-

LETTER V.

S. Wesley to his brother John.

Christmas Day, 1734.

DEAR JACK,

YESTERDAY I received a letter from my father, wherein he tells me you are unalterably resolved not to accept of a certain living if you could get it, and that for this reason, “ the question “ is not whether I could do more good to others “ *there* or *here*, but whether I could do more to my- “ self; seeing wherever I can be most holy myself, “ there I am assured I can most promote holiness in “ others; but I am equally assured there is no place “ under heaven so fit for my improvement as Ox- “ ford.”

After this declaration, I believe no one can move your mind but him who made it, much less do I think myself qualified for that purpose. You may perhaps say I have been too passive; I left Oxford, with all its opportunity of good, on a worldly account, at my father's desire. I left my last settlement by the same determination, and should have thought I sinned both times if I had not followed it. You may ask, if I suppose you not to be persuaded,

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and

and myself not fit to persuade, why do I write? For a plain reason, it is my duty, if I can, to please and profit my father and mother; and, secondly, to inform and profit you. The event I leave to the Almighty, ο χρωων χωπειτω.

I shall not draw the law of controversy, and therefore, though I judge every proposition flatly false, except that of your being assured, yet I shall allow every word, and have nevertheless this to say against your conclusions. 1. I see your love to yourself, but your love to your neighbour I do not see. This was not the spirit of St. Paul, when he wished himself accursed for his brethren's sake; the lowest sense of which must be thus much, to be deprived of the outward means of grace, and cut off from visible communion. What, would you not lose one degree of glory, were it possible to be instrumental in saving several, perhaps very many, from the place of torment?

2. You are not at liberty to resolve against undertaking a cure of souls. You are solemnly engaged to do it before God, and his high priest, and his church. Are you not ordained? Did you not deliberately and openly promise to instruct, to teach, to admonish, to exhort those committed to your charge? Did you equivocate then with so vile a reservation, as to purpose in your heart that you would never have any so committed? It is not a
College,

College, it is not an University, it is the *order of the Church*, according to which you were called. Let Charles, if he is silly enough, vow never to leave Oxford, and therefore avoid orders. Your faith is already plighted to the contrary; *you have put your hand to the plough, to that plough.*

I mention no less considerations, but restrain myself, though not a little surpris'd that you seem to hint, what scarce ever before entered the head of a christian, that a parish priest cannot attain to the highest perfection possible on this side heaven.

I am, &c.

S. WESLEY.

LETTER VI.

From J. Wesley to his brother Samuel.

Oxon, Jan. 15, 1734-5.

DEAR BROTHER,

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

Your second argument I had no occasion to mention before. To it I answer, that I do not, nor ever did, resolve against undertaking a cure of souls. There are four cures belonging to our College, and consistent with a Fellowship: I do not know but I may take one of them at Michaelmas. Not that I am clearly assured that I should be false to my engagement, were I only to instruct and exhort the

* Written to his father.

pupils committed to my charge. But of that I should think more.

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

DEAR BROTHER,

Your obliged and affectionate Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

LETTER VII.

From J. Wesley to his father.

DEAR SIR,

1st. **T**HE authority of a parent, and the call of Providence, are things of so sacred a nature, that a question in which these are any ways concerned, deserves the most serious consideration. I am therefore greatly obliged to you for the pains you have taken to set ours in a clear light; which I now intend to consider more at large, with the utmost attention of which I am capable. And I shall the more cheerfully do it, as being assured of your

joining with me in earnestly imploring his guidance, who will not suffer those that bend their wills to his, to seek death in the error of their life.

2d. I entirely agree, that "the glory of God, and the different degrees of promoting it, are to be our sole consideration and direction in the choice of any course of life;" and consequently, that it must wholly turn upon this single point, whether I am to prefer a college life, or that of a rector of a parish. I do not say the glory of God is to be my first, or my principal consideration, but my only one; since all that are not implied in this, are absolutely of no weight; in presence of this, they all vanish away, they are less than the small dust of the balance.

3d. And, indeed, till all other considerations were set aside, I could never come to any clear determination; till my eye was single, my whole mind was full of darkness. Every consideration distinct from this, threw a shadow over all the objects I had in view, and was such a cloud as no light could penetrate. Whereas, so long as I can keep my eye single, and steadily fixed on the glory of God, I have no more doubt of the way wherein I should go, than of the shining of the sun at noon-day.

4th. That course of life tends most to the glory of God, wherein we can most promote holiness in ourselves and others. I say in ourselves and others,

as

as being fully persuaded that these can never be put asunder. For how is it possible that the good God should make our interest inconsistent with our neighbours? That he should make our being in one state best for ourselves, and our being in another best for the church? This would be making a strange schism in his body; such as surely never was from the beginning of the world. And if not, then whatever state is best on either of these accounts, is so on the other likewise. If it be best for others, then it is so for us; if for us, then for them.

5th. However, when two ways of life are proposed, I should chuse to begin with that part of the question, which of these have I rational ground to believe will conduce most to my own improvement: And that not only because it is every physician's concern to heal himself first, but because it seems we may judge with more ease, and perhaps certainty too, in which state we can most promote holiness in ourselves, than in which we can in others.

6th. By holiness, I mean not fasting, or bodily austerity, or any other external means of improvement, but the inward temper, to which all these are subservient, a renewal of the soul in the image of God. I mean a complex habit of lowliness, meekness, purity, faith, hope, and the love of God and man. And I therefore believe, that in the state wherein I am, I can most promote this holiness in
C 4 myself,

myself, because I now enjoy several advantages, which are almost peculiar to it.

7th. The first of these, is daily converse with my friends. I know no other place under heaven where I can have always at hand half a dozen persons nearly of my own judgment, and engaged in the same studies. Persons who are awakened into a full and lively conviction, that they have only one work to do upon earth; who are in some measure enlightened so as to see, though at a distance, what that one work is, viz. the recovery of that single intention and pure affection which were in Christ Jesus; who, in order to this, have according to their power renounced themselves, and wholly and absolutely devoted themselves to God: and who suitably thereto deny themselves, and take up their crosses daily. To have such a number of such friends constantly watching over my soul, and according to the variety of occasions, administering reproof, advice, or exhortation, with all plainness, and all gentleness, is a blessing I have not yet found any christians to enjoy in any other part of the kingdom. And such a blessing it is, so conducive, if faithfully used, to the increase of all holiness, as I defy any one to know the full value of, till he receives his full measure of glory.

8th. Another invaluable blessing which I enjoy here in a greater degree than I could any where else,

is

is retirement. I have not only as much, but as little company as I please. I have no such thing as a trifling visitant, except about an hour in a month, when I invite some of the fellows to breakfast. Unless at that one time, no one ever takes it into his head to set foot within my door, except he has some business of importance to communicate to me, or I to him. And even then, as soon as he has dispatched his business, he immediately takes his leave.

9th. Both these blessings, the continual presence of useful and uninterrupted freedom from trifling acquaintance, are exceedingly endeared to me, whenever I have spent but one week out of this place. The far greatest part of the conversation I meet with abroad, even among those whom I believe to be real christians, turns on points that are absolutely wide of my purpose, that no way forward me in the business of life. Now, though they may have time to spare, I have none ; it is absolutely necessary for such a one as me to follow with all possible care and vigilance, that excellent advice of Mr. Herbert,

Still let thy mind be bent, still plotting where,
And when, and how, the business may be done.

And this, I bless God, I can in some measure do, so long as I avoid that bane of piety, the company
of

of good sort of men, lukewarm christians (as they are called) persons that have a great concern for, but no sense of religion. But these undermine insensibly all my resolutions, and quite steal from me the little fervour I have; and I never come from among these *Saints of the World* (as J. Valdesio calls them) faint, dissipated, and shorn of all my strength, but I say, "God deliver me from a half-christian."

10th. Freedom from care I take to be the next greatest advantage to freedom from useless, and therefore hurtful, company. And this too I enjoy in greater perfection here than I can ever expect to do any where else. I hear of such a thing as *the cares of this world*, and I read of them, but I know them not. My income is ready for me on so many stated days, and all I have to do is to count and carry it home. The grand article of my expence is food, and this too is provided without any care of mine. I have nothing to do, but at such an hour to take and eat what is prepared for me. My laundress, barber, &c. are always ready at quarter-day, so I have no trouble on account of those expences. And for what I occasionally need, I can be supplied from time to time without any expence of thought. Now to convince me what a help to holiness this is (were not my experience abundantly sufficient) I should need no better authority than St. Paul's, "I would
I have

have you be without carefulness." This I speak for your own profit, that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. Happy is he that careth only for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. He may be holy both in body and spirit, after the Apostle's judgment, and I think that he had the spirit of God.

11th. To quicken me in making a thankful and diligent use of all the other advantages of this place, I have the opportunity of public prayer twice a day, and of weekly communicating. It would be easy to mention many more, and likewise to shew many disadvantages, which a person of greater courage and skill than me, could scarce separate from a country life. But whatever one of experience and resolution might do, I am very sensible I should not be able to turn aside one of the thousand temptations that would immediately rush upon me. I could not stand my ground, no not for one month, against intemperance in sleeping, eating and drinking; against irregularity in study, against a general lukewarmness in my affections, and remissness in my actions; against softness and self-indulgence, directly opposite to that discipline and hardship which become a soldier of Jesus Christ. And then when my spirit was thus dissolved, I should be an easy prey to whatever impertinent company came in my way. Then would the cares of the world, and the
desire

desire of other things, roll back with a full tide upon me. It would be no wonder, if, while I preached to others, I myself should be a cast away. I cannot therefore but observe, that the question does not relate barely to degrees of perfection, but to the very essence and being of it. *Agitur de vitâ & sanguine Turni.* The point is, whether I shall, or shall not, work out my salvation, whether I shall serve Christ, or Belial.

12th. What still heightens my fear of this untried state is, that when I am once entered into it, be the inconveniencies of it found more or less—*vestigia nulla retrorsum*—when I am there, there I must stay. If this way of life should ever prove less advantageous, I have almost continual opportunities of quitting it; but whatever difficulties occur in that, whether foreseen or unforeseen, there is no returning, any more than from the grave. When I have once launched out into that unknown sea, there is no recovering my harbour; I must on among whatever whirlpools, or rocks, or sands, though all the waves and storms go over me.

13th. Thus much as to myself. But you justly observe, that we are not to consider ourselves alone; since God made us all for a social life, to which academical studies are only preparatory. I allow too that he will take an exact account of every talent which he has lent us, not to bury them, but to employ every mite we have received in diffusing holiness

ness all around us. I cannot deny that every follower of Christ is, in his proportion, the light of the world, that whoever is such can no more be concealed than the sun in the midst of heaven; that being set as a light in a dark place, his shining out must be the more conspicuous; that to this very end was his light given, that it might shine at least to all that look towards him; and indeed that there is one only way of hiding it, which is, to put it out. Neither can I deny that it is the indispensable duty of every christian to impart both light and heat to all who are willing to receive it. I am obliged likewise, unless I lie against the truth, to grant that there is not so contemptible an animal upon earth, as one that drones away life, without ever labouring to promote the glory of God, and the good of men; and that whether he be young or old, learned, or unlearned, in a college, or out of it. Yet granting the superlative degree of contempt to be on all accounts due to a college drone; a wretch that hath received ten talents, and yet employs none; that is not only promised a reward by his gracious master, but is paid before hand for his work by his generous founder, and yet works not at all; allowing all this, and whatever else can be said (for I own it is impossible to say enough) against the drowsy ingratitude, the lazy perjury of those who are commonly called harmless or good sort of men (a fair proportion

proportion of whom I must to our shame confess are to be found in colleges) allowing this, I say, I do not apprehend it will conclude against a college life in general. For the abuse of it does not destroy the use; though there are some here who are the lumber of the creation, it does not follow that others may not be of more service to the world in this station, than they could in any other.

14th. That I in particular could, might, it seems, be inferred from what has been proved already, viz. That I could be holier here myself than any where else, if I faithfully used the blessings I enjoy; for to prove, that the holier any man is himself, the more shall he promote holiness in others, there needs no more than this one *postulatum*, the help which is done on earth, God does it himself. If so, if God be the sole agent in healing souls, and man only the instrument in his hand, there can no doubt be made, but that the more holy a man is, he will make use of him the more. Because he is more willing to be so used; because the more pure he is, he is the fitter instrument for the God of purity; because he will pray more, and more earnestly that he may be employed, and that his service may tend to his master's glory; because all his prayers both for employment and success therein will the more surely pierce the clouds; because the more his heart is enlarged, the wider sphere he may act in without care-

carefulness or distraction. And lastly, because the more his heart is renewed in the image of God, the more God can renew it in others by him, without destroying him by pride or vanity.

15th. But for the proof of every one of these weighty truths, experience is worth a thousand reasons. I see, I feel them every day. Sometimes I cannot do good to others, because I am unwilling to do it; shame or pain is in the way; and I do not desire to serve God at so dear a rate. Sometimes I cannot do the good I desire to do, because I am in other respects too unholy. I know within myself, were I fit to be so employed, God would employ me in this work. But my heart is too unclean for such mighty works to be wrought by my hands. Sometimes I cannot accomplish the good I am employed in, because I do not pray more, and more fervently; and sometimes even when I do pray, and that instantly, because I am not worthy that my prayer should be heard. Sometimes I dare not attempt to assist my neighbour, because I know the narrowness of my heart, that it cannot attend to many things, without utter confusion, and dissipation of thought. And a thousand times have I been mercifully withheld from success in the things I have attempted; because were one so proud and vain enabled to gain others, he would lose his own soul.

16th. From all this I conclude, that where I am most holy myself, there I could most promote holiness in others; and, consequently, that, I could more promote it here, than in any place under heaven. But I have likewise other reasons besides this to think so; and the first is, the plenteousness of the harvest. Here is indeed a large scene of various action. Here is room for charity in all its forms. There is scarce any way of doing good to our fellow creatures, for which here is not daily occasion. I can now only touch on the several heads. Here are poor families to be relieved; here are children to be educated; here are work-houses wherein both young and old want, and gladly receive the word of exhortation; here are prisons to be visited, wherein alone is a complication of all human wants; and, lastly, here are the schools of the prophets; here are tender minds to be formed and strengthened, and babes in Christ to be instructed, and perfected in all useful learning. Of these in particular we must observe, that he who gains only one, does thereby as much service to the world as he could do in a parish in his whole life, for his name is *legion*; in him are contained all those who shall be converted by him. He is not a single drop of the dew of heaven; but *a river to make glad the city of God*.

17th. But Epworth is yet a larger sphere of action than this; there I should have the care of two thousand

thousand souls. Two thousand souls, I see not how any man living can take care of an hundred. At least I could not; I know too well *Quid valeant humeri*. Because the weight that I have already upon me, is almost more than I am able to bear, ought I to encrease it ten-fold?

———— *imponere Pelio Ossam*
Scilicet, atque Ossæ frondosum involvere Olympum.

Would this be the way to help either myself or my brethren, up to heaven? Nay, but the mountains I reared would only crush my own soul, and so make me utterly useless to others.

18th. I need not but just glance upon several other reasons, why I am more likely to be useful here than any where else. As, because I have the joint advice of many friends in any difficulty, and their joint encouragement in any dangers. Because the good bishop and vice chancellor, are at hand to supply (as need is) their want of experience; because we have the eyes of multitudes upon us, who, even without designing it, perform the most substantial office of friendship, apprizing us where we have already fallen, and guarding us from falling again; lastly, because we have here a constant fund (which I believe this year will amount to near eighty pounds) to supply the bodily wants of the poor, and thereby prepare their souls to receive instruction.

19th. If it be said that the love of the people at Epworth balances all these advantages here; I ask how long will it last? Only till I come to tell them plainly that their deeds are evil, and to make a particular application of that general sentence to say to each, *Thou art the man!* Alas, Sir, do I not know, what love they had for you at first? And how have they used you since? Why, just as every one will be used, whose business it is to bring light to them that love to sit in darkness.

20th. Notwithstanding, therefore, their present prejudice in my favour, I cannot quit my first conclusion, that I am not likely to do that good any where, not even at Epworth, which I may do at Oxford; and yet one terrible objection lies in the way; **Have you found it so in fact? What have you done there in so many years? Nay, have not the very attempts to do good, for want either of a particular turn of mind for the business you engaged in, or of prudence to direct you in the right method of doing it, not only been unsuccessful, but brought such contempt upon you, as has in great measure disqualified you for any future success? And are there not men in Oxford who are not only better and holier than you, but who having preserved their reputation, who being universally esteemed, are every way fitter to promote the glory of God in that place?**

21st. I am not careful to answer in this matter. It is not my part to say whether God has done any good by my hands; whether I have a particular turn of mind for this or not; or whether the want of success in my past attempts, was owing to want of prudence, to ignorance of the right method of acting, or to some other cause. But the latter part of the objection, that he who is despised can do no good, that without reputation a man cannot be useful in the world, being the strong hold of all the unbelieving, the vain glorious, and the cowardly christians (so called) I will by the grace of God, see what reason that has thus continually to exalt itself against the knowledge of Christ.

22d. With regard to contempt then (under which term I include all the passions that border upon it, as hatred, envy, &c. and all the fruits that flow from them, such as calumny, reproach, and persecution in any of its forms) my first position, in defiance of worldly wisdom, is this, "Every true christian is contemned wherever he lives, by all who are not so, and who know him to be such, *i. e.* in effect, by all with whom he converses; since it is impossible for light not to shine." This position I prove both from the example of our Lord, and from his express assertions. First from his example, if the disciple is not above his master, nor

the servant above his Lord, then, as our master was despised and rejected of men, so will every one of his true disciples. But the disciple is not above his master, and therefore the consequence will not fail him a hair's-breath. Secondly, from his own express assertions of this consequence. "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?" (Matt. x. 25.) "Remember (ye that would fain forget, or evade it) the word that I said unto you, the Servant is not greater than Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." And as for that vain hope, that this belongs only to the first followers of Christ. Hear ye him, "all these things will they do to you, because they know not him that sent me." And again, "because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John xvi. 20.) Both the persons who are hated, and the persons who hate them, and the cause of their hating them, are here clearly determined. The *hated* are all that are not of this world, that are born again in the knowledge and love of God; the *haters* are all that are of this world, that know not God, so as to *love* him with all their strength; the cause of their hatred is, the entire irreconcilable differences between their desires, judgments, and affections; because these know not God, and those are determined

determined to know and pursue nothing besides him; because these esteem and love the world, and those count it dung and dross, and singly desire that love of Christ.

23d. My next position is this, "Until he be thus contemned, no man is in a state of salvation." And this is no more than a plain inference from the former; for if all that are not of the world are therefore contemned by those that are, then till a man is so contemned, he is of the world. i. e. Out of a state of salvation. Nor is it possible for all the trimmers between God and the world, for all the dodgers in religion, to elude this consequence, which God has established, and not man, unless they could prove that a man may be of the world, i. e. void both of the knowledge and love of God, and yet be in a state of salvation. I must therefore, with or without leave of these, keep close to my Saviour's judgment, and maintain that contempt is a part of that cross which every man must bear if he will follow him; that it is the badge of his discipleship, the stamp of his profession, the constant seal of his calling; insomuch that, though a man may be despised without being saved, yet he cannot be saved without being despised.

24th. I should not spend any more words about this great truth, but that it seems at present quite

voted out of the world; the masters in Israel, learned men, men of renown, seem absolutely to have forgotten it; nay, censure those who have not forgotten the words of their Lord, as setters forth of strange doctrines. And hence it is commonly asked, *how can these things be?* How can contempt be necessary to salvation? I answer, as it is a necessary means of purifying souls for heaven, as it is a blessed instrument of cleansing them from pride, which else would turn their very graces into poison, as it is a glorious antidote against vanity, which would otherwise pollute and destroy all their labours; as it is an excellent medicine to heal the anger and impatience of spirit, apt to insinuate into their best employments; and, in a word, as it is one of the choicest remedies in the whole magazine of God against love of the world, in which whosoever liveth is counted dead before him.

25th. And hence (as a full answer to the preceding objection) I infer one position more. That our being contemned is absolutely necessary to our doing good in the world. If not to our doing some good (for God may work by Judas) yet to our doing so much as we otherwise should. For since God will employ those instruments most, who are fittest to be employed, since the holier a man is, the fitter instrument he is for the God of holiness, and since contempt is so glorious a means of advancing

holiness in him that is exercised thereby. Nay, since no man can be holy at all without it, who can keep off the consequence? The being contemned is absolutely necessary to a christian's doing his full measure of good in the world. Where then is the scribe? Where is the wise? Where is the disputer of this world? Where is the replier against God, with his sage maxims. "He that is despised can do no good in the world; to be useful, a man must be esteemed, to advance the glory of God, you must have a fair reputation." Saith the world so? But what saith the Scripture? Why that God hath laughed all the Heathen wisdom to scorn? It saith that twelve despised followers of a despised Master, all of whom were of no reputation, who were esteemed as the filth and off-scouring of the world, did more good in it than all the tribes of Israel. It saith, that the despised master of these despised followers left a standing direction to us, and to our children, "Blessed are ye (not accursed with the heavy curse of doing no good, of being useless in the world) when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil of you falsely for my name's sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

26th. These are part of my reasons for chusing to abide (till I am better informed) in the station wherein God has placed me. As for the flock com-

mitted to your care, whom for many years you have diligently fed with the sincere milk of the word, I trust in God your labour shall not be in vain, either to yourself or them; many of them the great shepherd has by your hand delivered from the hand of the destroyer, some of whom are already entered into peace, and some remain unto this day. For yourself, I doubt not, but when your warfare is accomplished, when you are made perfect through sufferings, you shall come to your grave, not with sorrow, but as a ripe shock of corn, full of years and victories. And he that took care of the poor sheep before you was born, will not forget them when you are dead.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

From Samuel Wesley to his brother John.

Feb. 8th, 1734-5, Devon.

DEAR JACK,

CHARLES was in the right to desire I might have your whole letter. Though you have stated the point, so as to take away the question, at least all possibility of differing about it, if it be only this, Whether you are to serve Christ or Belial? I see no end of writing now, but merely complying with your desire of having my thoughts upon it, which I here give in short, and I think almost in full, though I pass over strictures on less matters.

1st. Your friends, retirement, frequent ordinances, and freedom from care, are great blessings, all except the last you may expect in a *lower degree* elsewhere. Sure all your labours are not come to this, that more is absolutely necessary for you, for the very being of your christian life, than for the salvation of all the parish priests in England. It is very strange.

2d. To the question, what good have you done at Oxford? you are not careful to answer; how comes

comes it then you are so very careful about the good you might do at Epworth? "The help that is done on earth, he doth it himself," is a full solution of that terrible difficulty.

3. The impossibility of return, the certainty of being disliked by them that now cry you up, and the small (comparative) good my father has done, are good prudential reasons; but I think can hardly extend to conscience. You can leave Oxford when you will. Not surely to such advantage. You have a probability of doing good there. Will that good be wholly undone if you leave it? Why should you not leaven another lump?

4th. What you say of contempt, is nothing to the purpose, for if you will go to Epworth, I will answer for it you shall in a competent time, be despised as much as your heart can wish. In your doctrine, you argue from a particular to a general. "To be useful, a man must be esteemed," is as certain as any proposition in Euclid, and I defy all mankind to produce one instance of directly doing spiritual good without it in the whole book of God. You join to contempt, hatred and envy; but the first is very hardly consistent, the latter utterly incompatible with it, since none can possibly envy another, but for something that he esteems.

5th. God, who provided for the flock before, will do it after my father. May he not suffer them
them

them to be, what they once were, almost heathens? And may not that be prevented by your ministry? It could never enter into my head, that you could refuse on any other ground, than a general resolution against the cure of souls. I shall give no positive reason for it, till my first is answered. *The order of the church* stakes you down, and the more you struggle, will hold the faster. If there be such a thing as truth, I insist upon it you must, when opportunity offers, either perform that promise, or repent of it : *Utrum Mavis.*

I am, DEAR JACK,

Yours, &c.

As short as this letter is, it has been a full fortnight in transcribing ; a fair warning not to take copies.

LET-

LETTER IX.

From J. Wesley to his brother Samuel.

February 13, 1734.

DEAR BROTHER,

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

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

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

2d. I am not careful to answer “ what good I “ have done at Oxford,” because I cannot think of it without the utmost danger. “ I am careful about “ what good I may do at Epworth,” 1st. Because I can think of it without any danger at all. 2d. Be-
cause

cause as I cannot, as matters now stand, avoid thinking of it without sin.

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

4th. To the objection, you are despised at Oxford, therefore you can do no good there. I answer, 1st. A christian will be despised any where. 2d. No one is a christian till he is despised. 3d. His being despised will not hinder his doing good, but much further it, by making him a better christian. Without contradicting any of these propositions, I allow, that every one to whom you do good, directly must esteem you, first or last.— N. B. A man may despise you for one thing, hate you for a second, and envy you for a third.

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

Your last argument is either *Ignoratio elenchi*, or implies these two propositions. 1st. "You resolve against any parochial cure of souls." 2d. "The priest who does not undertake the first parochial cure that offers, is perjured." Let us add a third,
"The

“ The tutor, who being in orders, never accepts of a parish, is perjured.” And then I deny all three.

I am, DEAR BROTHER,

Your obliged and affectionate Brother.

LETTER X.

From S. Wesley to his brother John.

DEAR JACK,

1st. **Y**OU say you have but just enough. Had ever man on earth more? You have experienced less to be insufficient. Not in the course of priesthood to which you are called. In that way, I am persuaded, though he that gathereth much can have nothing over, yet he that gathereth little can have no lack.

2d. There is danger in thinking of the good you have done, but not of what you may. Vain glory lies both ways. But the latter was your duty: so
was

was the former; unless you can compare two things without thinking of one of them.

3d. The good at Oxford is more diffusive. It is not *that good* you have promised. You deceive yourself, if you imagine you do not here think of *what you have* done. Your want may be better supplied at Epworth; not if my father is right in his successions.

4th. "A christian will be despised every where; no one is a christian till he is so; it will further his doing good." If universal propositions, I deny them all. Esteem goes before the good done, as well as follows it. "A man may both despise and envy." True; he may have a hot and cold fit of an ague. Contempt in general is no more incompatible with, than necessary to, benefiting others.

5th. See 1st and 3d.

6th. I said plainly, I thought you had made a general resolution; as to taking the first offer, I supposed an opportunity, a proper one; and declare now my judgment, should you live never so long, in the ordinary course of providence, you can never meet another *so proper*. An ordained tutor, who accepts not a cure, is perjured; alter the term into, "Who resolves not to accept;" and I will maintain it, unless you can prove either of these two: 1st. There is no such obligation at taking orders. 2d.

This

This obligation is dispensed with. Both which I utterly deny. I am,

DEAR JACK,

Yours, &c.

N. B. I forgot the date in the foul copy.

Extract of my Father's letter, dated Nov. 20, 1734.

“YOUR state of the question, and only argument is: The question is not whether I
“ could do more good to others there or here ;
“ but whether I could do more good to myself :
“ Seeing wherever I can be most holy myself, there
“ I can most promote holiness in others. But I
“ can improve myself more at Oxford than at any
“ other place.”

To this I answer, 1st. It is not dear self, but the glory of God, and the different degrees of promoting it, which should be our main consideration and direction, in the choice of any course of life. Witness St. Paul and Moses.

2d. Supposing you could be more holy yourself at Oxford, how does it follow that you could more promote holiness in others there than elsewhere? Have you found many instances of it, after so many years hard pains and labour? Further, I dare say, you are more modest and just than to say, there are no holier men than you at Oxford; and yet it is possible they may not have promoted holiness more than you have done: as I doubt not but you might have done it much more, had you taken the right method. For there is a particular turn of mind for these matters. Great prudence as well as fervour.

3d. I cannot allow austerity, or fasting, considered by themselves, to be proper acts of holiness, nor am I for a solitary life. God made us for a social life; we are not to bury our talent; we are to let our light shine before men, and that not barely through the chinks of a bushel, for fear the wind should blow it out. The designs of lighting it was, that it might give light to all that went into the house of God. And to this academical studies are only preparatory.

4th. You are sensible what figures those make, who stay in the University till they are superannuated. I cannot think drowsiness promotes holiness. How commonly do they drone away their life, either in a college, or in a country parsonage, where they

can only give God the snuffs of them, having nothing of life or vigour left to make them useful in the world.

5th. We are not to fix our eye on one single point of duty, but to take in the complicated view of all the circumstances in every state of life that offers. Thus in the case before us, put all circumstances together: If you are not indifferent whether the labours of an aged father for above forty years in God's vineyard be lost, and the fences of it trodden down and destroyed; if you consider that Mr. M. must in all probability succeed me, if you do not, and that the prospect of that mighty Nimrod's coming hither, shocks my soul, and is in a fair way of bringing down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. If you have any care for our family, which must be dismally shattered as soon as I am dropt. If you reflect on the dear love and longing which this poor people has for you, whereby you will be enabled to do God the more service, and the plenteousness of the harvest, consisting of near two thousand souls, whereas you have not many more scholars in the University; you may perhaps alter your mind, and bend your will to his, who has promised, If in all our ways we acknowledge him, he will direct our paths.

LET-

LETTER XI.

From Charles Wesley to his brother Samuel.

Epworth, April 30, 1735.

DEAR BROTHER,

AFTER all your desire of seeing my father alive, you are at last assured you must see his face no more till he is raised in incorruption. You have reason to envy us, who could attend him in the last stage of his illness. The few words he could utter I saved, and hope never to forget. Some of them were, " Nothing too much to suffer for heaven. " The weaker I am in body, the stronger and more " sensible support I feel from God. There is but " a step between me and death; to-morrow I " would see you all with me round this table, that " we may once more drink of the cup of blessing, " before we drink of it new in the kingdom of God. " With desire have I desired to eat this passover " with you before I die." The morning he was to communicate, he was so exceeding weak and full of pain, that he could not without the utmost difficulty receive the elements, often repeating, " Thou shakest me, thou shakest me ;" but immediately

diately after receiving, there followed the most visible alteration. He appeared full of faith and peace, which extended even to his body; for he was so much better, that we almost hoped he would have recovered. The fear of death he had entirely conquered, and at last gave up his latest human desires of finishing Job, paying his debts, and seeing you. He often laid his hand upon my head, and said, "Be steady." "The christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not." To my sister Emily, he said, "do not be concerned at my death, God will then begin to manifest himself to my family." When we were met about him, his usual expression was, "Now let me hear you talk upon heaven." On my asking him, whether he did not find himself worse, he replied, "O my Charles, I feel a great deal; God chastens me with strong pain, but I praise him for it, I thank him for it, I love him for it." On the 25th, his voice failed him, and nature seemed entirely spent, when, on my brother's asking, "Whether he was not near heaven," he answered distinctly, and with the most of hope and triumph that could be expressed in sounds, "Yes, I am." He spoke once more just after my brother had used the commendatory prayer; his last words were, "Now you have done all!" This was about half an hour after six, from which
time

time till sun set, he made signs of offering up himself, till my brother, having again used the prayer, the very moment it was finished he expired. His passage was so smooth and insensible, that notwithstanding the stopping of his pulse, and ceasing of all sign of life and motion, we continued over him a considerable time, in doubt whether the soul was departed or no. My mother (who for several days before he died, hardly ever went into his chamber but she was carried out again in a fit) was far less shocked at the news than we expected, and told us that now she was heard, in his having so easy a death, and her being strengthened so to bear it.

We have now got yours of the 21st. My brother had laid aside all hopes (or fears, for I cannot certainly say which) of succeeding, as Sir J—s seemed to decline intermeddling; but by yours we guess Mr. Oglethorpe has quickened him. A petition might easily be sent, if now necessary. A neighbouring clergyman has sent word, that “He has the living;” which would be bad news, but that another as confidently affirms he has it. How many more may be sure of it, we cannot say, but if Providence pleases, a W—— will have it after all, though in the gift of the crown. I hope, and so does my brother, that you will have their wish, and that he may fail of his.

Though you have lost your chief reason for coming, yet there are others which make your presence more necessary than ever. My mother (who will hardly ever leave Epworth) would be exceeding glad to see you as soon as can be. She does not administer, so can neither sue nor be sued. We have computed the debts as near as can be, and find they amount to about one hundred pounds, exclusive of cousin Richardson's. Mrs. Knight, her landlady, seized all her quick stock, valued at above forty pounds, for fifteen pounds my father owed her, on Monday last, the day he was buried; and my brother this afternoon gives a note for the money, in order to get the stock at liberty to sell; for security of which, he has the stock made over to him, and will be paid as it can be sold. My father was buried very frugally, yet decently, in the church-yard, according to his own desire. It will be highly necessary to bring all accounts of what he owed you, that you may mark all the goods in the house, as principal creditor, and thereby secure to my mother time and liberty to sell them to the best advantage. *Chartas omnes et Epistolas precipuas appositâ serâ in adventum tuum reservo.* J. Kezzy and Mr. H— have parted for ever. Your advice in hers, and many other cases, will be absolutely necessary. If you take London in your way, my mother desires you would

would remember she is a clergyman's widow. Let the society give her what they please, she must be still in some degree *burthensome* to you, as she calls it. How do I envy you that glorious burthen, and wish I could share in it. You must put me into some way of getting a little money, that I may do something in this shipwreck of the family, for somebody, though it be no more than furnishing a plank. My mother sends her love and blessing; we all send our love to you, and my sister, and Phill, and hope of meeting you all once more at Epworth.

I should be ashamed of having so much business in my letter, were it not necessary. I would chuse to write and think of nothing but my father. E'er we meet, I hope you will have finished his elegy. Pray write if there be time.

I am,

Your most affectionate brother,

CHARLES WESLEY.

To the Rev. Mr. Wesley, }
at Tiverton, Devon. }

LETTER XII.

From J. Wesley to his brother Samuel.

Gravefend, on board the Simmonds, Oct. 15, 1735.

DEAR BROTHER,

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

The uncertainty of my having another opportunity to tell you my thoughts in this life, obliges me to tell you what I have often thought of, and that in as few and plain words as I can. Elegance of style is not to be weighed against purity of heart, purity both from the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. Therefore whatever has any tendency to impair that purity, is not to be tolerated, much less recommended, for the sake of that elegance. But of this sort (I speak not from the reason of the thing only, nor from my

* A Folio by his Father, in Latin.

single experience) are the most of the classics usually read in great schools: many of them tending to inflame the lusts of the flesh (besides Ovid, Virgil's *Æneid*, and Terence's *Eunuch*) and more, to feed the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God, who would have us holy, as he is holy, that you banish all such poison from your school, that you introduce in their place such christian authors, as will work together with you in building up your flock in the knowledge and love of God. For assure yourself, dear brother, you are even now called to the converting of heathens as well as I.

So many souls are committed to your charge by God, to be prepared for a happy eternity. You are to instruct them not only in the beggarly elements of Greek and Latin, but much more, in the gospel. You are to labour with all your might to convince them, that christianity is not a negation, or an external thing, but a new heart, a mind conformed to that of Christ, "Faith working by love."

We recommend you and yours to God. Pray for us. I am,

Your affectionate Brother and

Servant in Christ,

JOHN WESLEY.

To the Rev. Mr. Wesley, }
at Tiverton, Devon. }

LETTER XIII.

From J. Wesley to his brother Samuel.

Savannah, Nov. 23d, 1736.

Οι δεσ μεμνημενοι, κ' της επικοποτης, κ' παντις εργα αγαθις μη-
σθουσιαι.

O Pray write (and if it may be) speak, that they may remember him again, who did run well, but are now hindered.

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

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

“ All

“ All means are not necessary for all men: there-
“ fore each person must use such means, and such
“ only, as he finds necessary for him. But since we
“ can never attain our end by being wedded to the
“ same means; therefore we must not obstinately
“ cleave unto any thing, lest it become a hindrance,
“ not a help.”

“ Observe further, when the end is attained the
“ means cease. Now all the other things enjoined
“ are means to love: and love is attained by them
“ who are in the inferior way, who are utterly di-
“ vested of free will, of self love, and self activity,
“ and are entered into the passive state. These dei-
“ fied men, in whom the superior will has extin-
“ guished the inferior, enjoy such a contemplation,
“ as is not only above faith, but above sight, such
“ as is entirely free from images, thoughts, and dis-
“ course, and never interrupted by sins of infirmity,
“ or voluntary distractions. They have absolutely
“ renounced their reason and understanding: else
“ they could not be guided by a divine light. They
“ seek no clear or particular knowledge of any
“ thing; but only an obscure general knowledge,
“ which is far better. They know it is mercenary,
“ to look for a reward from God, and inconsistent
“ with perfect love.”

“ Having thus attained the end, the means must
“ cease. Hope is swallowed up in love. Sight, or
“ some-

“ something more than sight, takes place of faith.
 “ All particular virtues they possess in the essence
 “ (being wholly given up to the divine will) and
 “ therefore need not the distinct exercise of them.
 “ They work likewise all good works essentially, not
 “ accidentally, and use all outward means, only as
 “ they are moved thereto ; and then to obey supe-
 “ riors, or to avoid giving offence ; but not as ne-
 “ cessary or helpful to them.”

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

“ You that are to advise them that have not yet
 “ attained perfection, press them to nothing, not to
 “ self-denial, constant private prayer, reading the
 “ scriptures,

“ scriptures, fasting, communicating. If they love
“ heathen poets, let them take their full swing
“ in them: speak but little to them (in the mean
“ time) of eternity. If they are affected at any
“ time with what you say, say no more: let them
“ apply it, not you. You may advise them to some
“ religious books; but stop there; let them use
“ them as they please, and form their own reflections
“ upon them without your intermeddling. If one
“ who was religious falls off, let him alone. Either
“ a man is converted to God, or not: If he is not,
“ his own will must guide him in spite of all you can
“ do; if he is, he is so guided by the spirit of God, as
“ not to need your direction.”

“ You that are yourselves imperfect, know love
“ is your end. All things else are but means. Choose
“ such means as lead you most to love: those alone
“ are necessary for you. The means that others
“ need are nothing to you. Different men are led
“ in different ways. And be sure be not wedded to
“ any means. When any thing helps you no longer,
“ lay it aside. For you can never attain your end, by
“ cleaving obstinately to the same means. You
“ must be changing them continually. Conversa-
“ tion, meditation, forms of prayer, prudential rules,
“ fixt return of public or private prayer, are helps
“ to some: but you must judge for yourself. Per-
“ haps

“ haps fasting may help you for a time, and per-
 “ haps the holy communion. But you will be
 “ taught by the holy spirit, and by experience, how
 “ soon, how often, and how long, it is good for you
 “ to take it. Perhaps too you may need the holy
 “ scripture. But if you can renounce yourself with-
 “ out reading, it is better than all the reading in the
 “ world. And whenever you do read it, trouble
 “ yourself about no helps: the holy ghost will lead
 “ you into all truth.”

“ As to doing good, take care of yourself first.
 “ When you are converted, then strengthen your
 “ brethren. Beware of (what is incident to all be-
 “ ginners) an eager desire to set others a good ex-
 “ ample. Beware of an earnestness to make others
 “ feel, what you feel yourself. Let your light shine
 “ as nothing to you. Beware of a zeal to do great
 “ things for God. Be charitable first; then do
 “ works of charity: do them when you are not dis-
 “ sipated thereby, or in danger of losing your soul by
 “ pride and vanity. Indeed till then you can do no
 “ good to men’s souls; and without that, all done to
 “ their bodies is nothing. The command of doing
 “ good concerns not you yet. Above all take care
 “ never to dispute about any of these points. Dis-
 “ puting can do no * man wicked?

* The folding of this letter makes this illegible.

“ Cast

“ Cast not pearls before swine. Is he imperfect? He
“ that disputes any advice, is not yet ripe for it. Is
“ he good? All good men agree in judgment, they
“ differ only in words, which all are in their own na-
“ ture ambiguous.”

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

Dear Brother, my Sisters, and

Your most affectionate Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

Pray remember me to Philly.

To Mr. Wesley, Tiverton.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

John Wesley to his brother Samuel.

Bristol, April 4, 1738.

DEAR BROTHER.

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

To this hour you have pursued an *Ignoratio elenchi*. Your assurance and mine are as different as light and darkness. I mean, an assurance that I am now in a state of salvation; you, an assurance that I shall persevere therein. The very definition of the term cuts off your 2d and 3d observation. As to the first I would take notice. 1st. No kind of assurance (that I know) or of faith, or repentance, essential to their salvation who die infants. 2d. I believe God is ready to give all true penitents who fly to his free-grace in Christ, a fuller sense of pardon than they had before they fell. I know this to be true of several: whether these are exempt cases, I know not. 3d. Persons that were of a melancholy and

and gloomy constitution, even to some degree of madness, I have known in a moment (let it be called a miracle, I quarrel not) into a state of firm lasting peace and joy.

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

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corre-

correspondent did by the woman of Oxford, but) from the whole tenor of their life, till then* were not remarked; from that time holy, just, and good.

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

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

When I thy promis'd Christ have seen,
And claspt him in my souls embrace,
Possess'd of thy salvation then,
Then may I, Lord, depart in peace.

* The MS. is here injured by folding.

† How greatly was Mr. Wesley mistaken in this his full persuasion, when he lived fifty years after this.

The

The great blessing of God be upon you and your's.

I am,

Dear Brother,

Your ever affectionate and obliged Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

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

The Rev. Mr. Wesley, }
Tiverton, Devon. }

LETTER XV.

From Mrs. E. Hutton, to Mr. Samuel Wesley.

June 6, 1738.

DEAR SIR,

YOU will be surpris'd to see a letter from me, but Mr. Hutton and I are really under a very great concern, and know not what to apply to, if you cannot help us. After you left London, and your brothers had lost the conveniency of your house, believing them good and pious christians, we invited

them to make the same use of ours, and thought such an offer would not be unacceptable to God, or to them; which they received with signs of friendship, and took up with such accommodations as our house could afford, from time to time, as they had occasion. Mr. Charles at his arrival in England, was received and treated with such tenderness and love, as he could have been in your house, Mr. John the same; and as occasion has offered at different times, ten or twelve of their friends. But your brother John seems to be turned a wild enthusiast, or fanatic, and, to our very great affliction, is drawing our two children into these wild notions, by their great opinion of Mr. John's sanctity and judgment. It would be a great charity to many other honest well-meaning simple souls, as well as to my children, if you could either confine, or convert, Mr. John when he is with you. For after his behaviour on Sunday the 28th May, when you hear it, you will think him not a quite right man.

Without ever acquainting Mr. Hutton with any of his notions or designs, when Mr. Hutton had ended a sermon of Bishop Blackall's, which he had been reading in his study to a great number of people; Mr. John got up, and told the people, that five days before he was not a christian, and this he was as well assured of as that five days before he was not in that room, and the way for them all to be christians

tians was to believe, and own, that they were not now christians. Mr. Hutton was much surpris'd at this unexpected injudicious speech, but only said, "Have
 " a care Mr. Wesley, how you despise the benefits
 " received by the two sacraments." I not being in the study when this speech was made, had heard nothing of it when he came into the parlour to supper, where were my two children, two or three other of his deluded followers, two or three ladies who board with me, my niece, and two or three gentlemen of Mr. John's acquaintance, though not got into his new notions.

He made the same wild speech again, to which I made answer, if you was not a christian ever since I knew you, you was a great hypocrite, for you made us all believe you was one. He said, when we had renounced every thing but faith, and then got into Christ, then, and not till then, had we any reason to believe we were christians; and when we had so got Christ, we might keep him, and so be kept from sin. Mr. Hutton said, "if faith only was necessary to save us, why did our Lord give us that
 " divine sermon?" Mr. John said, that was *the letter that killeth*. "Hold," says Mr. Hutton, "you
 " seem not to know what you say, are our Lord's
 " words the letter that killeth?" Mr. John said, "if
 " we had no faith," Mr. Hutton replied, "I did
 " not ask you how we should receive it? But why

“our Lord gave it; as also the account of the
“judgment in the twenty-fifth of St. Matthew, if
“works are not what he expects, but faith only?”

Now it is a most melancholy thing to have not only our two children, but many others, to disregard all teaching, but by such a spirit as comes to some in dreams, to others in such visions as will surprize you to hear of. If there cannot be some stop put to this, and he can be taught true humility, the mischief he will do wherever he goes among the ignorant, but well meaning christians, will be very great.

Mr. Charles went from my son's, where he lay ill for some time, and would not come to our house, where I offered him the choice of two of my best rooms, but he would accept of neither, but chose to go to a poor brazier's in Little Britain, that that brazier might help him forward in his conversion, which was compleated on May 22d, as his brother John was praying. Mr. John was converted, or I know not what, or how, but made a christian, on May 25th. A woman had besides a previous dream, a ball of fire fell upon her, and burst, and fired her soul. Another young man when he was in St. Dunstan's church, just as he was going to receive the sacrament, had God the Father come to him, but did not stay with him, but God the Son did stay, who came with him holding his cross in his hands.

I can-

I cannot understand the use of these relations, but if you doubt the truth, or your brother denies them, I can produce undeniable proofs of the relation of such facts, from the persons who related the facts, that they had received such appearances. Mr. John has abridged the life of one Halyburton, a presbyterian teacher in Scotland. My son had designed to print it, to show the experiences of that holy man, of in-dwelling, &c. Mr. Hutton and I have forbid our son being concerned in handing such books into the world; but if you brother John, or Charles, think it will tend to promote God's glory, they will soon convince my son God's glory is to be preferred to his parents commands; then you will see what I never expected, my son promoting rank fanaticism. If you can, dear Sir, put a stop to such madness, which will be a work worthy of you, a singular charity, and very much oblige

Your sincere,

and affectionate servant,

E. HUTTON.

To the Rev. Mr. Wesley, }
at Tiverton, Devon. }

LETTER XVI.

From S. Wesley to Mrs. Hutton.

Tiverton, Devon. June 17, 1738.

DEAR MADAM,

I Am sufficiently sensible of yours and Mr. Hutton's kindness to my brothers, and shall always acknowledge it; and cannot blame you, either for your concern, or for writing to me about it. Falling into enthusiasm, is being lost with a witness, and if you are troubled for two of your children, you may be sure I am so, for two whom I may in some sense call *mine*; who if once turned that way will do a world of mischief, much more than even otherwise they would have done good; since men are much easier to be led into evil, than from it.

What Jack means by his not being a christian till last month, I understand not. Had he never been in covenant with God? Then, as Mr. Hutton observed, baptism was nothing. Had he totally apostatized from it? I dare say not: and yet he must either be unbaptized, or an apostate, to make his words true. Perhaps it might come into his crown that he was in a state of mortal sin unrepented of,
and

and had long lived in such a course. This I do not believe ; however he must answer for himself. But where is the sense of requiring every body else to confess that of themselves, in order to commence christians ? Must they confess it whether it be so or no ? Besides a sinful course is not an abolition of the covenant ; for that very reason, because it is a breach of it. If it *were* not, it would not be *broken*.

Renouncing every thing but faith, may be every evil ; as the world, the flesh, and the Devil : this is a very orthodox sense, but no great discovery. It may mean rejecting all merit of our own good works. What protestant does not do so ? Even Bellarmin on his death bed, is said to have renounced all merits but those of Christ. If this renouncing regards good works in any other sense, as being unnecessary, or the like, it is wretchedly wicked ; and to call our Saviour's words, *the letter that killeth*, is no less than blasphemy against the son of man. It is mere quakerism, making the outward Christ an enemy to the Christ within.

When the ball of fire fired the woman's soul (an odd sort of fire that) what reference had it to my two brothers ? Was the youth that had the father come to him, told any thing about them ? Did he see any thing, or only hear a voice ? What were the words, if any ? I suppose he will take
shelter

shelter in their being unspeakable. In short, this looks like down-right madness. I do not hold it at all unlikely, that perpetual intenseness of thought, and want of sleep, may have disordered my brother. I have been told that the Quaker's introversion of thought, has ended in madness. It is a studious stopping of every thought as fast as it arises, in order to receive the spirit. I wish the canting fellows had never had any followers among us, who talk of in-dwellings, experiences, getting into Christ, &c. &c. as I remember assurances used to make a great noise, which were carried to such a height, that (as far as nonsense can be understood) they rose to fruition; in utter defiance of christian hope, since the question is unanswerable, What a man hath, why does he yet hope for? But I will believe none without a miracle, who shall pretend to be wrapped up into the third heaven.

I hope your son does not think it as plainly revealed, that he shall print an enthusiastic book, as it is that he shall obey his father and his mother. Suppose it were never so excellent, can that supersede your authority? God deliver us from visions that shall make the law of God vain. I pleased myself with the expectation of seeing Jack, but now that is over, and I am afraid of it. I know not where to direct to him, or where he is. Charles I will write to as soon as I can, and shall be glad to hear

hear from you in the mean time. I heartily pray God to stop the progress of this lunacy. We join in service.

I am, DEAR MADAM,

Your sincere and

affectionate friend and servant,

SAMUEL WESLEY.

To Mrs. Hutton,
College-street, Westminster.

LETTER XVII.

From Mrs. Hutton to Mr. S. Wesley.

DEAR SIR,

I RETURN you thanks for so obligingly answering my letter, for which I ought to beg your pardon, since I am sensible what I related must afflict you, though it might not be in your power to lessen my affliction. For how can I expect more regard will be had to a brother than is had to parents?

rents? Though in reality, your brothers are much more obligated to you than many children are to their parents; you doing for them as a most kind and judicious parent, when you had not the same obligation. I was in hopes mine to you would have met your brother John at Tiverton, where he said he was going. If so, he could have explained to you the meaning of the two visions I sent you word of.

Every one of his converts are directed to get an assurance of their sins being all pardoned, and they sure of their salvation, which brings all joy and peace. And this is given them in an instant, so that every person so converted, is able to describe the manner and time when they get it, as they call it. Your brother John writ his reflections on Mr. Hervey's paper, in these words, "Remission of sins, and peace with God, The life of God, or love in our souls. The evidence of our own weakness, and the power of Christ." My son felt it on the 25th of April, at the Blessed Sacrament, as the minister said, *The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* Your brother Charles felt it at Mr. Bray's, as your brother John was praying for it, for him on the 22d of May. Your brother John felt it on the 25th of May, just as he awaked.

These things they make no secrets; for good Mr. Baldwin told me, he heard your brother Charles
give

give a relation of a young man at Oxford, who had lived, as he himself thought, a very good and pious life, but he was first convinced it was nothing, before he could get this faith ; upon which he threw himself upon his face upon his chamber floor, and lay so (I suppose praying) an hour or two, and then rose up with great joy and peace of mind. This affected Mr. Baldwin so much, that the next opportunity he had to talk with my son, he put into his hands a sermon of Bishop Bull's, upon the subject of the assistance we may expect from the Holy Spirit. But all authors and writings, but the bible, are rejected, and every man, if he will practice what he knows, shall have all the light necessary for himself, taught him from God.

They are, I think, aiming at something more ; for my son told me, that a woman, who is a Dissenter, had three years and more, as she fancied, been under the seal of reprobation, and upon her coming to Mr. Bray's, where your brother Charles, Mr. Bray, and my son were praying for her, though she went home in the same melancholy, yet in an hour after she sent them word she was delivered from the power of Satan, and desired them to return public thanks for the same in her behalf. I heard a poor simple barber, whose name is Wolf, relate such a dream that a blacksmith had, as a sign of his being just getting into Christ, *and of his own power,*

as put me beyond patience. This poor barber, since his conversion*, which I think could affect none but fools and madmen. My poor son lay ill of a fever at the same time, with such a number of these fancied faints about him, that I expected nothing but his weak brain would be quite turned. I think it is not far from it, that he will not give any, the most pious or judicious author his father recommends, a reading.

Now your brother John is gone, who is my son's pope, it may please God, if you will give yourself the trouble to try, he may hear some reason from you. If you could bring your brother Charles back, it would be a great step towards the reconversion of my poor son. Your two brothers are men of great parts and learning; my son is good humoured and very undesigning, and sincerely honest, but of weak judgment, so fitted for any delusion. It would be the greatest charity you ever did, and your charity of all kinds is very extensive. If you can undeceive your brother Charles and my son, it would put a stop to this wild-fire. I suppose you received a letter from your brother John, that he came to London the 12th at night, set forward the 13th, without seeing your brother Charles, to make a visit to Count Zinzendorf. I know he looks up-

* Here the MS. which is in the hand writing of Mr. Samuel Welley, is imperfect.

on his fancies as directions from the Holy Spirit. What carried him to Georgia I know not, but I can prove he brought that notion with him to Deal, when he landed from Georgia, and had Mr. Whitfield believed it, he had not proceeded on his voyage, John had brought him back by the direction of the spirit. We do nothing but pray for our children, and all others under this strange delusion; since arguments from us, which to others seem reasonable, have no effect upon them. I doubt not of your prayers upon the same occasion, and all other means your good judgment shall enable you to use. I have been thus long to give you all the light I can into this affair, as a help towards your finding out a cure; being with the greatest value and respect for your real, not imaginary worth,

Your most sincere humble servant,

ELIZABETH HUTTON.

June 20, 1738.

To the Rev. Mr. Samuel Wesley,
at Tiverton, Devon.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

From J. Wesley to his brother Samuel.

Marienbourn, near Frankfort, July 7, O. S. 1738.

DEAR BROTHER,

GOD has given me at length the desire of my heart. I am with a church whose conversation is in heaven, in whom is the mind that was in Christ, and who so walks as he walked. As they have all one Lord and one faith, so they are all partakers of one spirit, the spirit of meakness and love, which uniformly and continually animates all their conversation. O how high and holy a thing christianity is! And how widely distant from that—I know not what—which is so called, though it neither purifies the heart, or renews the life, after the image of our blessed Redeemer.

I grieve to think how that holy name, by which we are called, must be blasphemed among the heathen, while they see discontented christians, passionate christians, resentful christians, earthly-minded christians. Yea (to come to what we are apt to
count

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

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

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may

may you love your neighbour as yourself, both in word and tongue, and in deed and truth.

I believe in a week Mr. Ingham and I shall set out for Hernhuth, about 350 miles from hence. O pray for us, that God would sanctify to us all those precious opportunities, that we may be continually built up more and more in the spirit of power and love, and of a sound mind. I am,

DEAR BROTHER,

Your most affectionate friend and brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

To the Rev. Mr. Wesley, }
at Tiverton, Devon. }

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

From Mr. J. Wesley to his brother Samuel.

London, October 30, 1738.

DEAR BROTHER,

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

With regard to my own character, and my doctrine likewise, I shall answer you very plainly. By a christian, I mean one who so believes in Christ, as that sin hath no more dominion over him, and in this obvious sense of the word, I was not a christian till May the 24th last past. For till then sin had the dominion over me, although I fought with it continually; but surely then from that time to this, it hath not: Such is the free grace of God in Christ. What sins they were which till then reigned over

me, and from which, by the grace of God, I am now free, I am ready to declare on the house-top, if it may be for the glory of God.

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

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

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

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

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

2d. By such humility as may fill my heart, from this hour for ever, with a piercing uninterrupted sense,

ſenſe, “ *Nibil eſt quod haſtenus feci;*” having evidently built without a foundation.

3d. By ſuch a recollection, that I may cry to thee every moment, but more eſpecially when all is calm (if it ſhould ſo pleaſe thee) “ Give me faith, “ or I die! Give me a lowly ſpirit, otherwiſe *Mibi non ſit ſuaute vivere.*” Amen! Come Lord Jeſus!
 ως δαδιδ, ελεγιςον μοι.

Some meaſure of this faith, which bringeth ſalvation or victory over ſin, and which implies peace and truſt in God through Chriſt, which I now enjoy by his free mercy; though in very deed it is in me but as a grain of muſtard-ſeed; for the “ *πληροφορια πιςτως,* “ The ſeal of the ſpirit, the love of God ſhed abroad “ in my heart,” and producing joy in the Holy Ghoſt; “ Joy which no man taketh away; joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.” This witneſs of the ſpirit I have not, but I patiently wait for it. I know many who have already received it; more than one or two in the very hour we were praying for it. And having ſeen and ſpoken with a cloud of witneſſes abroad, as well as in my own country, I cannot doubt but that believers who wait and pray for it, will find theſe ſcriptures fulfilled in themſelves. My hope is, that they will be fulfilled in me; I build on Chriſt the rock of ages. On his ſure mercies deſcribed in his word, and on his promiſes, all which I know are yea, and amen.

Those who have not yet received joy in the Holy Ghost, the love of God, and the *plerophory* of faith (any, or all of which I take to be the witness of the spirit with our spirit, that we are the sons of God) I believe to be christians in that imperfect sense wherein I call myself such; and I exhort them to pray, that God would give them also "To rejoice in hope of the glory of God," and to feel "his love shed abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them."

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

O brother, would to God you would leave disputing concerning the things which you know not (if indeed you know them not) and beg of God to fill up what is yet wanting in you. Why should not you also seek till you receive "That peace of God which passeth all understanding? Who shall hinder

“ hinder you, notwithstanding the manifold temptations, from rejoicing with joy unspeakable, by reason of glory ?” Amen ! Lord Jesus ! May you, and all who are near of kin to you (if you have it not already) feel his love shed abroad in your hearts, by his spirit which dwelleth in you, and be sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of your inheritance.

I am,

Yours, and my sister's,

most affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

To the Rev. Mr. Wesley, }
at Tiverton, Devon. }

LETTER XX.

From Mr. S. Wesley to his brother John.

Tiverton, Devon, November 15, 1738.

DEAR JACK,

THE charge of evil-speaking is carried as high as it can go, so that my wife understands my being included now, as well as I did at first. Your bitterness is much better than Mr. Law's, though did *Sufurrus* fit me even as exactly as you can suppose, that would by no means excuse his having drawn it, no more than his fault or yours could justify mine. To convince you I may sometimes pray against it, I will apply to the same Magazine that furnished me against false doctrine. "From envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, Good Lord deliver me."

I have many remarks to make on your letter, but do not care to fight in the dark, or run my head against a stone wall. You need fear no controversy with me, unless you hold it worth while to remove these three doubts.

1st. Whether you will own, or disown in terms, the necessity of a sensible information from God of pardon?

pardon? If you disown it, the matter is over as to you, if you own it then.

2d. Whether you will not think me distracted to oppose you with the most infallible of all proofs, inward feeling in yourself, and positive evidence in your friends, while I myself produce neither.

3d. Whether you will release me from the horns of your dilemma, that I must either talk without knowledge like a fool, or against it like a knave? I conceive neither part strikes.—For a man may reasonably argue against what he never felt, and may honestly deny what he has felt to be necessary to others.

You build nothing on tales, but I do. I see what is manifestly built upon them, if you disclaim it, and warn poor shallow pates of their folly and danger, so much the better. They are counted signs or tokens, means or conveyances, proofs or evidences of the sensible information, &c. calculated to turn fools into madmen, and put them without a jest into the condition of Oliver's porter.

When I hear visions, &c. reprov'd, discourag'd, and ceas'd among the new brotherhood, I shall then say no more of them, but till then, I will use my utmost strength that God shall give me, to expose these bad branches of a bad root; and thus —

Such doctrine as encourages and abets spiritual fireballs, apparitions of the Father, &c. &c. is delusive and

and dangerous. But the sensible necessary information, &c. is such; *ergo*.—I mention not this to enter into any dispute with you, for you seem to disapprove them, though not expressly disclaim, but to convince you I am not out of my way, though encountering of wind-mills. I will do my best to make folks wiser.

I will borrow from our litany, a prayer you will join in. “That it may please thee to strengthen such
 “as do stand to comfort and help the weak hearted,
 “to raise up them that fall, and finally to beat down
 “Satan under our feet, We beseech thee to hear us
 “good Lord.”

My wife joins with love, we are all pretty well,

I am, DEAR JACK,

Your sincere and

Affectionate Friend and Brother,

SAMUEL WESLEY.

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

From old Mrs. Wesley to her Son Samuel.

Thursday, 8th March, 1738-9.

DEAR SON,

YOUR two double letters came safe to me last Friday. I thank you for them, and have received much satisfaction in reading them; they are written with good spirit and judgment, sufficient, I should think, to satisfy any unprejudiced mind, that the reviving these pretensions to dreams, visions, &c. is not only vain and frivolous as to the matter of them, but also of dangerous consequence to the weaker sort of christians.—You have well observed, “That it is not the method of providence to use extraordinary means, to bring about that for which ordinary ones are sufficient,” therefore the very end for which they pretend that these new revelations are sent, seems to me one of the best arguments against the truth of them. As far as I can see, they plead that these visions, &c. are given to assure some particular persons of their adoption and salvation.—But this end is abundantly provided for in the holy scriptures, wherein all may find

find the rules by which we must live here, and be judged hereafter, are so plainly laid down, "That he who runs may read," and it is by these laws we should examine ourselves, which is a way of God's appointment, and therefore we may hope for his direction and assistance in such examination. And if upon a serious review of our state, we find, that in the tenure of our lives we have, or do now, sincerely desire and endeavour to perform the conditions of the gospel covenant required on our parts, then we may discern, that the holy spirit hath laid in our minds a good foundation, of a strong, reasonable, and lively hope of God's mercy through Christ.

This is the assurance we ought to aim at, which the apostle calls *the full assurance of hope*, which he admonish us to *bold fast unto the end*. And the consequence of encouraging fanciful people in this new way of seeking assurance (as all do that hear them tell their silly stories without rebuke) I think must be the turning them out of God's way, into one of their own devising. You have plainly proved that the scripture examples, and that text in Joel which they urge in their defence will not answer their purpose, so that they are unsupported by any authority, either human or divine (which you have very well observed) and the credit of their relations must therefore depend on their own single affirmation, which

which surely will not weigh much with the sober judicious part of mankind.

I began to write to Charles before I last wrote to you, but could not proceed: for my chimney smoked so exceedingly that I almost lost my sight, and remained well nigh blind a considerable time. God's blessing on eye-water I make, cured me of the soreness, but the weakness long remained. Since I have been informed that Mr. Hall intends to remove his family to London, hath taken a house, and I must (if it please God I live) go with them, where I hope to see Charles, and then I can fully speak my sentiments of their new notions, more than I can do by writing; therefore I shall not finish my letter to him.

You have heard, I suppose, that Mr. Whitfield is taking a progress through these parts, to make a collection for a house in Georgia, for orphans, and such of the natives' children as they will part with, to learn our language and religion. He came hither to see me, and we talked about your brothers. I told him I did not like their way of living, wished them in some places of their own, wherein they might regularly preach, &c. He replied, I could not conceive the good they did in London, that the greatest part of our clergy were asleep, and there never was greater need of itinerant preachers than now. Upon which a gentleman that came with him,

him, said, that my son Charles had converted him, and that both my sons spent all their time in doing good. I then asked Mr. W. if my sons were not for making some innovations in the church, which I much feared. He assured me they were so far from it, that they endeavoured all they could to reconcile dissenters to our communion; that my son John had baptized five adult presbyterians in our way on St. Paul's day, and he believed would bring over many to our communion. His stay was short, so I could not talk with him so much as I desired. He seems to be a very good man, and one who truly desires the salvation of mankind. God grant that the wisdom of the serpent may be joined to the innocence of the dove.

My paper and fight are almost at an end; therefore I shall only add, that I send you and your's my hearty love and blessing.

Service to Mrs. Berry.

I had not an opportunity to send this till Saturday the 17th ult.

Love and blessing to Jacky Ellifon.

Pray let me hear from you soon. We go in April.

For the Rev. Mr. Welley, }
Tiverton, Devon. }

From Mrs. Wesley,
of Epworth.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

From Mr. S. Wesley to his brother John.

Tiverton, April 16, 1739.

DEAR JACK,

I Heartily pray God we may meet each other with joy in the next life; and beg him to forgive either of us as far as guilty, for our not meeting in this. I acknowledge his justice in making my friends stand afar off, and hiding my acquaintance out of my sight!

I find brevity has made me obscure. I argue against assurance (in your or any sense) as part of the gospel covenant; because many are saved without it.—You own you cannot deny exempt cases, which is giving up the dispute. *Your assurance*, being a clear impression of God upon the soul, I say, must be perpetual—must be irreversible. Else it is not assurance from God, infallible, and omnipotent.

Your seeing persons reformed is nothing to this. Dear brother, do you dream I deny the grace of God? But to suppose the means whereby they are so in this sense, is in my opinion as very a *petitio principii* as ever was.—You quarrel not at the word *miracle*, nor is there any reason you should, since you are

are so well acquainted with the thing. If I was as I have been, I should desire some of the plainest. You say the cross is strongly represented to the eye of the mind.—Do these words signify in plain English *the fancy*? Inward eyes, ears, and feelings, are nothing to other people. I am heartily sorry such alloy should be found among so much piety. The little reflection on my poor correspondent at Oxford, is quite groundless. I do not remember, he says, *singing* (adding *rolling*, &c.) was the only sign of her new-birth. It is brought as a fruit of it. May we judge the tree by the fruit? Such visions I think may fairly be concluded fallacious, only for being attended with so ridiculous an effect.

My mother tells me she fears a formal schism is already begun among you, though you and Charles are ignorant of it. For God's sake take care of that, and banish extemporary expositions, and extemporary prayers. I have got your abridgment of Halyburton, and have sent for Watts; if it please God to allow me life and strength I shall by his help demonstrate,—that the Scot as little deserves preference to all christians but our Saviour, as the book to all writings but those you mention. There are two flagrant falsehoods in the very first chapter. But your eyes are so fixed upon one point, that you overlook every thing else. You overshoot, but Whitfield raves.

I intreat you to let me know what reasons you have to think you shall not live long? I received yours dated 4th, on Saturday 14th. The post will reach me much sooner, and I shall want much to know what ails you? I should be very angry with you if you cared for it, should you have broken your iron constitution already; as I was with the glorious Pascal for losing his health, and living almost twenty years in pain.

My wife joins in love. We are all in tolerable health, I am,

DEAR JACK,

Your sincere and affectionate Friend and Brother,

SAMUEL WESLEY.

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

H

LET-

LETTER XXIII.

From Mr. T. Hervey to Mr. S. Wesley.

Stoke Abbey, May 7, 1739.

REV. SIR,

YESTERDAY Mr. Orchard received your letter; and being much afflicted with nervous disorders, which give him a trembling hand, and so unfit him for a ready use of the pen, has resigned the office of answering it to me. Now Sir, the chief view my honoured friend was acted by in making you a visit, was to stop as soon as possible the spread and prevalence of several very strange and pestilent opinions. He thought that to mention them to you, and only to represent them, was enough to stimulate and engage you to oppose.—He hoped also that this might be done effectually, and successfully, by an elder brother of the dear, but deluded man.

The dangerous and extravagant tenets may possibly have slipt your memory; and if so, the best, most pertinent, and material answer I can send you, will be to relate them. They are such as these, that the method of education, the distinction, order, degrees, even robes and habits of the university, are all anti-christian: that nothing is taught in it but learning,

learning, wisdom which opposes the power of God. That whoso is born of God is also taught of God, not in any limited sense, but so as to render the use of all natural means of no effect. That all human learning (however said to be sanctified by God) entirely disqualifies us from preaching the true gospel of *Jesus Christ*;—that none have a right to preach, but such as are immediately called to it by the spirit of God;—that an established ministry is a mere invention of man;—that our whole church, and all its authority, is founded on and supported by a lye—and that all who receive a power of preaching from it, are in a state of slavery and bondage, and must throw off all obedience to it, before they can enjoy the freedom of the gospel. Whatever was said in your company, was said with a design of provoking so able a scholar, and so near a relation of good Mr. Wesley's, to exert his authority, his interest, his learning, all his endeavours, to draw of his valuable brother from these wild doctrines; doctrines so palpably and so perniciously wrong. If you can, Sir, interpose and pluck the tares before they are rooted in the breast;—if you can dislodge these unhappy mistakes before they are rivetted in the mind; if you may be so fortunate as to strangle these delusions in their birth, what signal service will you do the best of causes, the cause of pure religion and true christianity. If Mr. Wesley imbibes such

erroneous notions, he will certainly be zealous, as he is most confessedly able to propagate them. He will think it his duty to inform, or rather to infect, others. So that whoever undeceives him, will by that one stroke cut off a legion of errors. That you may attempt this is the wish and desire; that attempting you may accomplish it shall be the hearty prayer, of

REVEREND SIR,

Your most obedient

humble servant,

T. HERVEY.

P. S. Mr. Orchard presents his humble service.

To the Rev. Mr. Wesley,
at Tiverton, Devon.

LET-

LETTER XXV.

From J. Wesley to his brother Samuel.

Bristol, May 10, 1739.

DEAR BROTHER,

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

The gospel promises to you and me, and our children, and all that are afar off, even as many of those whom the Lord our God shall call, as are not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, “The witness of God’s spirit with their spirit, that they are the children of God:” that they are *now*, at this hour all accepted in the beloved: but it witnesses “not, that they shall be.” It is an assurance of *present* salvation only. Therefore, not necessarily perpetual, neither irreverfible.

I am one of many witnesses of this matter of fact, that God does now make good this his promise daily, very frequently during a representation (how made I know not, but not to the outward eye) of Christ either hanging on the cross, or standing on the right hand of God. And this I know to be of

H 3

God,

God, because from that hour the person so affected is a new creature, both as to his inward tempers and outward life. Old things are past away; and all things become new.

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

A bystander, one John Haydon, was quite enraged at this, and being unable to deny something supernatural in it, laboured beyond measure to convince all his acquaintance, that it was a delusion of the devil. I was met in the street the next day by one, who informed me that John Haydon was fallen raving mad. It seems, he had sat down to dinner, but wanted first to make an end of a sermon he was reading.

reading. At the last page, he suddenly changed colour, fell off his chair, and began screaming terribly, and beating himself against the ground. I found him on the floor, the room being full of people, whom his wife would have kept away; but he cried out, "No; let them all come: let all the world see the just judgment of God." Two or three were holding him as well as they could. He immediately fixed his eyes on me, and said, "Ay, this is he I said deceived the people; but God hath overtaken me. I said, it was a delusion of the devil: but this is no delusion." Then he roared aloud, "O thou devil! thou cursed devil! Yea, thou legion of devils! Thou canst not stay in me. Christ will cast thee out. I know his work is begun. Tear me to pieces, if thou wilt. But thou canst not hurt me." He then beat himself again, and groaning again, with violent sweats, and heaving of the breast. We prayed with him, and God put a new song in his mouth. The words were, which he pronounced with a clear strong voice. "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from this time forth for evermore." I called again an hour after. We found his body quite worn out, and his voice lost. But his

foul was full of joy and love, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

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

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

DEAR BROTHER,

Your ever affectionate Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

To the Rev. Mr. Wesley, }
at Tiverton, Devon. }

LET.

LETTER XXV.

From S. Wesley to his brother John.

DEAR JACK,

IT has pleased God to visit me with sickness, else I should not have been so backward in writing. Pray to him for us, that he would “ give us patience “ under our sufferings, and a happy issue out of all “ our afflictions ; granting us in this world know- “ ledge of his truth, and in the world to come life “ everlasting.”

It is good news that you have built a charity-school, and better still that you have a second almost up, as I find by yours that Mr. Wigginton brought me. I wish you could build not only a school, but a church too, for the colliers, if there is not any place at present for worship where they can meet; and I should rejoice heartily to have it endowed, though Mr. Whitfield were to be the minister of it, provided the bishop fully joined.

Your distinction between the discipline and doctrine of the church, is, I think, not quite pertinent.

For

For surely episcopacy is matter of doctrine too; but granting it otherwise, you know there is no fear of being cast out of our synagogue for any tenets whatsoever. Did not Clarke die preferred? Were not Collins and Coward free from anathema? Are not Chubb and Gordon now caressed. My knowledge of this makes me suspect Whitfield, as if he designed to provoke persecution by his bodings of it. He has already personally disobliged the bishops of Gloucester and London, and doubtless will do as much by all the rest, if they fall not down before his whimsies, and should offer to stand in his way. Now if he, by his madness, should lay himself open to the small remains of discipline amongst us, as by marrying without licence, or any other way, and get excommunicated for his pains, I am very apprehensive you would still stick to him as your dear brother, and so, though the church would not excommunicate you, you would excommunicate the church. Then I suppose you would enlarge your censure, which now takes in only most of the inferior clergy; but you have taught me to have the worse opinion of no man on that account, till you have proved your charge against bishop Bull. At present I am inclined to think, that the being blamed with him, is glory.

You

You yourself doubted at first, and enquired, and examined about the extacies; the matter is not therefore so plain as motion to a man walking. But I have my own reason, as well as your own authority, against the exceeding clearness of divine interposition there. Your followers fall into agonies. I confess it. They are freed from them after you have prayed over them. Granted. They say it is God's doing. I own they say so. Dear Brother, where is your ocular demonstration? Where, indeed, is the rational proof? Their living well afterwards may be a probable and sufficient argument, that they believe themselves; but it goes no farther.

I must ask a few more questions. Did these agitations ever begin during the use of any collects of the church? Or during the preaching of any sermon that had before been preached within consecrated walls without that effect, or during the inculcating any other doctrine besides that of your new birth? Are the main body of these agents, or patients, good sort of people before hand, or loose and immoral?

My wife joins in love to you, and Charles, if he is with you, or indeed wherever he is. For you know best his notions, and he is likely to hear from you before me. Phill is very well, my wife indifferent,

ferent, and I on the mending hand in spite of foul weather. I am,

DEAR JACK,

Your sincere and affectionate

friend and brother,

SAMUEL WESLEY.

Tiverton, Sept. 3, 1739.

To Mr. John Wesley.

LETTER XXVI.

From Mr. S. Wesley to his Mother.

DEAR MOTHER,

WHEN you were here, as I remember, I was applied to for an account of my father's life and writings, and of my own. I have since that had the same request made me for the same book, *Wood's Athenæ Oxonienses*; and whether I grow vainer than I was then, or really am somewhat depraved in my intellect,

intellect, I begin to think it not altogether so absurd as I did at first. The person applying is an old clergyman, who wants to know where and when my father was born, where, when, and by whom admitted into holy orders. I have sent him your epitaph.

His name is Tomkins, at Kilmington, near Axminster, Devon. I promised him to write to you, who could inform him much fuller than myself about my father. He wants my two brothers histories also ; and as their actions have been important enough to be committed to writing, they are the fittest people alive to send informations about themselves ; especially now, because it will prevent any misrepresentations from others. They are now become so notorious, the world will be curious to know when and where they were born, what schools bred at, what colleges of in Oxford, and when matriculated, what degrees they took, and where, when, and by whom ordained ; what books they have written or published. I wish they may spare so much time as to vouchsafe a little of their story. For my own part, I had much rather have them picking straws within the walls, than preaching in the area of Moor Fields.

It was with exceeding concern and grief, I heard you had countenanced a spreading delusion, so far as to be one of Jack's congregation. Is it not enough
that

that I am bereft of both my brothers, but must my mother follow too? I earnestly beseech the Almighty to preserve you from joining a schism at the close of your life, as you were unfortunately * *engaged in one* at the beginning of it. It will cost you many a protest, should you retain your integrity, as I hope to God you will.

They boast of you already as a disciple. Charles has told Jo. Bentham that I do not differ much, if we understand one another. I am afraid I must be forced to advertise, such is their apprehension or their charity. But they design separation. Things will take their natural course, without an especial interposition of Providence. They are already forbid all the pulpits in London, and to preach in that diocese is actual schism. In all likelihood it will come to the same all over England, if the bishops have courage enough. They leave off the liturgy in the fields; though Mr. Whitfield expresses his value for it, he never once read it to his tatterdemalions on a common. Their societies are sufficient to dissolve all other societies but their own. Will any man of common sense, or spirit, suffer any domestic to be in a bond engaged to relate every thing without reserve, to five or ten people, that concerns the per-

* She was daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, one of the Morning Lecturers against Popery. See Calamy.

son's conscience, how much soever it may concern the family? Ought any married persons to be there, unless husband and wife be there together? This is literally putting asunder whom God hath joined together. As I told Jack, I am not afraid the church should excommunicate him, discipline is at too low an ebb, but that he should excommunicate the church. It is pretty near it; holiness and good works are not so much as *conditions* of our acceptance with God. Love feasts are introduced, and extemporary prayers and expositions of scripture, which last are enough to bring in all confusion; nor is it likely they will want any miracles to support them. He only can stop them from being a formed sect, in a very little time, who *ruleth the madness of the people*. Ecclesiastical censures have lost their terrors, thank fanaticism on the one hand, and atheism on the other. To talk of persecution therefore from thence, is mere insult. It is

To call the bishop grey beard Goff,
And make his pow'r as mere a scoff,
As Dagon when his hands were off

Poor Brown, who gave name and rise to the first separatists, though he repented every vein of his heart, could never undo the mischief he had done. My sister Hall has written to me on the subject, whom I will answer as soon as ever I can. In the
mean

mean time I shall be glad to hear from you, and beg your blessing upon us and ours, and your prayers that we may be guided safely through the painful remnant of our lives, and arrive by Christ's merits to everlasting happiness. I am,

DEAR MOTHER,

Your dutiful and affectionate son,

SAMUEL WESLEY.

Tiverton, Devon, October 20, 1739.

To Mrs. Wesley, senior.

N. B. Mr. Samuel Wesley died soon after this, viz. Nov. 6, 1739, in the forty-ninth year of his age.

LETTER

Copy of the Letter Mr. Wesley was writing his sister Hall, which was sent her by Post, under cover to Mrs. Hutton, November 14, 1739*.

LETTER XXVII.

From Mr. S. Wesley to his sister Mrs. Hall.

DEAR SISTER,

GOD forbid I should ever be unwilling to do you any good in my power, either as to this world or the next, and I must own Mr. Whitfield's affair concerns you in both. Your case is more difficult than most others, for you have not yet learnt the duty of hating literally a husband, for Christ's sake, as some fanatically expound it.

There is a plain schism evidently forming, and indeed actually begun. If the bishop of London has forbid any field preacher to officiate in any church within his diocese, whoever does so must be guilty of rebellion against the spiritual governor; nor will it much mend the matter to hold forth in streets and commons, since the bishop of course is still a greater enemy to that. It is in vain for Whitfield to pretend he is of the church of England, unless there be two, one subordinate, the other opposite to

* There must be an error either in this date, or that on Mr. S. Wesley's tomb-stone, as given by Mr. Hampson in his life of Mr. Wesley, according to which Mr. S. Wesley died the 6th of November, 1739.

the present ecclesiastical establishment and authority, one within doors, the other without. The foundations are laying for much wider differences. My brothers have the confidence to affirm, that holiness and good works are not so much as conditions of our acceptance with God. Popery is strongly charged upon our clergy, whose fault perhaps it may have been, that they have insisted too little some times upon faith ; but that will never justify others, who so expound one place of scripture, that it be repugnant to another, nay to the tenor of the whole book of God. St. Paul manifestly distinguishes faith, hope, and charity, and on comparison prefers the last. This single text will no more be quibbled away than the Epistle of St. James ; though, if it could, there are innumerable others that will take more than a life-time to reconcile to that zeal against good works that now seems to be reviving ; but foundations are laying for endless dissensions. The extemporary expounding of scripture, is a natural inlet to all false doctrine, heresy, and schism. The bands of societies are such a snare, that I was unwilling to believe it even of Whitfield's wrong-headness ; but I see another new brother, Bockler, has seconded him, and I can make no doubt now of the things being genuine.

LETTER

The following is not fully dated.

LETTER XXVIII.

From Mr. C. Wesley to his Sister.

Bristol, April 29.

DEAR SISTER,

YOU may fear I am in the land where all things are forgotten, by my long silence : but I have been only passing between this place and London, without settling at either. Most probably I shall now stay here long enough to hear from you by Phill, if she is not discouraged by my unpunctuality. You must make my peace with her, that she may inform me how you do. Methinks I could be gladder to ask you myself in person ; but I do not yet see a way opened. However, I would not have you over sure that I shall not make an elbow to Barnstaple by and by. My heart is full of desires after your happiness. Love and gratitude to God and man, constrains me to wish your welfare as my own ; but God only can remove that mountain of prejudice which is in the way.

I speak not this to upbraid you. No ; was it not for your great affection to me, you would be

much more prejudiced than you are. But, by nature we are averse to the things of God. We are *born* unbelievers ; and have no faith till we are *born again*. This is a hard saying (and yet a kind one) that you, my dear sister, *are not yet born again*. O let me beseech you, to ask our dear Lord whether these things be so ; If you have not experienced this change, there stands an *impossibility* betwixt you and salvation. For “except a man be born of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven : and “without holiness no one shall see the Lord.” Do not (I again conjure you) slight my words, for you *now want something without which it is impossible for you to be saved*. If you will consent to see your want, Jesus Christ will *supply* it. For it is no other than himself, even “Christ in *you* the hope of “glory.”

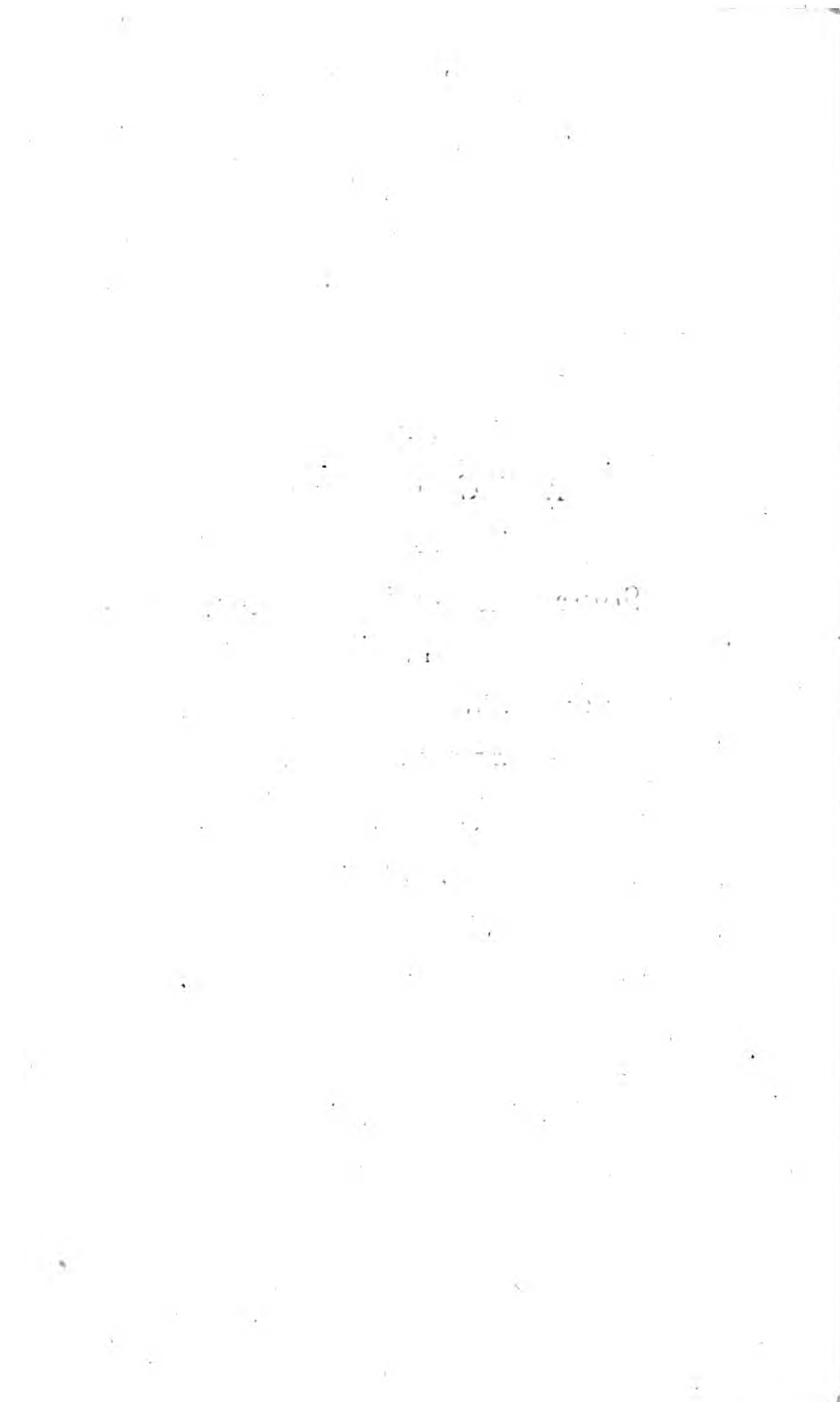
My love to dear M. Berry. Believe me, with the sincerest affection,

Your most faithful friend,

CHARLES WESLEY.

To Mrs. Ursula Wesley,
at Barnstaple.

AN
A C C O U N T
OF
Some Strange Noifes, &c.
IN
The Rev. Mr. WESLEY's HOUSE,
AT EPWORTH, 1716-7,
COLLECTED
By Mr. S. WESLEY.



LETTERS

CONCERNING

SOME SUPERNATURAL DISTURBANCES,

AT

MY FATHER'S HOUSE,

At EPWORTH, in LINCOLNSHIRE *.

LETTER I.

To Mr. Samuel Wesley, from his Mother.

January 12, 1716-7.

DEAR SAM,

THIS evening we were agreeably surpris'd with your packet, which brought the welcome news of your being alive, after we had been in the greatest panic imaginable, almost a month, thinking either you was dead, or one of your brothers by some misfortune been killed.

The reason of our fears, is as follows. On the First of December, our maid heard, at the door of

* The MS. is in the hand writing of Mr. S. Wesley. The editor has only added the titles of the letters, denoting the writers, and the persons to whom they were written.

the dining-room, several dismal groans, like a person in extremes, at the point of death. We gave little heed to her relation, and endeavoured to laugh her out of her fears. Some nights (two or three) after, several of the family heard a strange knocking in divers places, usually three or four knocks at a time, and then stayed a little. This continued every night for a fortnight; sometimes it was in the garret, but most commonly in the nursery, or green chamber. We all heard it but your father, and I was not willing he should be informed of it, lest he should fancy it was against his own death, which, indeed, we all apprehended. But when it began to be so troublesome, both day and night, that few or none of the family durst be alone, I resolved to tell him of it, being minded he should speak to it. At first he would not believe but somebody did it to alarm us; but the night after, as soon as he was in bed, it knocked loudly nine times, just by his bedside. He rose, and went to see if he could find out what it was, but could see nothing. Afterwards he heard it as the rest.

One night it made such a noise in the room over our heads, as if several people were walking, then run up and down stairs, and was so outrageous that we thought the children would be frightened, so your father and I rose, and went down in the dark to light a candle. Just as we came to the bottom of the

broad stairs, having hold of each other, on my side there seemed as if somebody had emptied a bag of money at my feet ; and on his, as if all the bottles under the stairs (which were many) had been dashed in a thousand pieces. We passed through the hall into the kitchen, and got a candle, and went to see the children, whom we found asleep.

The next night your father would get Mr. Hoole to lie at our house, and we all sat together till one or two o'clock in the morning, and heard the knocking as usual. Sometimes it would make a noise like the winding up of a jack, at other times, as that night Mr. Hoole was with us, like a carpenter planing deals ; but most commonly it knocked thrice and stopped, and then thrice again, and so many hours together. We persuaded your father to speak, and try if any voice would be heard. One night about six o'clock he went into the nursery in the dark, and at first heard several deep groans, then knocking. He adjured it to speak if it had power, and tell him why it troubled his house, but no voice was heard, but it knocked thrice aloud. Then he questioned it if it were Sammy, and bid it, if it were, and could not speak, knock again, but it knocked no more that night, which made us hope it was not against your death.

Thus it continued till the 28th of December, when it loudly knocked (as your father used to do at
the

the gate) in the nursery, and departed. We have various conjectures what this may mean. For my own part, I fear nothing now you are safe at London hitherto, and I hope God will still preserve you. Though some times I am inclined to think my brother is dead. Let me know your thoughts on it.

S. W.

LETTER II.

To my Father.

January 30, Saturday.

HONOURED SIR,

MY mother tells me a very strange story of disturbances in your house. I wish I could have some more particulars from you. I would thank Mr. Hoole, if he would favour me with a letter concerning it. Not that I want to be confirmed myself in the belief of it, but for any other person's satisfaction. My mother sends to me to know my thoughts of it, and I cannot think at all of any interpretation. Wit, I fancy, might find many, but wisdom none.

Your dutiful and loving Son,

S. WESLEY.

LETTER III.

From Mr. S. Wesley to his Mother.

DEAR MOTHER,

THOSE who are so wise as not to believe any supernatural occurrences, though ever so well attested, could find a hundred questions to ask about those strange noises, you wrote me an account of; but for my part, I know not what question to put, which if answered, would confirm me more in the belief of what you tell me. Two or three I have heard from others. Was there never a new maid, or man, in the house, that might play tricks? Was there no body above in the garrets, when the walking was there? Did all the family hear it together when they were in one room, or at one time? Did it seem to all to be in the same place, at the same time? Could not cats, or rats, or dogs, be the sprights? Was the whole family asleep, when my father and you went down stairs? Such doubts as these being replied to, though they could not, as God himself assures us, convince them who believe not Moses and the prophets, yet would strengthen such as do believe. As to my particular opinion,
concerning

124 ACCOUNT OF DISTURBANCES

concerning the events forboded by these noifes; I cannot, I must confefs, form any—I think fince it was not permitted to fpeak, all gueffes must be vain. The end of fpirits actions is yet more hidden than that of men, and even this latter puzzles the moft fubtle politicians. That we may be ftruck fo as to prepare ferioufly for any ill, may, it is poffible, be one defign of providence. It is furely our duty and wifdom to do fo.

DEAR MOTHER,

I beg your bleffing,

on your dutiful and affectionate Son,

S. WESLEY.

Jan. 29, 1716-7, Saturday, }
Dean's Yard, Weftminfter. }

I expect a particular account from every one.

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LETTER IV.

From Mrs. Wesley to her Son Samuel.

Jan. 25, or 27, 1716-7.

DEAR SAM,

THOUGH I am not one of those that will believe nothing supernatural, but am rather inclined to think there would be frequent intercourse between good spirits and us, did not our deep lapse into sensuality prevent it; yet I was a great while e'er I could credit any thing of what the children and servants reported, concerning the noises they heard in several parts of our house. Nay, after I had heard them myself, I was willing to persuade myself and them, that it was only rats or weasles that disturbed us; and having been formerly troubled with rats, which were frightened away by sounding a horn, I caused a horn to be procured, and made them blow it all over the house. But from that night they began to blow, the noises were more loud, and distinct, both day and night, than before, and that night we rose, and went down, I was entirely convinced, that it was beyond the power of any human creature to make such strange and various noises.

As

As to your questions, I will answer them particularly, but withal, I desire my answers may satisfy none but yourself; for I would not have the matter imparted to any. We had both man and maid new this last Martinmas, yet I do not believe either of them occasioned the disturbance, both for the reason above mentioned, and because they were more affrighted than any body else. Besides, we have often heard the noises when they were in the room by us; and the maid particularly was in such a panic, that she was almost incapable of all business, nor durst ever go from one room to another, or stay by herself a minute after it began to be dark.

The man, Robert Brown, whom you well know, was most visited by it lying in the garret, and has been often frighted down bare foot, and almost naked, not daring to stay alone to put on his cloaths, nor do I think, if he had power, he would be guilty of such villainy. When the walking was heard in the garret, Robert was in bed in the next room, in a sleep so sound, that he never heard your father and me walk up and down, though we walked not softly, I am sure. All the family has heard it together, in the same room, at the same time, particularly at family prayers. It always seemed to all present in the same place at the same time, though often before any could say it is here, it would remove to another place.

All

All the family, as well as Robin, were asleep when your father and I went down stairs, nor did they wake in the nursery when we held the candle close by them, only we observed that Hetty trembled exceedingly in her sleep, as she always did, before the noise awaked her. It commonly was nearer her than the rest, which she took notice of, and was much frightened, because she thought it had a particular spight at her, I could multiply particular instances, but I forbear. I believe your father will write to you about it shortly. Whatever may be the design of providence in permitting these things, I cannot say. *Secret things belong to God*; but I intirely agree with you, that it is our wisdom and duty to prepare seriously for all events.

S. WESLEY.

LETTER

LETTER V.

From Miss Susannah Wesley to her brother Samuel.

Epworth, Jan. 24.

DEAR BROTHER,

ABOUT the first of December, a most terrible and astonishing noise was heard by a maid servant, as at the dining room door, which caused the up starting of her hair, and made her ears prick forth at an unusual rate. She said, it was like the groans of one expiring. These so frightened her, that for a great while she durst not go out of one room into another, after it began to be dark, without company. But, to lay aside jesting, which should not be done in serious matters; I assure you that from the first to the last of a lunar month, the groans, squeaks, tinglys, and knockings, were frightful enough.

Though it is needless for me to send you any account of what we all heard, my father himself having a larger account of the matter than I am able to give, which he designs to send you; yet, in compliance with your desire, I will tell you as briefly as I can, what I heard of it. The first night I ever heard it my sister Nancy and I were set in the dining room. We heard something rush on the outside of the

the

the doors that opened into the garden, then three loud knocks, immediately after other three, and in half a minute the same number over our heads. We enquired whether any body had been in the garden, or in the room above us, but there was nobody. Soon after my sister Molly and I were up after all the family were a bed, except my sister Nancy, about some business. We heard three bounding thumps under our feet, which soon made us throw away our work, and tumble into bed. Afterwards the tingling of the latch and warming pan, and so it took its leave that night.

Soon after the above-mentioned, we heard a noise as if a great piece of sounding metal was thrown down on the outside of our chamber. We, lying in the quietest part of the house, heard less than the rest for a pretty while, but the latter end of the night that Mr. Hoole sat up on, I lay in the nursery, where it was very violent. I then heard frequent knocks over and under the room where I lay, and at the children's bed head, which was made of boards. It seemed to rap against it very hard and loud, so that the bed shook under them. I heard something walk by my bedside, like a man in a long night gown. The knocks were so loud, that Mr. Hoole came out of their chamber to us. It still continued. My father spoke, but nothing answered. It ended that night with my father's particular knock, very fierce.

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It is now pretty quiet, only at our repeating the prayers for the king and prince, when it usually begins, especially when my father says, "Our most gracious Sovereign Lord," &c. This my father is angry at, and designs to say *three* instead of *two* for the royal family. We all heard the same noise, and at the same time, and as coming from the same place. To conclude this, it now makes its personal appearance; but of this more hereafter. Do not say one word of this to our folks, nor give the least hint.

I am,

Your sincere friend and affectionate Sister,

SUSANNAH WESLEY.

LETTER VI.

Mr. S. Wesley in Answer.

Dean's Yard, Feb. 9, 1716-7.

DEAR SISTER SUKY,

YOUR telling me the spirit has made its personal appearance, without saying how, or to whom, or when, or how long, has excited my curiosity

riosity very much. I long mightily for a farther account of every circumstance by your next letter. Do not keep me any longer in the dark. Why need you write the less, because my father is to send me the whole story. Has the disturbance continued since the 28th of December? I understand my father did not hear it all, but a fortnight after the rest. What did he say remarkable to any of you when he did hear it? As to the devil's being an enemy to King George, were I the king myself, I should rather old Nick should be my enemy, than my friend. I do not like the noise of the night gown sweeping along the ground, nor its knocking like my father. Write when you receive this, though nobody else should, to your loving brother,

S. W.

LETTER VII.

Mr. S. Wesley to his Mother.

DEAR MOTHER,

YOU say you could multiply particular instances of the spirit's noises, but I want to know whether nothing was ever seen by any. For though it

is hard to conceive, nay, morally impossible, that the hearing of so many people could be deceived, yet the truth will be still more manifest and undeniable, if it is grounded on the testimony of two senses. Has it never at all disturbed you since the 28th of December? Did no circumstance give any light into the design of the whole?

Your obedient and loving Son,

S. WESLEY.

Feb. 12.

Have you dug in the place where the money seemed poured at your feet.

LETTER VIII.

Mr. S. Wesley to his Father.

HONOURED SIR,

I Have not yet received any answer to the letter I wrote some time ago, and my mother in her last seems to say, that as yet I know but a very small part of the whole story of strange noises in our house. I shall be exceedingly glad to have the entire account from you. Whatever may be the main design of such wonders, I cannot think they were ever meant

meant to be kept secret. If they bode any thing remarkable to our family, I am sure I am a party concerned.

Your dutiful Son,

S. WESLEY.

Feb. 12.

LETTER IX.

From Mr. S. Wesley to his Sister Emily.

DEAR SISTER EMILY,

I Wish you would let me have a letter from you about the spirit, as indeed from every one of my sisters. I cannot think any of you very superstitious, unless you are much changed since I saw you. My sister Hetty, I find, was more particularly troubled. Let me know all. Did any thing appear to her? I am,

Your affectionate Brother,

S. WESLEY.

Feb. 12.

LETTER X.

From old Mr. Wesley to his Son Samuel.

Feb. 11, 1726-7.

DEAR SAM,

AS for the noises, &c. in our family, I thank God we are now all quiet. There were some surprizing circumstances in that affair. Your mother has not written you a third part of it. When I see you here, you shall see the whole account, which I wrote down. It would make a glorious penny book for Jack Dunton: but while I live I am not ambitious for any thing of that nature. I think that's all, but blessings, from

Your loving Father,

SAM. WESLEY.

LETTER

The following Letter I received at the same time, though it has no date.

L E T T E R XI.

From Miss Emily Wesley to her brother Samuel.

DEAR BROTHER,

I Thank you for your last, and shall give you what satisfaction is in my power, concerning what has happened in our family. I am so far from being superstitious, that I was too much inclined to infidelity, so that I heartily rejoice at having such an opportunity of convincing myself past doubt or scruple, of the existence of some beings besides those we see. A whole month was sufficient to convince any body of the reality of the thing, and to try all ways of discovering any trick, had it been possible for any such to have been used. I shall only tell you what I myself heard, and leave the rest to others.

My sisters in the paper chamber had heard noises, and told me of them, but I did not much believe, till one night, about a week after the first groans were heard, which was the beginning, just after the clock had struck ten, I went down stairs to lock the doors, which I always do. Scarce had I got up the

best stairs, when I heard a noise, like a person throwing down a vast coal in the middle of the fore kitchen, and all the splinters seemed to fly about from it. I was not much frightened, but went to my sister Sukey, and we together went all over the low rooms, but there was nothing out of order.

Our dog was fast asleep, and our only cat in the other end of the house. No sooner was I got up stairs, and undressing for bed, but I heard a noise among many bottles that stand under the best stairs, just like the throwing of a great stone among them, which had broke them all to pieces. This made me hasten to bed; but my sister Hetty, who sits always to wait on my father going to bed, was still sitting on the lowest step on the garret stairs, the door being shut at her back, when soon after there came down the stairs behind her, something like a man, in a loose night gown trailing after him, which made her fly rather than run to me in the nursery.

All this time we never told our father of it, but soon after we did. He smiled, and gave no answer, but was more careful than usual, from that time, to see us in bed, imagining it to be some of us young women that sat up late, and made a noise. His incredulity, and especially his imputing it to us, or our lovers, made me, I own, desirous of its continuance till he was convinced. As for my mother, she firmly believed it to be rats, and sent for

for a horn to blow them away. I laughed to think how wisely they were employed, who were striving half a day to fright away Jeffrey, for that name I gave it, with a horn.

But whatever it was, I perceived it could be made angry. For from that time it was so outrageous, there was no quiet for us after ten at night. I heard frequently between ten and eleven, something like the quick winding up of a jack, at the corner of the room by my bed's head, just the running of the wheels and the creaking of the iron work. This was the common signal of its coming. Then it would knock on the floor three times, then at my sister's bed's head in the same room, almost always three together, and then stay. The sound was hollow, and loud, so as none of us could ever imitate.

It would answer to my mother, if she stamped on the floor, and bid it. It would knock when I was putting the children to bed, just under me where I sat. One time little Kesy, pretending to scare Patty, as I was undressing them, stamped with her foot on the floor, and immediately it answered with three knocks, just in the same place. It was more loud and fierce if any one said it was rats, or any thing natural.

I could tell you abundance more of it, but the rest will write, and therefore it would be needless. I was not much frightened at first, and very little at

last; but it was never near me, except two or three times, and never followed me, as it did my sister Hetty. I have been with her when it has knocked under her, and when she has removed has followed, and still kept just under her feet, which was enough to terrify a stouter person.

If you would know my opinion of the reason of this, I shall briefly tell you. I believe it to be witchcraft, for these reasons. About a year since, there was a disturbance at a town near us, that was undoubtedly witches; and if so near, why may they not reach us? Then my father had for several Sundays before its coming, preached warmly against consulting those that are called cunning men, which our people are given to; and it had a particular spight at my father.

Besides, something was thrice seen. The first time by my mother, under my sister's bed, like a badger, only without any head that was discernible. The same creature was sat by the dining-room fire one evening; when our man went into the room, it run by him, through the hall under the stairs. He followed with a candle, and searched, but it was departed. The last time he saw it in the kitchen, like a white rabbit, which seems likely to be some witch; and I do so really believe it to be one, that I would venture to fire a pistol at it, if I saw it long enough.

enough. It has been heard by me and others since December. I have filled up all my room, and have only time to tell you, I am,

Your loving sister,

EMILIA WESLEY.

LETTER XII.

Miss Susannah Wesley to her brother Samuel.

March 27:

DEAR BROTHER WESLEY.

I SHOULD farther satisfy you concerning the disturbances, but it is needless, because my sisters Emilia and Hetty write so particularly about it. One thing I believe you do not know, that is, last Sunday, to my father's no small amazement, his trencher danced upon the table a pretty while, without any body's stirring the table. When lo! an adventurous wretch took it up, and spoiled the sport, for it remained still ever after. How glad should I be to talk with you about it. Send me some news, for we are secluded from the sight, or hearing, of any verfal thing except Jeffrey.

SUSANNAH WESLEY.

*A Passage in a Letter from my Mother to me, dated
March 27, 1717.*

I CANNOT imagine how you should be so curious about our unwelcome guest. For my part, I am quite tired with hearing or speaking of it; but if you come among us, you will find enough to satisfy all your scruples, and perhaps may hear, or see it yourself.

S. WESLEY.

*A Passage in a Letter from my Sister Emily to Mr. N.
Berry, dated April 1.*

TELL my brother the spright was with us last night, and heard by many of our family, especially by our maid and myself. She sat up with drink, and it came just at one o'clock, and opened the dining room door. After some time it shut again. She saw as well as heard it both shut and open; then it began to knock as usual. But I dare write no longer, lest I should hear it.

EMILIA WESLEY.

MY FATHER'S JOURNAL,

OR, DIARY,

TRANSCRIBED BY

MY BROTHER JACK,

AUGUST 27, 1726,

AND FROM HIM BY ME,

FEBRUARY 7, 1730-1.

*An Account of Noises and Disturbances in my House, at
Epworth, Lincolnshire, in December and January,
1716.*

FROM the First of December, my children and servants heard many strange noises, groans, knockings, &c. in every story, and most of the rooms of my house. But I hearing nothing of it myself, they would not tell me for some time, because, according to the vulgar opinion, if it boded any ill to me, I could not hear it. When it increased,

creased, and the family could not easily conceal it, they told me of it.

My daughters Susannah and Ann, were below stairs in the dining room, and heard first at the doors, then over their heads, and the night after a knocking under their feet, though nobody was in the chambers or below them. The like they and my servants heard in both the kitchens, at the door against the partition, and over them. The maid servant heard groans as of a dying man. My daughter Emilia coming down stairs to draw up the clock, and lock the doors at ten at night, as usual, heard under the stair-case, a sound among some bottles there, as if they had been all dashed to pieces; but when she looked, all was safe.

Something like the steps of a man, was heard going up and down stairs, at all hours of the night, and vast rumblings below stairs, and in the garrets. My man, who lay in the garret, heard some one come slaring through the garret to his chamber, rattling by his side, as if against his shoes, though he had none there; at other times walking up and down stairs, when all the house were in bed, and gobbling like a turkey cock. Noises were heard in the nursery, and all the other chambers; knocking first at the feet of the bed and behind it; and a sound like that of dancing in a matted chamber
next

next the nursery, when the door was locked, and no body in it.

My wife would have persuaded them it was rats within doors, and some unlucky people knocking without ; till at last we heard several loud knocks in our own chamber, on my side of the bed ; but till, I think, the 21st at night, I heard nothing of it. That night I was waked a little before one, by nine distinct very loud knocks, which seemed to be in the next room to ours, with a sort of a pause at every third stroke. I thought it might be somebody without the house, and having got a stout mastiff, hoped he would soon rid me of it.

The next night I heard six knocks, but not so loud as the former. I know not whether it was in the morning after Sunday the 23d, when about seven my daughter Emily called her mother into the nursery, and told her she might now hear the noises there. She went in, and heard it at the bedsteads, then under the bed, then at the head of it. She knocked, and it answered her. She looked under the bed, and thought something ran from thence, but could not well tell of what shape, but thought it most like a badger.

The next night but one, we were awaked about one, by the noises, which were so violent, it was in vain to think of sleep while they continued. I rose, and my wife would rise with me. We went into
I every

every chamber, and down stairs ; and generally as we went into one room, we heard it in that behind us, though all the family had been in bed several hours. When we were going down stairs, and at the bottom of them, we heard, as Emily had done before, a clashing among the bottles, as if they had been broke all to pieces, and another sound distinct from it, as if a peck of money had been thrown down before us. The same, three of my daughters heard at another time.

We went through the hall into the kitchen, when our mastiff came whining to us, as he did always after the first night of its coming ; for then he barked violently at it, but was silent afterwards, and seemed more afraid than any of the children. We still heard it rattle and thunder in every room above or behind us, locked as well as open, except my study, where as yet it never came. After two, we went to bed, and were pretty quiet the rest of the night.

Wednesday night, December 26, after, or a little before, ten, my daughter Emilia heard the signal of its beginning to play, with which she was perfectly acquainted ; it was like the strong winding up of a jack. She called us, and I went into the nursery, where it used to be most violent. The rest of the children were asleep. It began with knocking in the kitchen underneath, then seemed to be at the
bed's

bed's feet, then under the bed, at last at the head of it. I went down stairs, and knocked with my stick against the joists of the kitchen. It answered me as often and as loud as I knocked; but then I knocked as I usually do at my door, 1—2 3 4 5 6—7, but this puzzled it, and it did not answer, or not in the same method; though the children heard it do the same exactly twice or thrice after.

I went up stairs, and found it still knocking hard, though with some respite, sometimes under the bed, sometimes at the bed's head. I observed my children that they were frightened in their sleep, and trembled very much till it waked them. I stayed there alone, bid them go to sleep, and sat at the bed's feet by them, when the noise began again. I asked it what it was, and why it disturbed innocent children, and did not come to me in my study, if it had any thing to say to me. Soon after it gave one knock on the outside of the house. All the rest were within, and knocked off for that night.

I went out of doors, some times alone, at others with company, and walked round the house, but could see or hear nothing. Several nights the latch of our lodging chamber would be lifted up very often, when all were in bed. One night, when the noise was great in the kitchen, and on a deal partition, and the door in the yard, the latch whereof was often lift up, my daughter Emilia went and

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held

held it fast on the inside, but it was still lifted up, and the door pushed violently against her, though nothing was to be seen on the outside.

When we were at prayers, and came to the prayers for King George, and the Prince, it would make a great noise over our heads constantly, whence some of the family called it a Jacobite. I have been thrice pushed by an invisible power, once against the corner of my desk in the study, a second time against the door of the matted chamber, a third time against the right side of the frame of my study door, as I was going in.

I followed the noise into almost every room in the house, both by day and by night, with lights and without, and have sat alone for some time, and when I heard the noise, spoke to it, to tell me what it was, but never heard any articulate voice, and only once or twice two or three feeble squeaks, a little louder than the chirping of a bird, but not like the noise of rats, which I have often heard.

I had designed on Friday, December the 28th, to make a visit to a friend, Mr. Downs, at Normandy, and stay some days with him, but the noises were so boisterous on Thursday night, that I did not care to leave my family. So I went to Mr. Hoole, of Haxsey, and desired his company on Friday night. He came, and it began after ten, a little later than ordinary. The younger children were
gone

gone to bed, the rest of the family and Mr. Hoole were together in the matted chamber. I sent the servants down to fetch in some fuel, went with them, and staid in the kitchen till they came in. When they were gone, I heard loud noises against the doors and partition, and at length the usual signal, though somewhat after the time. I had never heard it before, but knew it by the description my daughter had given me. It was much like the turning about of a windmill when the wind changes. When the servants returned, I went up to the company, who had heard the other noises below, but not the signal. We heard all the knocking as usual, from one chamber to another, but at its going off, like the rubbing of a beast against the wall; but from that time till January the 24th, we were quiet.

Having received a letter from Samuel the day before, relating to it, I read what I had written of it to my family; and this day at morning prayer, the family heard the usual knocks at the prayer for the king. At night they were more distinct, both in the prayer for the king and that for the prince; and one very loud knock at the *amen*, was heard by my wife, and most of my children, at the inside of my bed. I heard nothing myself. After nine, Robert Brown sitting alone by the fire in the back kitchen, something came out of the copper hole like a rabbit, but less, and turned round five times very

L 2

swiftly.

swiftly: Its ears lay flat upon its neck, and its little feet stood straight up. He ran after it with the tongs in his hands, but when he could find nothing, he was frightened, and went to the maid in the parlour.

On Friday the 25th, having prayers at church, I shortened, as usual, those in the family at morning, omitting the confession, absolution, and prayers for the king and prince. I observed when this is done, there is no knocking. I therefore used them one morning for a trial; at the name of king George, it began to knock, and did the same when I prayed for the prince. Two knocks I heard, but took no notice after prayers, till after all who were in the room, ten persons besides me, spoke of it, and said they heard it. No noise at all the rest of the prayers.

Sunday, January 27. Two soft strokes at the morning prayers for king George, above stairs.

Addenda

Addenda to and from my Father's Diary.

FRIDAY, December 21. Knocking I heard first, I think, this night; to which disturbances, I hope, God will in his good time put an end.

Sunday, December 23. Not much disturbed with the noises that are now grown customary to me.

Wednesday, December 26. Sat up to hear noises. Strange! spoke to it, knocked off.

Friday, 28. The noises very boisterous and disturbing this night.

Saturday, 29. Not frightened, with the continued disturbance of my family.

Tuesday, January 1, 1717. My family have had no disturbance since I went.

Memorandum of Jack's.

THE first time my mother ever heard any unusual noise at Epworth, was long before the disturbance of old Jeffrey. My brother, lately come from London, had one evening a sharp quarrel

with my sifter Sukey, at which time my mother happening to be above in her own chamber, the door and windows rung and jarred very loud, and presently several distinct strokes, three by three, were struck. From that night it never failed to give notice in much the same manner, against any signal misfortune, or illness of any belonging to the family.

Of the general Circumstances which follow, most, if not all, the family were frequent witnesses.

1. **P**RESENTLY after any noise was heard, the wind commonly rose, and whistled very loud round the house, and increased with it.

2. The signal was given, which my father likens to the turning round of a windmill when the wind changes; Mr. Hoole (Rector of Haxey) to the plaining of deal boards; my sifter to the swift wind-up of a jack. It commonly began at the corner of the top of the nursery.

3. Before it came into any room, the latches were frequently lifted up, the windows clattered, and

and whatever iron or brass was about the chamber, rung and jarred exceedingly.

4. When it was in any room, let them make what noise they would, as they sometimes did on purpose, its dead hollow note would be clearly heard above them all.

5. It constantly knocked while the prayers for the king and prince were repeating, and was plainly heard by all in the room, but my father, and sometimes by him, as were also the thundering knocks at the *amen*.

6. The sound very often seemed in the air in the middle of a room, nor could they ever make any such themselves, by any contrivance.

7. Though it seemed to rattle down the pewter, to clap the doors, draw the curtains, kick the man's shoes up and down, &c. yet it never moved any thing except the latches, otherwise than making it tremble; unless once, when it threw open the nursery door.

8. The mastiff, though he barked violently at it the first day he came, yet whenever it came after that, nay, sometimes before the family perceived it, he ran whining, or quite silent, to shelter himself behind some of the company.

9. It never came by day, till my mother ordered the horn to be blown.

L 4

10. After

10. After that time, scarce any one could go from one room into another, but the latch of the room they went to was lifted up before they touched it.

11. It never came once into my father's study, till he talked to it sharply, called it *deaf and dumb devil*, and bid it cease to disturb the innocent children, and come to him in his study, if it had any thing to say to him.

12. From the time of my mother's desiring it not to disturb her from five to six, it was never heard in her chamber from five till she came down stairs, nor at any other time, when she was employed in devotion.

13. Whether our clock went right or wrong, it always came, as near as could be guessed, when by the night it wanted a quarter of ten.

My Mother's Account to Jack.

Aug. 27, 1726.

ABOUT ten days after Nanny Marshall, had heard unusual groans at the dining room door, Emily came and told me that the servants and children, had been several times frighted with
strange

strange groans and knockings, about the house. I answered, that the rats John Maw had frightened from his house, by blowing a horn there, were come into ours, and ordered that one should be sent for. Molly was much displeas'd at it, and said, if it was any thing supernatural, it certainly would be very angry, and more troublesome. However, the horn was blown in the garrets; and the effect was, that whereas before the noises were always in the night, from this time they were heard at all hours, day and night.

Soon after, about seven in the morning, Emily came and desired me to go into the nursery, where I should be convinc'd they were not startl'd at nothing. On my coming thither, I heard a knocking at the feet, and quickly after at the head of the bed. I desired if it was a spirit, it would answer me, and knocking several times with my foot on the ground, with several pauses, it repeated under the sole of my feet, exactly the same number of strokes, with the very same intervals. Kezzy, then six or seven years old, said, let it answer me too, if it can, and stamping, the same sounds were return'd that she made many times, successively.

Upon my looking under the bed, something ran out pretty much like a badger, and seem'd to run directly under Emily's petticoats, who sat opposite to me on the other side. I went out, and one or two
nights

nights after, when we were just got to bed, I heard nine strokes, three by three, on the other side the bed, as if one had struck violently on a chest with a large stick. Mr. Wesley leapt up, called Hetty, who alone was up in the house, and searched every room in the house, but to no purpose. It continued from this time to knock and groan frequently at all hours, day and night; only I earnestly desired it might not disturb me between five and six in the evening, and there never was any noise in my room after during that time.

At other times, I have often heard it over my mantle tree, and once, coming up after dinner, a cradle seemed to be strongly rocked in my chamber. When I went in, the sound seemed to be in the nursery. When I was in the nursery, it seemed in my chamber again. One night Mr. W. and I were waked by some one running down the garret stairs, then down the broad stairs, then up the narrow ones, then up the garret stairs, then down again, and so the same round. The rooms trembled as it passed along, and the doors shook exceedingly, so that the clattering of the latches was very loud.

Mr. W. proposing to rise, I rose with him, and went down the broad stairs, hand in hand, to light a candle. Near the foot of them a large pot of money seemed to be poured out at my waist, and to run jingling down my night gown to my feet. Presently

sently after we heard the noise as of a vast stone thrown among several dozen of bottles, which lay under the stairs: but upon our looking no hurt was done. In the hall the mastiff met us, crying and striving to get between us. We returned up into the nursery, where the noise was very great. The children were all asleep, but panting, trembling, and sweating extremely.

Shortly after, on Mr. Wesley's invitation, Mr. Hoole staid a night with us: as we were all sitting round the fire in the matted chamber. He asked whether that gentle knocking was *it*? I told him yes, and it continued the sound, which was much lower than usual. This was observable, that while we were talking loud in the same room, the noise, seemingly lower than any of our voices, was distinctly heard above them all. These were the most remarkable passages I remember, except such as were common to all the family.

My Sister Emily's account to Jack.

ABOUT a fortnight after the time when, as I was told, the noises were heard, I went from my mother's room, who was just gone to bed, to the best chamber, to fetch my sister Suky's candle. When I was there, the windows and doors began to jar, and ring exceedingly, and presently after I heard a sound in the kitchen, as if a vast stone coal had been thrown down, and mashed to pieces. I went down thither with my candle, and found nothing more than usual; but as I was going by the screen, something began knocking on the other side, just even with my head. When I looked on the inside, the knocking was on the outside of it; but as soon as I could get round, it was at the inside again. I followed to and fro several times, till at last, finding it to no purpose, and turning about to go away before I was out of the room, the latch of the back kitchen door was lifted up many times. I opened the door and looked out, but could see nobody. I tried to shut the door, but it was thrust against me, and I could feel the latch, which I held in my hand, moving upwards at the same time. I looked out again, but finding it was labour lost, clapped the door

door to, and locked it. Immediately the latch was moved, strongly up and down, but I left it, and went up the worst stairs, from whence I heard, as if a great stone had been thrown among the bottles, which lay under the best stairs. However I went to bed.

From this time, I heard it every night, for two or three weeks. It continued a month in its full majesty, night and day. Then it intermitted a fortnight or more, and when it began again, it knocked only on nights, and grew less and less troublesome, till at last it went quite away. Towards the latter end it used to knock on the outside of the house, and seemed farther and farther off, till it ceased to be heard at all.

My Sister Molly's account to Jack.

Aug. 27.

I Have always thought it was in November, the rest of our family think it was the 1st of December 1716, when Nanny Marshall, who had a bowl of butter in her hand, ran to me, and two or three more of my sisters, in the dining room, and told us

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she had heard several groans in the hall, as of a dying man. We thought it was Mr. Turpine, who had the stone, and used sometimes to come and see us. About a fortnight after, when my Sister Suky and I were going to bed, she told me how she was frightened in the dining room, the day before, by a noise, first at the folding door, and then over head. I was reading at the table, and had scarce told her, I believe nothing of it, when several knocks were given just under my feet. We both made haste into bed, and just as we laid down, the warming pan by the bedside jarred and rung, as did the latch of the door, which was lifted swiftly up and down, presently a great chain seemed to fall on the outside of the door (we were in the best chamber) the door, latch, hinges, the warming pan, and windows, jarred, and the house shook from top to bottom.

A few days after, between five and six in the evening, I was by myself in the dining room. The door seemed to open, though it was still shut, and somebody walked in a night gown trailing upon the ground (nothing appearing) and seemed to go leisurely round me. I started up, and ran up stairs to my mother's chamber, and told the story to her and my sister Emily. A few nights after, my father ordered me to light him to his study. Just as he had unlocked it, the latch was lifted up for him. The same (after we blew the horn) was often done
to

to me, as well by day as by night. Of many other things all the family as well as me were witnesses.

My father went into the nursery from the matted chamber, where we were, by himself in the dark. It knocked very loud on the press bed head. He adjured it to tell him why it came, but it seemed to take no notice; at which he was very angry, spoke sharply, called it *deaf and dumb devil*, and repeated his adjuration. My sisters were terribly afraid it would speak. When he had done, it knocked his knock on the bed's head, so exceeding violently, as if it would break it to shivers, and from that time we heard nothing till near a month after.

My Sister Sukey's Account to Jack.

I Believed nothing of it till about a fortnight after the first noises, then one night I sat up on purpose to hear it. While I was working in the best chamber, and earnestly desiring to hear it, a knocking began just under my feet. As I knew the room below was locked, I was frightened, and leapt into bed with all my cloaths on. I afterwards heard as it were a great chain fall, and after some time, the usual

usual noises at all hours of the day and night. One night hearing it was most violent in the nursery, I resolved to lie there. Late at night, several strong knocks were given on the two lowest steps of the the garret stairs, which were close to the nursery door. The latch of the door then jarred, and seemed to be swiftly moved to and fro, and presently began knocking about a yard within the room on the floor. It then came gradually to sister Hetty's bed, who trembled strongly in her sleep. It beat very loud three strokes at a time, on the bed's head. My father came, and adjured it to speak, but it knocked on for some time, and then removed to the room over, where it knocked my father's knock on the ground, as if it would beat the house down. I had no mind to stay longer, but got up, and went to sister Em and my mother, who were in her room. From thence we heard the noises again from the nursery. I proposed playing a game at cards, but we had scarce begun, when a knocking began under our feet. We left off playing, and it removed back again into the nursery, where it continued till towards morning.

Sister

Sister Nancy's Account to Jack.

Sept: 10.

THE first noise my sister Nancy heard, was in the best chamber, with my sister Molly and my sister Sukey; soon after my father had ordered her to blow a horn in the garrets, where it was knocking violently. She was terribly afraid, being obliged to go in the dark, and kneeling down on the stairs, desired that, as she acted not to please herself, it might have no power over her. As soon as she came into the room, the noise ceased, nor did it begin again till near ten; but then, and for a good while, it made much greater and more frequent noises than it had done before. When she afterwards came into the chamber in the day time, it commonly walked after her from room to room. It followed her from one side of the bed to the other, and back again, as often as she went back; and whatever she did which made any sort of noise, the same thing seemed just to be done behind her.

When five or six were set in the nursery together, a cradle would seem to be strongly rocked in the room over, though no cradle had ever been there. One night she was sitting on the press bed,

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playing

playing at cards with some of my sisters, when my sister Molly, ETTY, PATTY, and KEZZY, were in the room, and Robert Brown. The bed on which my sister Nancy sat, was lifted up with her on it. She leapt down and said, "surely old Jeffery would not run away with her." However, they persuaded her to sit down again, which she had scarce done, when it was again lifted up several times successively, a considerable height, upon which she left her seat, and would not be prevailed upon to sit there any more.

Whenever they began to mention Mr. S. it presently began to knock, and continued to do so till they changed the discourse. All the time my sister Suky was writing her last letter to him, it made a very great noise all round the room, and the night after she set out for London, it knocked till morning with scarce any intermission.

Mr. Hoole read prayers once, but it knocked as usual at the prayers for the king and prince. The knockings at those prayers were only towards the beginning of the disturbances, for a week or thereabouts.

Mr.

The Rev. Mr. Hoole's Account.

Sept. 16.

AS soon as I came to Epworth, Mr. Wesley telling me, he sent for me to conjure, I knew not what he meant, till some of your sisters told me what had happened, and that I was sent for to sit up. I expected every hour, it being then about noon, to hear something extraordinary, but to no purpose. At supper too, and at prayers, all was silent, contrary to custom, but soon after one of the maids, who went up to sheet a bed, brought the alarm, that Jeffery was come above stairs. We all went up, and as we were standing round the fire in the east chamber, something began knocking just on the other side of the wall, on the chimney piece, as with a key. Presently the knocking was under our feet, Mr. Wesley and I went down, he with a great deal of hope, and I with fear. As soon as we were in the kitchen, the sound was above us, in the room we had left. We returned up the narrow stairs, and heard at the broad stairs head, some one flaring with their feet (all the family being now in bed beside us) and then trailing as it were, and rustling with a silk night gown. Quickly it was in the nursery, at

the bed's head, knocking as it had done at first, three by three. Mr. Wesley spoke to it, and said he believed it was the devil, and soon after it knocked at the window, and changed its sound into one like the plaining of boards. From thence it went on the outward south side of the house, sounding fainter and fainter, till it was heard no more.

I was at no other time than this during the noises at Epworth, and do not now remember any more circumstances than these.

Epworth, Sept. 1.

My sister Kezzy says she remembers nothing else, but that it knocked my father's knock, ready to beat the house down in the nursery one night.

Robin Brown's Account to Jack.

THE first time Robin Brown, my father's man, heard it, was when he was fetching down some corn from the garrets. Somewhat knocked on a door just by him, which made him run away down stairs. From that time it used frequently to visit him in bed, walking up the garret stairs, and in the garrets,

garrets, like a man in jack boots, with a night gown trailing after him, then lifting up his latch and making it jar, and making presently a noise in his room like the gobling of a turkey cock, then stumbling over his shoes or boots by the bed side. He was resolved once to be too hard for it, and so took a large mastiff we had just got to bed with him, and left his shoes and boots below stairs; but he might as well have spared his labour, for it was exactly the same thing, whether any were there or no. The same sound was heard as if there had been forty pairs. The dog indeed was a great comfort to him, for as soon as the latch began to jar, he crept into bed, made such an howling and barking together, in spite of all the man could do, that he alarmed most of the family.

Soon after, being grinding corn in the garrets, and happening to stop a little, the handle of the mill was turn round with great swiftness. He said nothing vexed him, but that the mill was empty. If corn had been in it, old Jeffrey might have ground his heart out for him; he would never have disturbed him.

One night, being ill, he was leaning his head upon the back kitchen chimney (the jam he called it) with the tongs in his hands, when from behind the oven stop, which lay by the fire, somewhat came out like a white rabbit. It turned round before him

several times, and then ran to the same place again. He was frighted, started up, and ran with the tongs into the *parlour* (*dining-room*).

D. R. Epworth, Aug. 31.

BETTY MASSY one day came to me in the parlour, and asked me if I had heard old Jeffrey, for she said she thought there was no such thing. When we had talked a little about it, I knocked three times with a reel I had in my hand, against the dining room cieling, and the same were presently repeated. She desired me to knock so again, which I did, but they were answered with three more so violently as shook the house, though no one was in the chamber over us. She prayed me to knock no more for fear it should come into us.

Epworth, August 31, 1726.

JOHN and Ketty Maw, who lived over against us, listened several nights in the time of the disturbance, but could never hear any thing.

From

From Mr. Pope to Mr. Samuel Wesley.

Twittenham, Oct. 21.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR letter had not been so long unanswered, but that I was not returned from a journey of some weeks, when it arrived at this place. You may depend on the money, for the Earl of Peterborow, Mr. Bethel, Dr. Swift, and Mr. Eckershall, which I will pay before hand to any one you shall direct; and I think you may set down Dr. Delaney, whom I will write to. I desired my Lord Oxford some months since to tell you this: it was just upon my going to take a last leave of Lord Peterborow, in so much hurry, that I had not time to write, and my Lord Oxford undertook to tell it you for me. I agree with you in the opinion of Savage's strange performance, which does not deserve the benefit of the clergy. Mrs. Wesley has my sincere thanks for her good wishes in favour of this wretched tabernacle my body; the soul that is so unhappy as to inhabit it, deserves her regard something better, because it really harbours much good will for her husband and herself, no man being more truly,

DEAR SIR,

Your affectionate and faithful servant,

M 4

A. POPE.

From Lord Oxford to Mr. Samuel Wesley.

Dover-street, August 7, 1734.

REVEREND SIR,

I Am sorry, and ashamed, to say it, but the truth must come out, that I have a letter of your's dated June the 8th, and this is August the 7th, and I have but now set pen to paper to answer it. I assure you I was very glad to hear from you; and since that you are much mended in your health, change of air will certainly be of great service to you, and I hope you will use some other exercise than that of the school. I hear you have had an increase of above forty boys since you have been down there. I am very glad for your sake, that you are so well approved of. I hope it will in every respect answer your expectation. If your health be established, I make no doubt that all parts will prove to your mind, which will be a great pleasure to me.

There is very little news stirring: they all agree that the Bishop of Winchester is dying. They say Hoadly is to succeed him, and Potter Hoadly; but how farther I cannot tell, nor does the town pretend, which is a wonderful thing.

I am

I am very glad you was reduced to read over Hudibras three times with care, and I find you are perfectly of my mind, that it much wants notes, and that it will be a great work. Certainly it will be, to do it as it should be. I do not know one so capable of doing it as yourself. I speak this very sincerely. Lilly's life I have, and any books that I have you shall see, and have the perusal of them, and any other part that I can assist. I own I am very fond of the work, and it would be of excellent use and entertainment.

The news you read in the papers of a match with my daughter and the Duke of Portland, was compleated at Mary-le-bonne Chapel. I think there is the greatest prospect of happiness to them both. I think it must be mutual; one part cannot be happy without the other. There is a great harmony of temper, a liking to each other, which is, I think, a true foundation for happiness. Compliments from all here attend you.

I am, SIR,

Your most affectionate humble servant,

OXFORD.

The two boys are very well.

Pray let me hear from you soon, and let me know, under your own hand, how you do.

On Sir Robert Walpole, by Bishop Atterbury.

Three Frenchmen, grateful in their way,
Sir Robert's glory would display,
Studious by sister arts t' advance,
The honour of a friend of France ;
They consecrate to Walpole's fame,
Picture, and verse, and anagram.
With mottos quaint the print they dress,
With snakes, with rocks, with goddeses.
Their lines beneath the subject fit,
As well for quantity, as wit.
Thy glory, Walpole, thus enroll'd,
E'en foes delighted may behold.
For ever sacred be to thee,
Such sculpture, and such poetry.

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