J. H. Moldenhauer

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New York

1932

# LETTERS OF JOHN WESLEY

Photo Emery Walker

*John Wesley*

AETAT CIRCA 50

*From the bust by Roubiliac in the National Portrait Gallery*

## JOHN WESLEY

In those clear, piercing eyes behold
The very soul that over England flamed!
Deep, pure, intense; consuming shame and ill;
Convicting men of sin; making faith live;
And—this the mightiest miracle of all,—
Creating God again in human hearts.
Let not that image fade
Ever, O God! from out the minds of men,
Of him Thy messenger and stainless priest,
In a brute, sodden and unfaithful time
Early and late, o'er land and sea on-driven;
In youth, in eager manhood, age extreme,—
Driven on forever, back and forth the world,
By that divine, omnipotent desire—
The hunger and the passion for men's souls.

RICHARD WATSON GILDER, 'John Wesley.'

# LETTERS OF
# JOHN WESLEY

A SELECTION OF IMPORTANT AND NEW LETTERS WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES BY

GEORGE EAYRS, F.R.HIST.S.

WITH A CHAPTER ON

## Wesley, His Times and Work

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL
K.C., M.P.

A PORTRAIT OF WESLEY AND LETTERS IN FACSIMILE

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO
1915

TO

THE DEAR AND SACRED MEMORY OF

MY MOTHER

A MYSTIC AND A METHODIST

WHO CONQUERED LIKE WESLEY

BY PRAYER AND HOLY SONG

# PREFACE

JOHN WESLEY wrote many letters. Some thousands of them have been traced; doubtless more are in existence. Many of his letters are short and unimportant. The perusal of them all is a task which would be essayed by few, albeit everything is interesting which came from the hand of 'the St. John of England,' the leader of the evangelical revival of religion in the eighteenth century and the human founder of Methodism, now a world-wide communion of more than thirty millions.

This is the first selection of representative letters by Wesley, and the largest collection of his letters since that given in his works (third edition, 1829), from which many here given are drawn. The letters have been selected from this and other sources on the ground of their representative character, of the importance of the subject-matter, or of the fact that they are new or little known. About seventy of those here given may be regarded as new. They have not been published before, or only in fugitive or private form; they are not accessible in the great Public Libraries. Of many of them no note is taken in works on Wesley. These 'new' letters are marked *N* in the list of dates, titles, and sources of letters given on page xix. Among them are some of the finest letters Wesley ever wrote. Many other

letters are here more completely given than hitherto. A letter to his mother (page 44) is thus doubled in length.

Genuine letters by Wesley are now supported by several degrees of authenticity. Some are holograph, wholly written in his handwriting, and they also bear marks of passage through the post, or reception by those to whom he sent them. His handwriting was clear, pretty, scholarly, and quite distinctive all through his life, as is shown by the facsimiles here given of letters written by him when he was thirty-one, sixty-four, and eighty-four years of age respectively (see pages 64, 400, 464). Of other letters which he wrote, Wesley made and kept a draft in each case. This he endorsed. Other drafts, or copies of his letters, were made by his helpers, some of whom imitated his handwriting very closely and his free use of capital letters (see pages 53 and 99). Some of these drafts or copies Wesley endorsed. This is the case with his famous letter to Pitt (see page 483). Other drafts and copies exist without his endorsement. The text of these has the authority of his characteristic composition or of publication during his lifetime by those who had the originals, some of which cannot now be traced. Letters of all these values are here given. The genuineness of them all is undoubted.

It was from the Rev. James Everett that the Rev. Luke Tyerman received many Wesley letters and other materials which made his *Life of Wesley* a storehouse to which all subsequent writers on the subject are indebted. From it I have drawn some letters. But Everett did not part with all his Wesleyana. Amongst treasures retained was a volume containing holograph letters by Wesley and

others, 'The Everett Collection,' which I have here used. Some years ago the late venerable and beloved Rev. Edward Boaden handed to me for use, according to my discretion, other Everett manuscripts, his diary (used in part in his Life by Rev. R. Chew issued by the present Publishers), and many letters, etc., some of even tragic interest, as all who know Everett's skill as a literary collector and the part he played in Methodist history in the last century will understand. Some of these materials were used by me in *A New History of Methodism.* Others are used here. Other new letters are from the unique Colman Collection, and from other sources acknowledged in the list or in the text.

With these helps, Wesley's letters to his most intimate lay friend Ebenezer Blackwell and also those to Wesley's most distinguished follower in Scotland, Lady Maxwell, are given more completely than ever before. The letters to his chief preachers and to eccentric Thomas Wride and others, many of them new letters, are typical of a host of such which he dispatched to his helpers as they changed the face of England. Few readers will omit his letters, some of them little known, to young people and to public men. The chapter of letters to American and Canadian Methodists gives together for the first time, and with important additions, Wesley's messages to those lands in which his followers were to become so numerous.

Volumes of letters are unwelcome to some because they take too much for granted on the part of readers. It is hoped that the introductory chapters to the letters, and the explanatory paragraphs given with separate letters

or groups of them, will remove this difficulty. Without these 'elucidations,' as Carlyle styles them in his *Letters of Oliver Cromwell*, letters may not mean much except to the expert. It may be added that the substance of these introductions was given as lectures in the United States and Canada in the Autumn of 1914. One found that the interest in Wesley is undying; and it grows. The titles here given to the letters are culled from them. They often indicate the chief topic, or give a Wesley counsel or command.

The chapter on Wesley and his Times and Work, by the Right Honourable Augustine Birrell, K.C., M.P., sets Wesley before us in quite an inimitable way. I am greatly indebted to Mr. Birrell for permission to use it, and for the important additions made to it. With characteristic kindness he had promised me to give an address on Wesley in the United Methodist Church, Milk Street, Bristol, but he was prevented from so doing.

My cordial thanks are due to several friends for ready access to private collections of Wesley manuscripts. I must name Mr. and Mrs. Russell J. Colman of Norwich, and their representative, Mr. Alexander W. Newman; Past Principal the Rev. Thomas Sherwood, the Rev. Principal David Brook, M.A., D.C.L., and the Rev. W. H. Cory Harris, Secretary of Victoria Park United Methodist College, Manchester, for the loan of the Everett Collection; and the Rev. J. S. Clemens, B.A., D.D., Governor of the United Methodist College, Ranmoor, Sheffield. The facsimile letters given are from the Colman and Everett Collections. Some Wesley letters from the Moravian

archives, Fetter Lane, London, of which I was courteously permitted the use for *Wesley and Kingswood and the Free Churches*, have again been used.

For permission to copy letters in the great Public Libraries, and for much courtesy received while doing so, I am indebted to the Keeper of Manuscripts, British Museum, London; the Librarian of the Bodleian Library, Oxford; Mr. A. E. Guppy, M.A., of the John Rylands Library, Manchester; and the Keeper of the Manuscripts, Public Library, Copley Square, Boston, U.S.A. The President (the Rev. E. S. Tipple, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D.) and Professor J. A. Faulkner, M.A., D.D., of the Drew Methodist Episcopal Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey, U.S.A.; the Chancellor of Victoria College and University, Toronto, Canada (the Rev. R. P. Bowles, M.A., LL.D.), and Professor A. E. Lang, M.A., Librarian, have all laid me under special obligation for their brotherly interest in this work. At Drew and Victoria noble libraries of Methodist manuscripts and literature are being built up of importance to Methodist students in all lands.

A short list of authorities to which I am indebted is given. I gratefully pay my small tribute to the genius, unwearied industry and personal kindness of the late Rev. Nehemiah Curnock, who, with the help of experts, has given us the standard edition of Wesley's *Journal*. Mr. G. H. Leonard, M.A., Professor of Modern History in Bristol University, greatly heartened me as he saw this work in progress. My nephew, the Rev. A. J. G. Seaton, B.D., Superintendent of Edinburgh Wesleyan Mission, has helped me to some facts concerning Lady Maxwell. The Rev.

William Wakinshaw, and the Rev. Archibald Harrison, B.D., B.Sc., of Bristol, have rendered the costly kindness of reading the work in proof, and they and the Rev. Thomas E. Brigden have offered valuable suggestions. Mr. Leonard J. Snook and our daughter, Winifred, have rendered much clerical assistance. Our son Charles has helped also. Notwithstanding all this kind help, and my best endeavours, I cannot hope that in dealing with all the material and facts involved in this work I have avoided all mistakes. For these I ask pardon. The kind patience of the Publishers, for whom, soon after the publication of the *History* named above, I undertook this task, must also be acknowledged. To that work this is in some ways a supplemental volume.

In her delightful work *The Old Testament in Life and Literature*, Miss J. T. Stoddart quotes Luther's saying that 'No one can understand Cicero's Letters unless he has been engaged for twenty-five years in a great commonwealth.' More than that number of years ago I became one among the thousands of preachers who serve the commonwealth of Methodism. I was drawn into wondering admiration of Wesley and his work, and began to feel the spell and stimulus of his character. Since then, helped by many whom I hold in grateful remembrance, I have learned to think of him, not as he is often regarded and represented, as immaculate, a plaster saint, and almost infallible, but far otherwise: as a young growing man, struggling, sinning, sorrowing, praying, moving upward and onward by Divine help; as in his later days mounting to self-mastery and shining serenity; as high and lifted up, a genius and a

dedicated spirit, but also a creature not too bright and good to be followed afar off, in so far as he followed Christ, by the humblest. His strong, gravely beautiful face looks down upon me in many forms from my study walls, and he seems to sing his living and dying faith, mingled of humility and confidence:

> 'I the chief of sinners am,
> But Jesus died for me,'

and anon to utter one of his golden counsels: 'Never be unemployed; never be triflingly employed; never while away time.'

G. E.

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*A Selection from the Letters of John Wesl*

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## CHAPTER IX



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## CHAPTER XI



## CHAPTER XII

# LIST OF JOHN WESLEY'S LETTERS GIVEN IN THIS VOLUME, IN ORDER OF THEIR DATE, WITH TITLES, AND SOURCES OF LETTERS, AND SOME AUTHORITIES USED.

## I

## LIST OF LETTERS

*N indicates that the letter is new or little known.*

| DATE | TITLE IN THE TEXT | SOURCE OF LETTER | PAGE IN THIS VOL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1725 | | | |
| June 18. | Bishop Taylor says, 'Whether God has forgiven us or no, we know not,' | *Works* | 40 |
| 1727 | | | |
| January. | Curiosity . . . if we had half a dozen centuries of life to come, . | ,, | 42 |
| Mar. 19. | Implant what habits I would before the flexibility of youth be over, . | Colman Coll. | 44 |
| [July 18. | A letter from Wesley's father, . | Everett Coll.] | 48 |
| 1731 | | | |
| June 11. | Our little company [the Oxford Methodists] is shrunk into almost none at all, . . . . . | *Works* | 50 |
| 1733 | | | |
| June 13. | Diminution of fortune, friends, and reputation, . . . . . | ,, | 52 |
| 1734/5 | | | |
| ? N Jan. 13. | The subject of Christian liberty, . (In facsimile also; see page 64.) | Colman Coll. | 53 |

# LIST OF WESLEY'S LETTERS

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# LIST OF WESLEY'S LETTERS

| DATE | TITLE IN THE TEXT | SOURCE OF LETTER | PAGE IN THIS VOL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1756 | | | |
| Feb. 18. | I would engage to take any person, and teach him in seven years, . | *U.M.F.C. Magazine*, 1866 | 425 |
| ,, 21. | Never write to that person at all, nor of her, . . . . . | ,, | 427 |
| Mar. 1. | I will do what a good subject ought, | *Works* | 331 |
| ,, ,, | An offer of raising a company of volunteers, . . . . . | *Life* | 470 |
| ,, 4. | Some way of managing elections without embittering Englishmen, . | *Works* | 331 |
| ,, 14. | Fight, Sammy, fight! . . . . | *U.M.F.C. Magazine*, 1866 | 427 |
| Apr. 16. | Are you stark, staring mad? . . | ,, | 428 |
| ,, 19. | All here are as safe as if they were already in Paradise, . . . | *Works* | 332 |
| 1757 | | | |
| *N* Jan. 8. | All is best, . . . . . | Everett Coll. | 220 |
| May 28. | Business that will endure, . . | *Works* | 333 |
| ,, 30. | Not delivered till I was gone, lest you should think I wanted anything, . . . . . | Colman Coll. | 455 |
| Sept. 20. | The unspeakable advantages which the Methodists enjoy in regard to public worship, . . . . | *Works* | 113 |
| 1758 | | | |
| June 5. | The letters I received were open, . | ,, | 335 |
| July 12. | So eloquent *a Person* at your elbow, | ,, | 336 |
| 1759 | | | |
| Mar. 2. | I do not speak: it would be lost labour, . . . . . | Colman Coll. | 337 |
| [ ,, —. | Blackwell's reply to Wesley, . . | ,, ] | 338 |
| ,, 12. | We are at present upon pretty good terms, . . . . . | *Works* | 340 |

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# LIST OF WESLEY'S LETTERS

| DATE | TITLE IN THE TEXT | SOURCE OF LETTER | PAGE IN THIS VOL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1771 | | | |
| Jan. 24. | I never preach in a controversial way, . . . . . | *Works* | 409 |
| *N* Feb. 14. | Labour to be steadily serious, weighty in conversation, and to walk humbly and closely with God, . | Everett Coll. | 185 |
| ,, 26. | The preachers . . . felt a damp upon their spirits, . . . . . | *Works* | 411 |
| May 28. | The Bible gives us no authority to think ill of any one, . . . . | ,, | 449 |
| June 13. | Your having an extraordinary call, . | ,, | 360 |
| *N* ,, 23. | Let all that were of the Church keep to the Church, . . . . . | Everett Coll. | 186 |
| July 13. | There may be self-approbation which is not sin, . . . . . | *Works* | 451 |
| *N* Sept. 7. | Be zealous, serious, active, . . | Everett Coll. | 186 |
| 1772 | | | |
| Feb. 1. | I am going to America to turn Bishop, . . . . . | *Works* | 278 |
| ,, 8. | Easier to lose love than to find truth, . . . . . | ,, | 412 |
| *N* April 3. | The second blessing . . . receivable in a moment, . . . . . | See text | 224 |
| *N* June 30. | Be exact in everything, . . . | Everett Coll. | 187 |
| July 18. | Whoever undertakes to baptize is excluded, . . . . . | *U.M.F.C. Magazine,* 1862 | 229 |
| *N* Nov. 5. | Suffer none to ride over your head. Only be mild, . . . . . | Everett Coll. | 187 |
| *N* Dec. 16. | Miss no congregation, at the peril of his life, . . . . . | ,, | 188 |
| 1773 | | | |
| Jan. —. | Thou art the man ! . . . . . | *Works* | 141 |
| Mar. —. | I let you loose on the great continent of America, . . . . . | ,, | 244 |
| *N* April 15. | Pay . . . what is due to him, . . | Everett Coll. | 188 |

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| DATE | TITLE IN THE TEXT | SOURCE OF LETTER | PAGE IN THIS VOL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1783 | | | |
| *N* Jan. 16. | Should trustees place and displace preachers? . . . . . | Everett Coll. | 130 |
| ,, 16. | We shall not build any more in haste, . . . . . | *Life* | 210 |
| *N* Feb. 25. | Enlarge the house. . . . Remember, light enough and air enough, . | Everett Coll. | 211 |
| ,, 26. | I have great hopes we shall then be able to send you assistance, . . . . . | *Life* | 259 |
| Mar. 16. | One of our sisters here told us a particular dream, . . . . | ,, | 375 |
| ,, 25. | Tell Brother Ridel not to please the Devil by preaching himself to death, . . . . . | British Museum, London | 166 |
| April 21. | Your kind reproof. . . . I cannot write without tears, . . . | *Life* | 460 |
| *N* ,, 26. | Do all you can during this precious season, . . . . . | Everett Coll. | 211 |
| *N* June 5. | According to the printed *Minutes*, . | ,, | 212 |
| July 13. | Swift increase is generally followed by decrease equally swift, . . | *Life* | 260 |
| *N* Dec. 24. | Concerning the building of preaching-houses, . . . . . | Everett Coll. | 212 |
| 1784 | | | |
| Jan. 10. | When I was young I had abundance of infirmities, . . . . . | *Life* | 455 |
| *N* ,, 12. | The books, . . . . . | Everett Coll. | 213 |
| *N* Mar. 4. | Talk against the Church, . . | Drew Seminary, Madison, New Jersey | 232 |
| May 11. | See that ye fall not out by the way, . . . . . | *Life* | 261 |
| Aug. 19. | If you are not born of God, you are of no Church, . . . . . | C. Wesley's *Life* | 443 |
| *N* Aug. 30. | The preachers going to America, . | Everett Coll. | 213 |

# LIST OF WESLEY'S LETTERS

| DATE | TITLE IN THE TEXT | SOURCE OF LETTER | PAGE IN THIS VOL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1784 | | | |
| Sept. 6. | New taxes . . . smuggling villains, the Distillery . . . that scandal of the English nation—suicide, . | *Life* | 483 |
| Sept. 10. | My scruples are at an end . . . I violate no order by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest, . . . . . | *Works* | 263 |
| Oct. 15. | Is it not advisable that you act by united counsels? . . . . | *Life* | 265 |
| *N* ,, 31. | It might be productive of much good, . . . . . | See text | 226 |
| 1785 | | | |
| Feb. 15. | Make the opportunities that you cannot find, . . . . . | *Works* | 171 |
| ,, 25. | Go on. You shall want no assistance, . . . . . | ,, | 266 |
| April 7. | I leave these my last words with you, . . . . . | ,, | 132 |
| *N* ,, ,, | I would not employ an Apostle if he could not preach in the morning, . . . . . | Everett Coll. | 214 |
| May 6. | If he sells bread on the Lord's Day, . | *Arminian (B.C.) Magazine*, 1827 | 227 |
| June 16. | The English Methodists do not roll in money like many of the American Methodists, . . . . . | *Works* | 268 |
| ,, 26. | I am become, I know not how, an honourable man, . . . . | ,, | 380 |
| *N* July 8. | I desire you to come to the Conference, . . . . . | Everett Coll. | 197 |
| Aug. 19. | I firmly believe I am a scriptural bishop as much as any man in England, . . . . . | *Works* | 90 |
| *N* Sept. 5. | Disappoint those who wait for your halting, . . . . . | Everett Coll. | 198 |
| *N* ,, 16. | Those doggerel verses, . . . . | ,, | 198 |

# LIST OF WESLEY'S LETTERS

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| DATE | TITLE IN THE TEXT | SOURCE OF LETTER | PAGE IN THIS VOL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1787 | | | |
| July 3. | A manifestation few are favoured with, . . . . . | *Works* | 415 |
| ,, 16. | You do not send me your Journal yet, . . . . . | ,, | 274 |
| Sept. 26. | Guard your flock, . . . . . | *Life* | 275 |
| Oct. 20. | I, not you, will judge, . . . . | *Works* | 172 |
| Dec. 11. | Distilled liquors . . . I would banish them out of the world, . | *U.M.F.C. Mag.*, 1862 | 217 |
| Dec. —. | I will engage to eat it! . . . | *Works* | 165 |
| 1788 | | | |
| *N* Feb. 29. | That young man who neglects the Lord's Supper, . . . . . | Victoria Coll., Toronto | 230 |
| *N* Mar. 8. | In travelling up and down you will want a little money, . . . | See text | 364 |
| ,, 19. | The case of those poor demoniacs, . | *Life* | 276 |
| May 16. | Thus far only I could go, . . | ,, | 181 |
| ,, 28. | Many of the genteeler sort. You have a particular mission to these, . . . . . | *Works* | 376 |
| June 3. | These calculations are far above, out of my sight, . . . . . | Rylands Library, Manchester | 153 |
| ,, 30. | The work . . . seems to lie nearer my heart, . . . . . | *Works* | 277 |
| July 30. | By whom shall the preachers be judged? . . . . . | *Life* | 131 |
| Aug. 3. | The itinerant plan. . . . Oh do not hide that you are a Methodist, . | *Works* | 417 |
| Sept. 20. | You are the elder brother of the American Methodists: I am, under God, the father of the whole family, . . . . . | ,, | 279 |
| ,, 30. | Throw that money into the sea, . | ,, | 418 |
| *N* Oct. 31. | You are called to marry, . . | Rylands Library | 228 |
| Nov. 16. | You should not wear the surplice . . . any more, . . . . . | Everett Coll. | 214 |

# LIST OF WESLEY'S LETTERS

# LIST OF WESLEY'S LETTERS

| DATE | TITLE IN THE TEXT | SOURCE OF LETTER | PAGE IN THIS VOL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1790 | | | |
| Sept. 9. | I followed one rule: You must either bend or break, . . . | *Works* | 179 |
| ,, 15. | This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists, . . | ,, | 173 |
| Nov. 4. | The day after you receive this, go. . . . Sick or well, go! . . . | ,, | 369 |
| 1790/1 | | | |
| [No date.] | Think and let think, . . . . | ,, | 135 |
| Feb. 1. | Declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world, . . . . . | ,, | 286 |
| ,, 13. | Kill your enemies? They'll die of themselves if you let them alone, . | *U.M.F.C. Magazine*, 1862 | 217 |
| ,, 24. | Opposing that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature, . | *Life* | 489 |

## II

## SOURCES OF LETTERS CITED ABOVE, AND SOME AUTHORITIES USED

Colman Coll.—Collection of Wesley Papers in the possession of Russell J. Colman, Esq., D.L., J.P., Norwich.

Everett Coll.—Collection of Autograph Wesley and other Letters (made by the Rev. James Everett), now in the United Methodist College, Victoria Park, Manchester.

Moravian Coll.—Wesley and other Letters in the archives of the Moravian Publication Office, Fetter Lane, London.

*Works.—Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* Third edition. Edited by Thomas Jackson. 14 volumes, 1829-31.

# LIST OF WESLEY'S LETTERS

*Life.—Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.* By the Rev. L. Tyerman. Sixth edition. 3 volumes, 1890.

C. Wesley's *Life.—Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A.* By Thomas Jackson. 2 volumes, 1841.

*The Works of John and Charles Wesley: A Bibliography.* By the Rev. Richard Green. Second edition, 1906.

*Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* Edited by Nehemiah Curnock, assisted by Experts. 8 volumes, 1909-

*Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society.* Privately published. Volumes I.-IX.

*A New History of Methodism.* Edited by W. J. Townsend, D.D., H. B. Workman, M.A., D.Lit., and George Eayrs, F.R.Hist.S. With a Bibliography. 2 volumes, 1909.

# INTRODUCTORY NOTE

WESLEY'S Letters rank with his famous *Journal* and Diaries as chronicles of his work and revelations of his character. As the human founder of the Methodists, the largest Protestant community in the world, he had extraordinary influence in the British Isles and America, even in his lifetime. He was a general in religious matters, and his army of preachers and followers was largely controlled by his short, sharp letters, which ring like an officer's orders. He was also to many thousands a director and shepherd of spirit, soul, and body. Counsels on the most momentous and the most trivial affairs of life are given. And while he gives counsel, he asks it also. Here are long and intimate Letters to his most valued lay friend, to whom he confided his troubles concerning his utterly unsuitable wife; to lady friends; to the king and his ministers, and some of the best-known people of his time; and to those who, but for his Letters, would never have been heard of half a mile from home.

How versatile he was! He intermeddled with all knowledge. Besides unnumbered Letters about Methodism, his Letters deal with the Church, the State and its Taxes, Trade and Economics, Social Questions, Slavery, Education, Health, Sleep, Medicine, Literary Style, and Publishing. These and other of his many interests come before us in the representative Letters here given.

Some account is given in Book I. of Wesley the Man,

his time and its conditions, his work and character; his life is also given in outline. As he reads these representative Letters, grouped according to their main purpose, or received by this or that correspondent, the reader will link the Letters with the years and events of Wesley's life, and recall as he reads, some impression of the form and manner of their writer.

The reproduction herein of some of his Letters in facsimile, and of an authentic likeness of him, will further help to place us by the side of him who wrote and of those who first read these Letters.

# BOOK I

## JOHN WESLEY AND HIS LETTERS

Wesley has at last come into the kingdom of his fame. The most splendid compliments paid to him to-day come, not from those inside the Church he founded, but from those outside it. Leslie Stephen describes Wesley as the greatest captain of men of his century. Macaulay ridicules those writers of 'books called histories of England' who failed to see that amongst the events which have determined that history is the rise of Methodism. Wesley, he says, had 'a genius for government not inferior to that of Richelieu'; Matthew Arnold gives nobler praise when he says he had 'a genius for godliness.' Southey, who wrote Wesley's life without in the least understanding Wesley's secret, asserts him to be 'the most influential mind of the last century; the man who will have produced the greatest effects, centuries or perhaps millenniums hence, if the present race of men shall so long continue.' Buckle calls him 'the first of ecclesiastical statesmen.' Lecky says that the humble meeting in Aldersgate Street when Wesley was converted 'forms an epoch in English history'; and he adds that the religious revolution begun in England by the preaching of the Wesleys is 'of greater historic importance than all the splendid victories by land and sea won under Pitt.' Wesley, he holds, was one of the chief forces that saved England from a revolution such as France knew. England, in a word, is as truly interested in Wesley as in Shakespeare.

W. H. FITCHETT.

# CHAPTER I

## THE MAN, JOHN WESLEY

### 'The Little Trim Gentleman.'

JOHN WESLEY according to the flesh was, like all the Wesleys, short in stature and slight in build. At manhood his height was only five feet five inches; his weight was one hundred and twenty-two pounds, and so remained for many years. His appearance was singularly impressive. The peculiar composure of his countenance showed him to be no common man. In youth his black (dark brown) hair, quite smooth, and parted very exactly at the front, was long, and reached almost to his shoulders. It became silvery white in his old age. After an illness, when seventy-two, he wore a wig, as represented in his later portraits. He wore the professional three-cornered hat of the period. When preaching, whether in a building or in the open air, he always wore the black gown and bands of a clergyman.

A full pen portrait of Wesley was given by one of his preachers, John Hampson, Jun. He knew him intimately, and published his skilful delineation in the year of Wesley's death, while quick memories could attest or correct it. Phrases are often quoted from it. In its entirety it is the most complete and vivid contemporary description of Wesley in existence.[1]

### A Pen Portrait.

'The figure of Mr. Wesley was remarkable. His stature was of the lowest: his habit of body in every period of life

[1] In part it may be compared with the skilful study of Wesley's features, by the late Rev. Richard Green, as given in the fine Williams portrait of him. See *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i., frontispiece, and p. 204.

the reverse of corpulent, and expressive of strict temperance and continual exercise: and, notwithstanding his small size, his step was firm and his appearance, till within a few years of his death, vigorous and muscular. His face, for an old man, was one of the finest we have seen. A clear, smooth forehead, an aquiline nose, an eye the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived, and a freshness of complexion scarcely ever to be found at his years, and expressive of the most perfect health, conspired to render him a venerable and interesting figure. Few have seen him without being struck with his appearance; and many who had been greatly prejudiced against him have been known to change their opinion the moment they were introduced into his presence. In his countenance and demeanour there was a cheerfulness mingled with gravity; a sprightliness which was the natural result of an unusual flow of spirits, and was yet accompanied by every mark of the most serene tranquillity. His aspect, particularly in profile, had a strong character of acuteness and penetration. In dress he was a pattern of neatness and simplicity. A narrow plaited stock, a coat with a small upright collar, no buckles at his knees, no silk or velvet in any part of his apparel, and a head as white as snow, gave an idea of something primitive and apostolical, while an air of neatness and cleanliness was diffused over his whole person. His rank as a preacher is pretty generally understood. His attitude in the pulpit was graceful and easy, his action calm and natural, yet pleasing and expressive: his voice not loud, but clear and manly; his style neat, simple, perspicuous, and admirably adapted to the capacity of his hearers.'

From Wesley's Itinerary[1] it may be gathered that he travelled two hundred and fifty thousand miles in his ministrations, during which he preached forty thousand times. In early life he was a great walker. His later and longer journeys were performed on horseback. Often he used the stage-coach, 'the machine' as he calls it, the 'diligence,' or post-chaise. When he was sixty-three years of age, a carriage and pair was presented to him. He must be pictured for

[1] Wesley Historical Society publication.

many thousands of hours riding on highways and byways, the reins lying loose on his horse's neck, while his hands hold up a book to his eyes, as he was near-sighted. At his next halting-place his ever-ready pen will exercise itself on that book in commendation, sharp criticism, or condensation for his followers; other literary matter or these letters will be written, or the thousand and one tasks of a shepherd of souls and bodies will engage him. But 'who besides Wesley ever turned the saddle and the open road and the changing English skies into a permanent study'? The door of one side of his coach was nailed up, and on the inside were shelves filled with books. Attached to the front of the coach was a board which was let down and used as a desk.

## His Service and its Secret.

Incessantly travelling, preaching, organising, he yet found time to write two hundred and thirty original works, great and small. One hundred works were extracted and edited, and thousands of letters were written, from which these are selected. In his young manhood hindered by alternate liveliness or moroseness, idleness, and even untruthfulness, recorded in cipher in his diary with many a sigh and cry for mercy,[1] he was renewed by the Holy Spirit in the inward man, and by self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control was brought to sovran power and tireless industry. 'Leisure and I have taken leave of one another,' he declared; and, 'though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry.' He claimed England afresh for God, and looked upon all the world as his parish.[2]

## 'A Little, Frail, Dyspeptic, Consumptive Body.'

It is a bad mistake to suppose that Wesley worked easily, or had the advantage of an iron constitution. The opposite is the fact. He began life ill-equipped, as is said above in Mr. Curnock's words. His record must be viewed in the light of his care, development, and conquest of a weak body.

[1] See his *Journal*, Standard edition, vol. i. p. 54.

[2] For his life and work and their immediate, subsequent, and world-wide results see *A New History of Methodism*.

The fifteenth child of his parents, he was so delicate that his father baptized him on the day of his birth, and commanded him to run a mile every day for health's sake when at school. His nose and lungs bled frequently while he was at Oxford. His *Journal* tells that he had smallpox when a child, a fever at thirty-eight, and twice later. At fifty-one he was so near death by consumption that he wrote his own epitaph—'To avoid vile panegyric.' He suffered often from cramp and what he calls 'a flux.' When over seventy he underwent a surgical operation, and in June 1775 he was for days 'more dead than alive.' Although very active and abstemious, he suffered from gout, of which his father was frequently ill and his mother died, and was attacked by it nine or ten times in thirty years. That he lived to be eighty-eight and made such an extraordinary record of service are proofs of divine assistance united with rare common sense, restraint, patience, and determination. He won his laurels by means which all may use.

## Praying always, with all Prayer.

The secret of these victories by Wesley in the inner and the outer world alike is disclosed in his diaries[1] and these Letters. It was prayer and communion with God. Among his early resolves were these: 'To dedicate an hour, morning and evening; No Excuse, Reason or Pretence'; 'To pray every hour, seriously, deliberately, fervently.' We can trace his frequent, almost literal, fulfilment of these vows. Alike in years far apart as 1738 and 1782, day after day, the first item in the almost hourly record is 'Prayed.' It recurs four, six, or more times, and it closes the busy day's account. The other frequent item is 'Singing.' On some days he sang eight times.

These Letters show him at prayer for others also, and he urges them to use the same weapon—All-prayer.

Of Wesley's life, times, and work, and his character, Mr. Birrell writes in his brilliant, inimitable style in the next chapter.

[1] *Journal*, vol. i. p. 125; vol. vi. pp. 370, 379, 493.

# CHAPTER II

## JOHN WESLEY, HIS TIMES AND WORK

By the Right Honourable Augustine Birrell, K.C., M.P.

### The Strenuous Worker of the Eighteenth Century.

John Wesley, born as he was in 1703, and dying as he did in 1791, covered as nearly as mortal man may the whole of the eighteenth century, of which he was one of the most typical figures, and certainly the most strenuous. He began his published *Journal* on October 14, 1735, and its last entry is under date Sunday, October 24, 1790, when in the morning he explained to a numerous congregation in Spitalfields Church 'The Whole Armour of God,' and in the afternoon enforced to a still larger audience in St. Paul's, Shadwell, the great truth, 'One Thing is Needful,' the last words of the *Journal* being: 'I hope many even then resolved to choose the better part.'

Between these two Octobers there lies the most amazing record of human exertion ever penned or endured.

Here is a summary of a week's work in 1777.[1] His age is seventy-four. On Friday, May 9, he rides from Osmotherly, fifteen miles, to Malton, Yorkshire, suffering at intervals from ague. He preaches. Having heard that E. Ritchie is ill, he sets out after the service and reaches Otley, forty-eight miles away, at four o'clock Saturday morning. After seeing the invalid he rides back to Malton, having as he says ridden between ninety and a hundred miles. He rests an hour and then rides twenty-two miles to Scarborough, and preaches in the evening. On Sunday morning

[1] Rev. T. E. Brigden in *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. p. 217.

he is shaking with fever. He lies between blankets, drinks hot lemonade, perspires, and sleeps for half an hour. Then he rises up and preaches. After this he meets the Society. On Monday he is preaching at Bridlington. On Tuesday he preaches at Beverley in the morning and at Hull at night, having ridden thirty-six miles that day. On Wednesday he rides twenty-six miles to Pocklington, preaches, rides twelve miles farther to York, and preaches again. He admits that he feels his 'breast out of order,' and would gladly rest. But he is expected at Tadcaster. He starts at 9 a.m. on Thursday in a chaise, which breaks down. He borrows a lively horse whose movements, he says, electrify him and feels better. He preaches, and that same night he returns twelve miles to York. The next day he 'took the diligence' for London. Such had been Wesley's weekly tale of work for thirty-eight years, as his *Journal* shows. And it minimises the facts. This is seen when it is compared with his private diaries and sermon register. His day began at four or six o'clock in the morning, often earlier than the former, and lasted until ten or half-past eleven. Every hour and half-hour is accounted for, used, and filled. He gave an exposition of Scripture to every company, small or large, that he met. The register shows that he frequently gave six, nine, or twelve such expositions in a day. On Sunday, November 5, 1752, he seems to have used the almost incredible number of nineteen different Scripture portions in this way.[1]

## A Fifty Years' Campaign.

I do not know whether I am likely to have among my readers any one who has ever contested an English or Scottish county in a Parliamentary election since household suffrage. If I have, that tired soul will know how severe is the strain of its three weeks, and how impossible it seems at the end of the first week that you should be able to keep it going for another fortnight, and how when the last night arrived you felt that had the strife been accidentally prolonged another

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. ; vol. iv. pp. 2, 47.

seven days you must have perished by the wayside. Well, John Wesley contested the three kingdoms in the cause of Christ during a campaign which lasted fifty years. He did it for the most part on horseback. He paid more turnpikes than any man who ever bestrode a beast. Eight thousand miles was his annual record for many a long year, during each of which he seldom preached less frequently than a thousand times. Had he but preserved his scores at all the inns where he lodged they would have made by themselves a history of prices. And throughout it all he never knew what depression of spirits meant, though he had much to try him—suits in Chancery and a jealous wife.

## The Itinerant Evangelist.

In the course of this unparalleled contest Wesley visited again and again the most out-of-the-way districts, the remotest corners of England—places which to-day lie far removed even from the searcher after the picturesque. Even now, when the map of England looks like a gridiron of railways, none but the sturdiest of pedestrians, the most determined of cyclists, can retrace the steps of Wesley and his horse and stand by the rocks and the natural amphitheatres in Cornwall and in Northumberland, in Lancashire and Berkshire, where he preached his Gospel to the heathen. Exertion so prolonged, enthusiasm so sustained, argues a remarkable man, while the organisation he created, the system he founded, the view of life he promulgated, is still a great fact among us. No other name than Wesley's lies embalmed as his does. Yet he is not a popular figure. Our standard historians—save, indeed, Mr. John Richard Green, Mr. Lecky, and lately Mr. Temperley in the *Cambridge Modern History*, have dismissed him curtly. The fact is, Wesley puts your ordinary historian out of conceit with himself. How much easier to weave into your page the gossip of Horace Walpole, to enliven it with a heartless jest of George Selwin's, to make it blush with sad stories of the extravagance of Fox, to embroider it with the rhetoric of Burke, to humanise it with the talk of Johnson, to discuss

the rise and fall of administrations, the growth and decay of constitutions, than to follow John Wesley into the streets of Bristol or on to the bleak moors near Burslem, where he met face to face in all their violence, all their ignorance, and all their generosity, the living men, women, and children who made up the nation!

It has, perhaps, also to be admitted that to found great organisations is to build your tomb. A splendid thing it may be, a veritable sarcophagus, but none the less a tomb. John Wesley's chapels lie a little heavily on John Wesley. Even so do the glories of Rome make us forgetful of the grave in Syria.

It has been said that Wesley's character lacks charm, that mighty antiseptic. It is not easy to define charm, which is not a catalogue of qualities, but a mixture. Let no one deny charm to Wesley who has not read his *Journal*. Southey's Life is a dull, almost a stupid book, which happily there is no need to read. Read the *Journal*, which is a book full of plots and plays and novels, which quivers with life, and is crammed full of character.

## His Ancestry and Parentage.

John Wesley came of a stock which had been much harassed and put about by unhappy religious difficulties. Politics, business, and religion are the three things Englishmen are said to worry themselves about. The Wesleys early took up with religion. John Wesley's great-grandfather and grandfather were both ejected from their livings in 1662, and the grandfather was so bullied and oppressed by the Five Mile Act that he early gave up the ghost, whereupon his remains were refused what is called Christian Burial, though a holier and more primitive man never drew breath.[1] This poor, persecuted spirit left two sons according to the flesh, Matthew and Samuel; and Samuel it was who in his turn became the father of John and Charles Wesley.

Samuel Wesley, though minded to share the lot, hard

[1] See 'Links between the Ejected Clergy of 1662, the Wesleys, and Methodism,' by Mr. Eayrs, in *The Ejectment of 1662 and the Free Churches.*

though that lot was, of his progenitors, had the moderation of mind, the Christian conservatism, perhaps even the disposition to Toryism, which marked the family, and being sent to a Dissenting College, became disgusted with the ferocity and bigotry he happened there to encounter. Those were the days of the Calves' Head Club and feastings on January 29, graceless meals for which Samuel Wesley had no stomach. His turn was for the things that are 'quiet, wise, and good.' He departed from the Dissenting Seminary, and in 1685 entered himself as a poor scholar at Exeter College, Oxford. He brought £2, 6s. with him, and as for prospects he had none. Exeter received him. During the eighteenth century our two Universities, famous despite their faults, were always open to the poor scholar who was ready to subscribe, not to boat clubs or cricket clubs, but to the Thirty-Nine Articles. Three Archbishops of Canterbury during the eighteenth century were the sons of small tradesmen. There was, in fact, much less snobbery and money-worship during the century when the British Empire was being won than during the century when it is being talked about. Samuel Wesley was allowed to remain at Oxford, where he supported himself by devices known to his tribe, and when he left the University to be ordained, he had clear in his pouch, after discharging his few debts, £10, 15s. He had thus made £8, 9s. out of his University, and had his education as it were thrown in for nothing. He soon obtained a curacy in London, and married a daughter of the well-known ejected clergyman Dr. Annesley, about whom you may read in another eighteenth-century book, *The Life and Errors of John Dunton.*

## His Epworth Home.

The mother of the Wesleys was a remarkable woman, though cast in a mould not much to our minds nowadays. She had nineteen children, and greatly prided herself on having taught them, one after another, by frequent chastisements, to — what do you think? — cry softly. She had

theories of education and strength of will, and of arm too, to carry them out. She knew Latin and Greek, and though, as some would say, a stern, forbidding, almost an unfeeling parent, she was successful in winning and retaining, not only the respect, but the affection of such of her huge family as lived to grow up. But out of the nineteen, thirteen early succumbed. Infant mortality was one of the great facts of the eighteenth century, whose Rachels had to learn to cry softly over their dead babes. The mother of the Wesleys thought more of her children's souls than of their bodies.

The revolution of 1688 threatened to disturb the early married life of Samuel Wesley and his spouse. The husband wrote a pamphlet in which he defended revolution principles, but the wife secretly adhered to the old cause; nor was it until a year before Dutch William's death that the Rector made the discovery that the wife of his bosom, who had sworn to obey him and regard him as her overlord, was not in the habit of saying 'Amen' to his fervent prayers on behalf of his suffering sovereign. An explanation was demanded and the truth extracted, namely, that in the opinion of the Rector's wife her true king lived over the water. The Rector at once refused to live with Mrs. Wesley any longer until she recanted. This she refused to do, and for a twelvemonth the couple dwelt apart, when William III. having the good sense to die, a reconciliation became possible. If John Wesley was occasionally a little pig-headed, need one wonder? The story of the fire at Epworth Rectory and the miraculous escape of the infant John was once a tale as well known as Alfred in the neatherd's hut, and pictures of it still hang up in many a collier's home.

## Scholar, Gentleman, Clergyman.

John Wesley received a sound classical education at Charterhouse and Christ Church, and remained all his life very much the scholar and the gentleman. The name Wesley is a shortened form of Wellesley. Arthur Wellesley, the great Duke of Wellington, belonged to a collateral

branch of the same family.[1] No company was too good for John Wesley, and nobody knew better than he did that had he cared to carry his powerful intelligence, his flawless constitution, and his infinite capacity for taking pains into any of the markets of the world, he must have earned for himself place, fame, and fortune.

Coming, however, as he did of a theological stock, having a saint for a father and a notable devout woman for a mother, Wesley from his early days learned to regard religion as the business of his life, just as the younger Pitt came to regard the House of Commons as the future theatre of his actions. After a good deal of heart-searching and theological talk with his mother, Wesley was ordained a deacon by the excellent Potter, afterward Primate, but then (1725) Bishop of Oxford. In the following year Wesley was elected a Fellow of Lincoln, to the great delight of his father. 'Whatever I am,' said the good old man, 'my Jack is Fellow of Lincoln.'[2]

## The Course of Church History: Elizabeth.

In trying to form even a glimmering idea of the state of the Church of England in 1725, when Wesley took orders, there are some incidents in its past history which must not be overlooked. I mean its repeated purgings. Evictions are, of course, of frequent occurrence in all Church histories, but the Church of England has been peculiarly unlucky in this respect. Let me, in a handful of sentences, recall the facts. I pass over the puzzling and unedifying events of King Henry VIII.'s time, the Protestant rule of his short-lived son, the frank Romanism of his eldest daughter, and begin with Elizabeth, who succeeded in November 1558. Crowned though she was according to the Catholic ceremonial, including the unction and the Pontifical Mass, it appears to have been well understood by those in high places that England having got a new master, must be prepared once

[1] Wesley's pedigree is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS. Eng. Lang. d. 20).

[2] See his letter on page 48.

more for new men and new measures. They were indeed strange times. Can it be that the country did not care about the continuity of its Church? The Act of Supremacy soon made its appearance, annexing to the Crown all jurisdictions, spiritual and ecclesiastical, for the visitation and reformation of the ecclesiastical state and persons, and of all errors, heresies, and schisms. The inevitable oath was directed to be taken under the usual penalties—first, loss of property, then loss of life. When Queen Mary died there were but fifteen Anglican bishops. Of these, fourteen refused the oath, and were turned neck-and-crop out of their sees. They went away quickly enough, and disappeared into obscurity. Elizabeth called them a set of lazy scamps. We have no evidence that they were anything of the kind. Hardships and indignities were heaped upon them. Some died in prison, others in retirement; one or two escaped abroad. It seems to be the fact that they all died in their beds. They had no mind either to burn or hang. Jeremy Collier gives us, in addition to those fourteen prelates, a list of three bishops-elect, one abbess, four priors, twelve deans, fourteen archdeacons, sixty canons, one hundred priests, all well preferred, fifteen heads of colleges, and about twenty doctors of both faculties—all what one may call stationary people hard to move, who were at this same time deprived of their places, profits, and dignities. It does not seem a great many out of the nine thousand spiritual places in England. Still, to lose its whole hierarchy (except the Bishop of Llandaff) at one blow was a shrewd knock, nor, we may be sure, did the bishops-elect, the deans, the archdeacons and canons, the heads of houses and doctors of divinity, and the one hundred well-preferred priests go out without rendings of the heart and bitter reflections. There were no newspapers to record their emotions or to summarise their losses under the heading 'Crisis in the Church'; but we may be sure they were pious men, sick of shuffles and crowned heads, while of those who remained, who can tell with what uneasiness of mind, with what pangs of conscience, they did so?

## Under the Commonwealth.

This is Purge No. 1, and it got rid of the old Roman pietist; and let no man deny to the Church of Rome one of the notes of a true Church—the capacity to breed saints.

Purge No. 2 was numerically more important. Charles I. got into those difficulties which brought his comely head to the scaffold, and the beneficed clergy were made subject to visitation by order of the House of Commons and in large numbers turned adrift. That many of these clergy were illiterate and unfit for their office is true enough; but in the teeth of the protests made by the best men among the Puritan party, other tests than those of learning and piety were imposed and enforced. Loyalty to the dead king, or malignancy as it was termed, was counted to be a disqualification for a country parson; a sour observance of Sunday was reckoned as piety, and many a good man who had earned and deserved the love of his parishioners was evicted to make way for a Presbyterian. How many parsons were turned out during the Commonwealth it is hard to say; but many hundred there certainly were, and among them were numbered some of the very choicest spirits of the age.

## The Ejectment of 1662.

Purge No. 3 is the one best known in Nonconformist circles. It occurred after the restoration of the Stuarts, when two thousand of the clergy, including a large number of the intruders of the Commonwealth, were turned out of their livings for refusing to take the oath required by the Act of Uniformity. The celebrated Richard Baxter (who refused a bishopric) tells us in his Life,[1] which is one of the best books in existence, how these evicted tenants were made up. The passage is too long to be here quoted, and it is enough to say that by this purge the Church of England

[1] *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ.* The Bishop of Chester issued an *Excerpt* from it in 1910—the remarkable passage giving Baxter's Self-Review. The most recent Life (1912) is *Richard Baxter and the Revival of Preaching and Pastoral Service*, by Mr. Eayrs.

lost a host of her clergy who had no objection to bishops or to a Liturgy, who had never signed the Solemn League and Covenant, who had been against the Civil War, but who were unwilling, because unable, to give their unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer. But they had to go. They were devout, they were learned, they were peaceful, they were sensible. It mattered not; out they went like Wesley's own grandfather, and were hunted from place to place like wolves.

## The Nonjurors.

Purge No. 4 has still to be endured. The Stuarts ran their destined course. The blessed restoration was in less than thirty years succeeded by the glorious revolution, and a fresh oath had, of course, to be invented as a burden upon the conscience of the established clergy. It was in form simple enough: 'I, A. B., do sincerely promise and swear to bear true allegiance to their Majesties King William and Queen Mary.' But to appreciate its horrid significance we must remember that the now mouldy doctrines of 'Divine right' and 'passive obedience' were then as much the talk of the clergy of the Church of England as incense, lights, and the sacramental theory are to-day. The books and pamphlets on these subjects may still be counted, though hardly read, in thousands. The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Sancroft) and five of his brethren, including Bishop Ken, were deprived of their sees, and at least four hundred divines followed them into exile. These were the Nonjurors, men of fabulous learning and primitive piety, who added evangelical fervour and simplicity to High Church doctrine. To read the lives of these men is to live among the saints and doctors, and their expulsion from the Church they alone loved and they alone could properly defend, diverted into alien channels the very qualities we find so sorely lacking in the Anglican Church of the eighteenth century. How absurd to grumble at the Hoadleys and the Watsons, the Hurds and the Warburtons! They were all that was left.

Faith and fervour, primitive piety, Puritan zeal, Catholic devotion—each in its turn had been decimated and cast out. What a history it is! Whether you read it in the Roman page of Lingard and Dodd and Morris, or in the Anglican record of Collier, or turn over the biographies to be found in our old friends Walker and Calamy, what can you do but hold up your hands in horror and amazement? Wherever and whenever there was goodness, piety, faith, devotion, out it had to go. It was indeed as into a dungeon, stripped, swept, and bare, that the Church of England stepped at the revolution, and in that dungeon she lay for a hundred years. Since then many things have happened. There has been a revival of faith and fervour in the Church of England, so much so that Purge No. 5 may shortly be expected.

The reason why I have dwelt at great length on these facts of Church history is because we should have them in mind if we are to understand what may be called the *status quo ante bellum* John Wesley waged with the devil in Great Britain.

## Wesley's Work.

Wesley's motive never eludes us. In his early manhood, after being greatly affected by Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying* and the *Imitatio Christi*, and by Law's *Serious Call* and *Christian Perfection*, he met a 'serious man' who said to him: 'Sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven. Remember, you cannot serve Him alone. You must therefore find companions or make them. The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion.' He was very confident, this serious man, and Wesley never forgot his message: 'You must find companions or make them. The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion.' These words for ever sounded in Wesley's ears, determining his theology, which rejected the stern individualism of Calvin, and fashioning his whole polity, his famous class meetings, and generally gregarious methods.

'Therefore to him it was given
Many to save with himself.'

We may continue the quotation and apply to Wesley the words of Mr. Arnold's memorial to his father:

> 'Languor was not in his heart,
> Weakness not in his word,
> Weariness not on his brow.'

If you ask what is the impression left upon the reader of the *Journal* as to the condition of England question, the answer will vary very much with the tenderness of the reader's conscience and with the extent of his acquaintance with the general behaviour of mankind at all times and in all places. Wesley himself is no alarmist, no sentimentalist; he never gushes, seldom exaggerates, and always writes on an easy level. Naturally enough he clings to the supernatural, and is always disposed to believe in the *bona fides* of ghosts and the diabolical origin of strange noises; but outside this realm of speculation Wesley describes things as he saw them. In the first published words of his friend Dr. Johnson, 'he meets with no basilisks that destroy with their eyes, his crocodiles devour their prey without tears, and his cataracts fall from the rocks without deafening the neighbouring inhabitants.'

## His Humour and Persistence.

Wesley's humour is of the species donnish, and his modes and methods quietly persistent. He writes in his *Journal*:

On Thursday, the 20th May (1742), I set out. The next afternoon I stopped a little at Newport-Pagnell, and then rode on till I overtook a serious man, with whom I immediately fell into conversation. He presently gave me to know what his opinions were, therefore I said nothing to contradict them. But that did not content him. He was quite uneasy to know 'whether I held the doctrines of the decrees as he did'; but I told him over and over: 'We had better keep to practical things, lest we should be angry at one another.' And so we did for two miles, till he caught me unawares, and dragged me into the dispute before I

knew where I was. He then grew warmer and warmer; told me I was rotten at heart, and supposed I was one of John Wesley's followers. I told him 'No. I am John Wesley himself.' Upon which

> 'Improvisum aspris veluti qui sentibus anguem
> Presset——'

he would gladly have run away outright, but being the better mounted of the two I kept close to his side, and endeavoured to show him his heart till we came into the street of Northampton.

What a picture have we here of a fine May morning in 1742, the unhappy Calvinist trying to shake off the Arminian Wesley! But he cannot do it. *John Wesley is the better mounted of the two*, and so they scamper together into Northampton.

The England described in the *Journal* is an England still full of theology. All kinds of queer folk abound; strange subjects are discussed in odd places. There was drunkenness and cock-fighting, no doubt, but there were also Deists, Mystics, Swedenborgians, Antinomians, Necessitarians, Anabaptists, Quakers, nascent heresies, and slow-dying delusions. Villages were divided into rival groups which fiercely argued the nicest points in the aptest language. Nowadays in one's rambles a man is as likely to encounter a grey badger as a black Calvinist.

## Opposition encountered.

The clergy of the Established Church were jealous of Wesley's interference in their parishes, nor was this unnatural; he was not a Nonconformist but a brother Churchman. What right had he to be so peripatetic? But Wesley seldom records any instance of gross clerical misconduct. Of one drunken parson he does indeed tell us, and he speaks disapprovingly of another whom he found one very hot day consuming a pot of beer in a lone alehouse. I am bound to confess I have never had any but kindly feelings toward that thirsty ecclesiastic. What, I wonder, was he thinking

of as Wesley rode by?—*Méditations Libres d'un Solitaire Inconnue*—unpublished!

When Wesley, with that dauntless courage of his—a courage which never forsook him—which he wore on every occasion with the delightful ease of a soldier—pushed his way into fierce districts, amid rough miners dwelling in their own village communities almost outside the law, what most strikes one with admiration, not less in Wesley's *Journal* than in George Fox's (a kindred though earlier volume), is the essential fitness for freedom of our rudest populations. They were coarse and brutal and savage, but rarely did they fail to recognise the high character and lofty motives of the dignified mortal who had travelled so far to speak to them. Wesley was occasionally hustled, and once or twice pelted with mud and stones; but at no time were his sufferings at the hands of the mob to be compared with the indignities it was long the fashion to heap upon the heads of Parliamentary candidates. The mob knew and appreciated the difference between a Bubb Dodington and a John Wesley.

I do not think any ordinary Englishman will be much horrified at the demeanour of the populace. If there was disturbance it was usually quelled. At Norwich two soldiers who disturbed the congregation were seized and carried before the commanding officer, who ordered them to be soundly whipped. In Wesley's opinion they richly deserved all they got. He was no sentimentalist, although an enthusiast.

Where the reader of the *Journal* will be shocked is when his attention is called to the public side of the country—to the state of the gaols, to Newgate, to Bethlehem, to the criminal code, to the brutality of so many of the judges and the harshness of the magistrates, to the supineness of the bishops, to the extinction in high places of the missionary spirit—in short, to the heavy slumber of humanity.

## Wesley's Evangelistic, Social Service.

Wesley was full of compassion—of a compassion wholly free from hysterics and credulity. In public affairs his was the

composed zeal of a Howard. His efforts to penetrate the dark places were long in vain. He says in his dry way: 'They won't let me go to Bedlam because they say I make the inmates mad, or into Newgate because I make them wicked.' The reader of the *Journal* will be at no loss to see what the sapient magistrates meant. Wesley was a terribly exciting preacher, quiet though his manner was. He pushed matters home without flinching. He made people cry out and fall down, nor did it surprise him that they should. You will find some strange biographies in the *Journal*. Consider that of John Lancaster for a moment. He was a young fellow who fell into bad company, stole some velvet, and was sentenced to death, and lay for a while in Newgate awaiting his hour. A good Methodist woman, Sarah Peters, obtained permission to visit him, though the fever was raging in the prison at the time. Lancaster had no difficulty in collecting six or seven other prisoners, all like himself waiting to be strangled, and Sarah Peters prayed with them and sang hymns, the clergy of the diocese being otherwise occupied. When the eve of their execution arrived, the poor creatures begged that Sarah Peters might be allowed to remain with them to continue her exhortations; but this could not be. In her absence, however, they contrived to console one another, for that devilish device of a later age, solitary confinement, was then unknown. When the bellman came round at midnight to tell them, 'Remember you are to die to-day,' they cried out: 'Welcome news—welcome news!' How they met their deaths you can read for yourselves in the *Journal*, which concludes the narrative with a true eighteenth-century touch: 'John Lancaster's body was carried away by a company hired by the surgeons, but a crew of soldiers pursued them, took it from them by force, and delivered it to his mother, by which means it was decently interred in the presence of many who praised God on his behalf.'

If you want to get into the last century, to feel its pulses throb beneath your finger, be content sometimes to leave the letters of Horace Walpole unturned, resist the drowsy temptation to waste your time over the learned triflers who

sleep in the seventeen volumes of Nichols—nay, even deny yourself your annual reading of Boswell or your biennial retreat with Sterne, and ride up and down the country with the greatest force of the eighteenth century in England.

## At the Centre.

No man lived nearer the centre than John Wesley, neither Clive nor Pitt, neither Mansfield nor Johnson. You cannot cut him out of our national life. No single figure influenced so many minds, no single voice touched so many hearts. No other man did such a life's work for England. As a writer he has not achieved distinction. He was no Athanasius, no Augustine. He was ever a preacher and organiser, a labourer in the service of humanity: but happily for us his journals remain, and from them we can learn better than from anywhere else what manner of man he was, and the character of the times during which he lived and moved and had his being.

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

# CHAPTER III

## JOHN WESLEY'S LIFE IN OUTLINE

1703. June 17 (O.S.). Born at Epworth Rectory, Lincolnshire. Baptized John Benjamin. Wesley never used his second name.
1709. Rescued from the fire which burned down his home.
1711. Admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
1714. Entered Charterhouse School, London.
1720. Elected Scholar of Christ Church College, Oxford.
1724. Graduated B.A.
1725. April. Met 'with a religious friend' (?'Varenese,' Miss Betty Kirkham) and 'set in earnest upon a new life.'
September 19. Ordained deacon and priest (1728) by Dr. Potter, Bishop of Oxford.
October 16. Preached his first sermon at South Leigh, near Witney, Oxford.
1726. Elected Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and Greek Lecturer and Moderator of the Classes.
1727. Graduated M.A., and became curate at Wroot.
1729. Returned to Oxford University for duties, and joined the Methodists there.
1732. Met the Rev. William Law, whose *Serious Call* had impressed him.
1733. Preached his first sermon before Oxford University.
Issued his first work, *A Collection of Forms of Prayer*.
1735. October 14. Sailed for Georgia and Savannah, U.S.A., as a missionary. On board met Moravian Christians.
1737. Published his first hymnbook at Charlestown, U.S.A.

1738. February 1. Arrived in England. Met Peter Böhler and joined a Religious Society in Fetter Lane, London.

May 24. Felt his heart 'strangely warmed' in a Religious Society in Aldersgate Street, London: his 'Evangelical Conversion.'

Visited Count Zinzendorf, and the Moravian settlement at Herrnhut, Germany.

1739. April 2 (Monday). Preached for the first time in the open air in England, 'at the farther end of St. Philip's Plain, Bristol.'

April 4. Formed his first Bristol society.

April 8. Preached for the first time at Hanham Mount, Kingswood, Bristol.

May 12. Began his first chapel, the New Room, Horsefair and Broadmead, Bristol, now in part the oldest Methodist building in the world.

June 14. Lay preaching begun by Cennick.

June. Commenced the Colliers' Schoolhouse, Kingswood, Bristol, now the oldest entire Methodist building.

Nov. 11. Opened the Foundery, Tabernacle Street, Finsbury Square, London, as a Methodist chapel.

Dec. 27. The United Society of Methodists was founded, 'First in London.'

1740. Separated from the Moravians.

1741. Left by Whitefield and his followers.

1742. Arranged Methodist finance and class meetings at Bristol.

Began Methodism at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

July 23. At his mother's death-bed, in London.

1743. Issued General Rules for his societies, and his *Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion.*

1744. Held the first Methodist Conference (London).

1745. Became convinced that Bishops and Presbyters are one order.

1747. First visit to Ireland.

1749-55. Edited the *Christian Library* in fifty volumes.

1751. Married to Mrs. Vazeille.

# DATES AND EVENTS

1753-4. Serious illnesses at Lewisham, Bristol, and London.
1755. Issued his *Notes on the New Testament.*
1768. A Methodist chapel was opened in New York.
1770. Preached Whitefield's funeral sermon.
1774. Underwent a surgical operation.
1775. Illness in Ireland.
1778. Erected City Road Chapel, London.
Began the issue of the *Arminian Magazine.*
1780. Published his *Collection of Hymns for the People called Methodists.*
1781. Death of his wife.
1784. February 28. Executed his Deed of Declaration settling his chapels and constituting the Wesleyan Methodist Conference.
1784-9. Ordained ministers for America, Scotland, and England.
1786. Made a tour in Holland.
1788. March 29. Charles Wesley died.
1789. Suffered from diabetes.
1791. February 23. Preached his last sermon at Leatherhead, and next day sent his last letter (see p. 488).
March 2. Died at City Road Chapel House, London.

# BOOK II

## A SELECTION FROM THE LETTERS OF JOHN WESLEY

To write a really good letter requires a combination of qualities at once rare in themselves and rarer still in their conjunction. Thus the writer must himself be interesting, and have interesting matter to communicate; he must be something of an egoist, to whom his own sensations are noticeable, and worthy of notice; he must possess both daring and freedom, for the last place where caution and reticence are required is in the familiar epistle; he must be absolutely sincere, for the moment he begins to pose his magic wand is broken, and he becomes tedious and offensive; he must above all possess the intimate note, for without it he will produce an essay, but not a letter. Of all these qualities perhaps the last is the rarest, for a good letter is really a page from the secret memoirs of a man.—DAWSON, *Great English Letter-Writers.*

# CHAPTER I

## JOHN WESLEY AS A LETTER-WRITER

### A Great English Letter-Writer.

WESLEY as a letter-writer has not received his due, nor has the world had its share of delight in him in this regard. He is omitted from a recent collection of great English letter-writers.[1] On the other hand, Dr. Richard Garnett of the British Museum, when editing the greatest of anthologies,[2] in twenty volumes, included Wesley's famous *Letter to a Friend Concerning Tea*[3] as the most characteristic and generally interesting product of his busy and versatile pen. Wesley declared that letter-writing was the talent of his brother Charles rather than his own. He knew the ideal letter as varied in its topics, newsy, descriptive, intimate, and self-revealing. Wesley in his Letters is all these, on occasion; but generally he is eager to teach or comfort, to correct or command. The letters are the man.

Is it 'a mistake when a letter-writer is a man of action, with too much to tell'?[4] This would rule out two of the most perfect letters in the world—St. Paul's letter to Philemon, and that of President Lincoln to Mrs. Bixby, who had lost five sons in the American Civil War. 'In a man's letters his soul lies naked,' says Dr. Johnson: 'his letters are only the mirror of his heart.' This is true of Wesley's letters. His letters quiver with heart-throbs. Often he is in dead earnest. There are few intenser letters than his to

[1] By William J. Dawson and Coningsby W. Dawson.
[2] *The International Library of Famous Literature.*
[3] See p. 454.
[4] Mr. E. V. Lucas, *William Cowper's Letters: a Selection.*

young Furley at Queen's College, Cambridge.[1] More than in his famous published *Journal*, and sometimes as much as in his diaries, written in cipher, and now deciphered by the genius and pious industry of Mr. Nehemiah Curnock, Wesley reveals himself. Such letters answer the highest test: they are revelations of a human spirit.

One almost hesitates to give some of Wesley's letters, say of those to his most intimate lay friend, Ebenezer Blackwell, the London banker. And the flippant and coarse may sneer at the affectionate terms used to his many lady correspondents. But, as with his cipher diaries, and all the records, every letter may be read, and there will not be found a word or a scintilla which shows him other than a true man, an English gentleman, and a Christian. Although he was these, judged by the highest standards, he knew himself to be fallible and imperfect. In these letters, as elsewhere, he urges the duty of seeking perfection, 'Christian Perfection,' as within the purpose and covenant of God for man, and commends some who possess it; but he never says that he has attained it.

## Natural Characteristic Letters.

Few of Wesley's letters are without something attractive or distinctive. A golden, memorable phrase, a witty turn, an epigram, a flash of irony, a touch of intimacy, or some self-revelation is there. 'To read John Wesley's letters,' said Alexander Knox, 'is to feel that he wrote as he spoke. Their unstudied simplicity must give this impression; and I, who often heard him speak, can attest its justness.' Often they thus conform to the dictum of that prince of letter-writers, William Cowper, who declared to Lady Hesketh, 'I like *talking* letters.' Moreover, they are the letters of the man who under God changed the face of England and founded a world-wide community. The reader of his letters sees all this in progress. Many are dispatches from the battlefield, or the general's orders to captains there. Indeed, sometimes the letters are instruments in the wars.

[1] See p. 428.

They are half-battles: his letters indeed are weighty. They seldom fail of their purpose. Wesley offered his pen to the Government to answer the letters of Junius. They missed a powerful ally in not using him.

These letters are all written in terse, vigorous English. Wesley soon gets right home to his subject and his reader.[1] No letter needed to be read twice to learn its meaning. The many letters to his preacher, Thomas Wride,[2] were not necessitated by any lack of clearness on Wesley's part, and even that reader must have winced at last. Wesley often shows himself a master of dialectics. His experience at Oxford as president of the disputations made him a keen analyst of statements and an almost fierce exposer of bad logic. He is among the ablest users of the Socratic method. His letter of many questions to the Methodists concerning poor William Shent[3] left them ashamed and penitent.

## A Change in their Style.

There is a marked and significant change in the tone and style of Wesley's letters after his evangelical conversion in 1738. Delightful geniality and radiancy take the place of formal courtesy and coldness which were often his while 'under the law.'[4] Another change occurs when his close companionship with the Moravians ceased, to whom he owed, and knew and declared that he owed, an irreparable debt. In his early letters to them, elaborate expressions of his humility and abject spiritual need are frequent. In a less noble nature these might have been mere simulation—the pride which apes humility. He never completely lost this manner of speech. It was a sign of that appreciation of spiritual wealth and of the aristocracy of the holy and the initiated which is always displayed by the mystic. Whoever was learned in the things of God, Wesley counted worthy of high honour. Social distinctions and intellectual attainments were overlooked if the secret of the Lord was known.

[1] Compare his letters on style herein, p. 434. [2] See p. 185.
[3] See p. 235.
[4] E.g. *Original Letters by the Rev. John Wesley, Illustrative of his Early History*, by Joseph Priestley, LL.D., 1791.

Hence he writes with freedom, familiarity, and gratitude to those whom he knew but slightly, and who were far removed from him by birth, gifts, culture, attainments, position, and service. To such he styles himself as 'friend and brother.' Were they not of the family of God and of the household of faith? Often to those not worthy to untie his shoe-latchet he signs himself as 'servant.' He was a gentleman—a gentle man; but the deeper reason just given explains the difference between him and some others who have borne without abuse that ancient name. The Duchess of Buckingham, in her bitter letter to the noble Countess of Huntingdon about the Methodists, thought it 'monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches who crawl on the earth.' Wesley, of purer birth and breeding, gladly associates himself closely with 'common' people in these letters, if only they are heirs with him of the same promise of life in Christ. Even so St. John's encyclical letter to the faithful Asiatic Christians declares of them, some unlearned and immature, 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things'; and St. Paul said he was not only the bond-slave of Christ, but in slavery to all the Corinthians. He besought Philemon when he might have commanded him.

## His Affectionate Terms.

This spiritual principle largely explains the confidential, even affectionate tone of Wesley's letters to comparative strangers. He trusts, and places high responsibility on, persons of whom he knew little. Sometimes they proved utterly unworthy. 'He says he will keep your secret,' said Charles Wesley of his brother to some friends. 'Let me whisper to you—he will not. He cannot keep his own.' Often his friends were surprised and amazed by his guilelessness, trustfulness, and freeness; his wife was jealous and angry. His latest, as his earliest, letters show him frank, confiding, and wonderfully patient and hopeful. Probably no letter-writer used the word affectionate so frequently and generally in subscriptions as did he. It was used

Lavington, Bishop of Exeter; but Wesley wrote him long public letters, and unmasked him too.

The signatures to Wesley's letters vary. Sometimes he did not sign them. His handwriting and style always reveal him. To Lady Maxwell he always signed in full, John Wesley; while to his valued lay friend, Ebenezer Blackwell, it is sometimes that, or J. Wesley or J. W. To his preachers it is generally J. Wesley. His handwriting, as shown by the facsimiles herein, was singularly neat, pretty, and steady until, as he put it pathetically, when very aged, Death had shaken him by the hand. He used capital letters very freely, and the familiar contractions of the time —ye for the, yt for that, and ym for them, etc. He wrote his letter with a quill pen,[1] on a small quarto sheet of paper which he folded when written, slipped it end into end, and sealed it with wax. Envelopes were yet to come.

## The Contrasts and Unity of Wesley's Character.

As they are perused these letters will show the contrasts in Wesley's constitution and character. As a thinker and teacher, he derived from St. Paul through Augustine and Luther; and his letters often recall those of the Reformer. Sometimes Wesley wrote as charmingly as Luther to his son Hänsichen; anon, as terribly as Luther to the Pope. Some contrarieties which Professor Adolf Deissmann[2] notes in St. Paul, 'polar contradictions,' are here seen in Wesley: his ailing body and physical endurance; his humility and pride—'before God a worm, before men an eagle'; his tenderness and severity. 'And these opposing principles did not shatter' Wesley; 'they set up in him the high tension which found an outlet in the energy he expended on the great work of his life.' There was a deep, underlying, real unity in him. His purpose was always the same. Mr. Birrell truly says that Wesley's motive never eludes us.[3] As in all his work, he is here intent on 'saving souls.' He

[1] His last quill is in a glass case with many curios in the Wesley Museum, Wesley's House, City Road, London.

[2] *St. Paul; a Study in Social and Religious History*—'St. Paul the Man.'

[3] See p. 19.

years previous, a greater number of pious correspondents than any person in England, perhaps in Europe. He had his favourites. No business must hinder his writing to that elect lady, Miss Bolton of Witney (see page 366).

Most of his letters were to individuals—like all the best letters. Some, not only those on private affairs, were sealed with wax and bore the Latin legend *Tibi soli*, solely for thee, or for yourself alone.[1] From his hundreds of inns and halting-places he sent his letters fluttering in great numbers into all kinds of eager hands, now in palace, now in cot. A letter from Wesley was even then an event. Incessantly travelling, preaching, writing, and carrying the weight of all his churches and much more, defending great causes, starting national movements, surrounded by crowds, he ever and anon withdraws to the inner sanctities and bends over one life, to comfort, nurture, and woo it to perfection or service. According to an old Methodist custom, many of his letters were read in the band—an inner, strictly limited fellowship of Methodism — or in the class-meeting or society. But, unlike many famous letter-writers, Wesley did not assume an audience for his letters. He reminds us of St. Paul, not of Horace Walpole or Lady Mary Montagu. 'Everywhere we find not the meditated artificiality of the rhetorician, counting the rhythm of his sentences, but the natural indication of hidden greatness.'

## His Public Letters.

Wesley used the literary letter as a form of public appeal, answer, and defence. These letters were epistles, broadsheets, pamphlets, treatises in literary form. One such letter to Bishop Warburton filled a hundred and ten pages, and Wesley was four days in writing it.[2] To another clergyman, Dr. Free, he wrote two long letters, though he declared 'he is too dirty a writer for me to touch.' So was

[1] So some in the Moravian Collection.

[2] This was his famous reply to Bishop Warburton on the Holy Spirit. Wesley respectfully asks the Bishop to write in a more serious tone. Before printing his own letter, the Bishop sent it to Wesley with a request that he would correct its errors!—Wesley's *Works*, vol. xii. p. 114.

is catholic in his range and taste: everything interests him. He goes to Bristol fair to see a 'monster,' and to the Tower of London to note the effect of music on the lions there; witnesses a will in which there is a legacy to a cat; reins up his horse to admire and record scenery; is eager to abate taxation and to remedy the scarcity of provisions; and would fain avert the war between England and her American colonies. He has a cultured taste and delights in friendship. But he can never forget his high duty and privilege. He always has an engagement. 'I hate to meet your brother,' said Dr. Johnson to Miss Martha Wesley; 'the dog enchants you with his conversation, and then breaks away to go and visit some old woman.' Nor does Wesley drag in his message. To him it is the most natural thing in the world. When he has sympathised with 'a poor patient' in the agonies of gout[1]—which he knew by much experience—and offered to him the best remedies he knows, he reverently speaks of 'a sickness drugs cannot cure,' for which 'there is no other medicine under heaven but the peace of God.'

## This Selection of his Letters.

The chapters which follow contain a representative collection and selection from the thousands of letters which Wesley wrote in his long life. They are grouped under the names of those to whom he wrote them, or the subjects on which he wrote.[2] Some of the letters tell their own story. Sufficient explanation is given with others to place the present reader by the side of Wesley and the first reader.[3]

That Wesley, one of the busiest men of all time, ministered so amply and nobly by Letters is perhaps one of his lessons to our busy age.

[1] *Works*, vol. xii. p. 282.
[2] A list in chronological order is given on p. xix.
[3] And see Book I., pp. 5-12.

# CHAPTER II

## TO HIS FATHER AND MOTHER—THE REV. SAMUEL WESLEY, M.A., AND MRS. SUSANNA WESLEY

### His Mother, Susanna Wesley.

THE first of Wesley's letters here given shall be one to his mother, Susanna Wesley (1669-1742). 'The mother makes us most,' said Tennyson. This was strikingly verified in Wesley's disposition, character, and career. Mrs. Wesley, as shown above,[1] was singularly gifted, and godly. She was that strange and influential combination, a practical mystic, and is rightly styled the Mother of Methodism. In her husband's absence she held a so-called conventicle in the kitchen of Epworth Rectory. She fostered in her children, especially in John, the mind's love of God, and fearless inquiry into facts and causes; withheld him from hindering new methods, as preaching by laymen, which were manifestly owned of God; and until her death, and by her influence long afterwards, heartened her two sons, John and Charles, in establishing Methodism. She had a robust, full, sober, methodical mind, suffused with womanly emotion and fired by love. Of John she wrote in her diary—'I do intend to be more particularly careful with the soul of this child.' She amply fulfilled her vow. Thursday night was regularly devoted to him while at home, and afterwards also. He pleaded for its continuance. He consulted and discussed points of philosophy, doctrine, and organisation with her. It was probably for her that he wrote the detailed and ingenuous account of his affair of the heart with Miss Sophia

[1] See p. 13.

Hopkey while in Savannah. On the blank outside leaf he quoted the significant Scripture quotation, 'Snatched as a brand out of the fire.'[1] On the death of his father, Wesley made a home for his mother in his house at City Road Chapel, London, and rejoiced in the full discharge of his filial duty to her. Charles Wesley said he envied him of 'that glorious burden.' Mrs. Wesley lived to see Methodism in its third year, firmly established by her son John, and rising to music and the sacred song of another son, Charles.[2] The former was in Bristol when he heard of her last illness. He left that city on Sunday evening, rode hard the hundred and twenty miles in the hot July weather, and arrived in London on Tuesday, dusty and exhausted; for, said he, 'I shall never have another mother.' When she died a few days later he fulfilled her last wish by leading a psalm of praise by those round her deathbed.

'Bishop Taylor says, "Whether God has forgiven us or no, we know not."'

Here Wesley is feeling after and defending the truth which he was to recall and make a distinguishing feature of his teaching—Assurance of Salvation, the Witness of the Holy Spirit to the believer's acceptance in Christ.[3] Thirteen long and weary years must pass before he will know this blessing himself; but even now the logic of the situation convinces him.

*To his Mother.*

OXFORD, *June* 18, 1725.

DEAR MOTHER,—You have so well satisfied me as to the tenets of Thomas à Kempis that I have ventured to trouble you once more on a more dubious subject. I have heard

[1] The original is in the Wesleyan Conference Office. It is a beautiful specimen of Wesley's handwriting and exquisite neatness, is without abbreviations, and is suitable for reading by an aged person. See *Journal*, vol. i. p. 288.

[2] See note on her approval and sympathy.—*Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 483.

[3] Compare his appeals to Lady Maxwell, p. 388.

one[1] I take to be a person of good judgement say that she would advise no one very young to read Dr. Taylor on *Holy Living and Dying*. She added that he almost put her out of her senses when she was fifteen or sixteen years old, because he seemed to exclude all from being in a way of salvation who did not come up to his rules, some of which are altogether impracticable.

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

[1] Probably his 'religious friend,' Miss Betty Kirkham. See below, p. 44. Dr. Augustin Leger of Brest, in *La Jeunesse de Wesley*, thinks this, rather than May, 1738 (see below, p. 61), was the period of Wesley's 'conversion' (*Wes. Hist. Proceedings*, viii. 3). Certainly Wesley was in an intense spiritual condition, as is shown by the incident which happened then and is related in the next letter, Jan. 27, 1727—a year and a half later. But in all his own accounts Wesley looks back to May 24, 1738, as *the* day. See below, letter Oct. 30, 1738.

men most miserable. God deliver us from such a fearful expectation as this! Humility is undoubtedly necessary to salvation; and if all these things are essential to humility, who can be humble, who can be saved?—I am, Dear mother, Your dutiful and affectionate son.

## 'Curiosity . . . if we had half a dozen Centuries of Life to come.'

Just about the time of the above letter an incident occurred which so impressed Wesley that he narrates it in the next letter we give. It is an impressive glimpse of his motives and methods. He is now four-and-twenty. As he walks this winter's night with his consumptive friend in the still aisle of St. Mary's, Oxford, the same moral passion, directness, and winsome tact are seen as will appear a thousand times in the subsequent sixty years of eager endeavour to help men. He knew the things which belong unto their peace.[1]

*To his Mother.*

OXFORD, *January* 1727.

I am shortly to take my Master's degree. As I shall from that time be less interrupted by business not of my own choosing, I have drawn up for myself a scheme of studies from which I do not intend, for some years at least, to vary. I am perfectly come over to your opinion that there are many truths it is not worth while to know. Curiosity, indeed, might be a sufficient plea for our laying out

[1] Hugh Price Hughes, who closely resembled Wesley in these and many features of his work, did the like to this on one occasion when he was himself a Methodist minister in Oxford, and with the same timeliness for the life which he helped. 'Excuse me,' he said to a graduate almost unknown to him whom he accosted in the High Street, 'but I am curiously constrained to ask you a question. What is your opinion of Jesus Christ? How does it stand between you and Him?' 'Mr. Hughes,' was the reply, 'I have been waiting for twenty years for some one to ask me that question. Come to my rooms and talk to me.'—*Life*, by his daughter, p. 144.

some time upon them, if we had half a dozen centuries of life to come; but methinks it is great ill-husbandry to spend a considerable part of the small pittance now allowed us in what makes us neither a quick nor a sure return.

Two days ago I was reading a dispute between those celebrated masters of controversy, Bishop Atterbury and Bishop Hoadly, but must own I was so injudicious as to break off in the middle. I could not conceive that the dignity of the end was at all proportioned to the difficulty of attaining it, and I thought the labour of twenty or thirty hours, if I was sure of succeeding, which I was not, would be ill rewarded by that important piece of knowledge, whether Bishop Atterbury had misunderstood Bishop Hoadly or no.

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

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

'Implant what Habits I would before the Flexibility of Youth be over.'

His mother, a book—Thomas à Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi*—and the 'meeting with a religious friend,'[1] probably Miss Betty Kirkham, have further steadied and stirred Wesley. He is almost minded now to seek cloistral retirement, is very careful of company and worship, and is frugal of time. Doubtless Miss Kirkham was one of 'the persons of whom he never speaks without gratitude,' to whom he alludes here. She is 'Varenese,' one of a small circle of his intimate correspondents. He met her two years before this letter, and with important results for himself. 'Meeting likewise a religious friend, which I never had till now, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation and to set in earnest upon a new life.'

What a headmaster Wesley would have made! His hobby for many years, and his least successful enterprise, was his school for boys at Kingswood.

This letter, with many personal details, is from the original, and is much more completely given than in his *Works*.

*To his Mother.*

LINC[OLN COLLEGE], [OXFORD], *March* 19, 1726/7.

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

On Saturday next I propose beginning an entirely new life, with relation to the management of my expenses, from what I have hitherto done. I expect then to receive a sum of money, and intend immediately to call in all my

[1] For the evidence of identification of this 'friend' with Miss Kirkham, see his *Journal*, vol. i. p. 13.

creditors' bills (that they may not grow by lying by, as it sometimes happens), and from that time forward to trust no man of what sort or trade soever, so far as to let him trust me.

Dear mother, I speak what I know: my being little and weak, whereas had it not been for a strange concurrence of accidents (so called in the language of men) I should very probably be just the reverse, I can easily account for; I can readily trace the wisdom and mercy of Providence in allotting me these imperfections. (Though what if I should not? Since while I look through a glass I can only expect to see darkly.) But here the difficulty was likely to lie: Why should Infinite Goodness permit me to contract a habit of sin, even before I knew it to be sinful, which has been a thorn in my side ever since? 'How can I skill of these Thy ways?' So well, that I am verily persuaded, had it not been for that sinful habit I had scarce ever acquired any degree of any virtuous one. Is not this the finger of God? Surely no one else could have extracted so much good from evil! Surely it was mercy not to hear my prayer!

The conversation of one or two persons, whom you may have heard me speak of (I hope never without gratitude), first took off my relish for most other pleasures, so far that I despised them in comparison of that. From thence I have since proceeded a step further; to slight them absolutely. And I am so little at present in love with even company—the most elegant entertainment next to books—that, unless the persons have a peculiar turn of thought, I am much better pleased without them. I think it is the settled temper of my soul that I should prefer, at least for some time, such a retirement as would seclude me from all the world, to the station I am now in. Not that this is by any means unpleasant to me; but I imagine it would be more improving

to be in a place where I might confirm or implant in my mind what habits I would, without interruption, before the flexibility of youth be over, than to stay where, among many advantages, I lie under the inconvenience of being almost necessarily exposed to so much impertinence and vanity.

A school in Yorkshire, 40 miles from Doncaster, was proposed to me lately, on which I shall think more when it appears whether I may have it or not. A good salary is annexed to it, so that in a year's time 'tis probable all my debts would be paid and I should have money beforehand. But what has made me wish for it most is the frightful description, as they call it, which some gentlemen who know the place gave me of it yesterday. 'The town (Skipton in Craven), lies in a little vale, so pent up between two hills that it is scarcely accessible on any side: so that you can expect little company from without, and within there is none at all.' I should therefore be entirely at liberty to converse with company of my own choosing, whom for that reason I would bring with me: and company equally agreeable, wherever I fixed, could not put me to less expense.

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

The text of that sermon I preached on the Sunday following Mr. Griffith's death was, 'Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' I never gave

more reason to suspect my doctrine did not agree with my practice, for a sickness and pain in my stomach, attended with a violent looseness which seized me the day he was buried, altered me so much in three days, and made me look so pale and thin, that those who saw me could not help but observe it.

A letter from my sister Emily, my brother tells me, was brought to my chambers the other day; but wherever the fellow laid it, I have not been able to set my eye on it from that day to this.

I am full of business, but have found a way to write without taking any time from that. It is but rising an hour sooner in the morning, and going into company an hour later in the evening: both which may be done without any inconvenience. My brother has got the other side away from me.—I am, Dear Mother, Your affectionate, dutiful son.

I return you thanks for your thoughts on Zeal, and my sister Emily for hers on—I know not what. However, I am persuaded they were very good. My love attend my other sisters; I should have said, brother Charles too.

## A Letter from his Father.

Four months later Wesley, still at Oxford, received the following letter from his father, the Reverend Samuel Wesley, M.A.[1] (1662-1735), Rector of Epworth, Lincolnshire. It is copied from the original. On the third side of the sheet is a letter to Wesley's brother Charles, also at Oxford. It shows the home into which these Wesley letters went. Here is the mother, now in broken health; and here is the father, quaint, feeling the effects of his service at his two charges at Epworth and Wroot, but tenacious as ever. The 'perfect harmony' in the family is a contrast to its tone

[1] See Tyerman's *Life and Times of Reverend Samuel Wesley, M.A.*

sometimes.[1] Wesley's father is described, in fiction, as an ogre. He was something of a martinet, and held the views of his time that a father is a magistrate in his family, and that the claims of women, even daughters, are fewer and lower than those of men, even boys.[2] He anticipated his sons in the emphasis they placed upon Assurance and the Witness of the Spirit, and foresaw the Evangelical Revival. His dying testimony to his son John was, 'The inward witness, son, the inward witness, this is the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity'; and he often laid his hands upon the head of Charles and said, 'Be steady. The Christian Faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not.' He strongly wished that his son John should succeed him as Rector of Epworth. This he declined in a long, argumentative letter. He was later to look upon all the world as his parish.[3]

*From Wesley's Father to John Wesley.*

WROOT, *July* 18, 1727.

DEAR SON JOHN,—We received last packet your compliments of condolence and congratulation to your mother on the supposition of her near approaching demise, to which your sister Patty will by no means subscribe, for she says she is not so good a philosopher as you are, and that she

[1] See Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

[2] These lines by Wesley's elder brother Samuel, then away from home, show us the Rector and his family and home in a comical, not unkindly light.

'Methinks I see you striving all
Who first shall answer to his call,
Or lusty Nan or feeble Moll
Sage Pat or sober Hetty;
To rub his cassock's draggled tail,
Or reach his hat from off the nail,
Or seek the key to draw his ale
When damsel haps to steal it;
To burn his pipe, or mend his clothes,
Or wisely darn his russet hose,
For comfort of his aged toes
So fine they cannot feel it.'

Then comes in a letter from Jack or Jacky, as they called the clever son and brother at Oxford.

[3] See his letter to his brother Samuel below, p. 56.

can't spare her mother yet, if it please God, without very great inconveniency.

And indeed, though she has now and then some very sick fits, yet I know the sight of you would revive her. However, when you come you will see a new face on things, my family being now pretty well colonised (?) and all perfect harmony, much happier in no small straits than perhaps we ever were before in the greatest affluence, and you 'll find a servant that will make us rich, if God gives him leave, and us anything for him to work upon. I know not but it may be this prospect, together with my easiness in my family, which keeps my spirits from sinking, tho' they tell me I 've lost some of my tallow between Wroot and Epworth. But that I don't value as long as I 've strength still left to perform my office. If Charles can get to London, I believe Hardsley at the Red Lion, Aldersgate St., might procure him a horse, as reasonably as any, to ride along with you to Lincoln [City], and direct him where to leave it there, with the carrier to return, which will be the cheapest and safest way; and I warrant you we will find means to bring Charles up again. Your own best way, as in my case, will be to buy a horse for yourself (J. F.) for the reasons I then told you.—I 'm weary, but Your loving father, SAM. WESLEY.

## 'Our little Company,' the Oxford Methodists, 'is shrunk into almost none at all.'

Wesley, probably with his brother Charles, has been home to Epworth. They have evidently walked there from Oxford and back. Wesley was fond of walking. Of money he had little, and wanted all for charities. With this letter to his father was one to his mother. To her he says that the walking 'and the sun together in our hundred and fifty miles walk so carried off all our superfluous humours that

we continue perfectly in health, though it is here a very sickly season.'

His father and all at the Rectory were much interested in 'our little company.' These are the Oxford Methodists.[1] The name had been used several times before for persons who were markedly methodical, but it was now stuck by a wit of Christ Church College upon a little company of students, a religious fellowship, of which Charles Wesley was founder. Of all the names given to them this was to survive and to become one of the commonest in religious nomenclature. John Wesley became chief of these Oxford Methodists, and was nicknamed 'the Curator of the Holy Club.' These Methodist tutors, graduates, and undergraduates lived by rule and very frugally, had practically all things in common, studied steadily, observed punctiliously the regulations of their colleges, the University, and the Church, and urged others to do the same. They spent their leisure in visiting and relieving the poor, the prisoners in the Castle, and in teaching children. Critics and detractors were many. The next two letters show some. Wesley's father cordially approved of all this earnest work. His excellent hymn beginning

'Behold the Saviour of mankind,'

was a notable contribution to the Methodist evangel, and was wondrously useful.

*To his Father.*

*June* 11, 1731.

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

[1] Tyerman's *The Oxford Methodists.*

Since our return, our little company that used to meet us on a Sunday evening is shrunk into almost none at all. Mr. Morgan is sick at Holt; Mr. Boyce is at his father's house at Barton; Mr. Kirkham must very shortly leave Oxford to be his uncle's curate; and a young gentleman of Christ Church who used to make a fourth, either afraid or ashamed, or both, is returned to the ways of the world, and studiously shuns our company. However, the poor at the Castle have still the gospel preached to them and some of their temporal wants supplied, our little fund rather increasing than diminishing. Nor have we yet been forced to discharge any of the children which Mr. Morgan left to our care. Though I wish they too do not find the want of him, I am sure some of their parents will.

Some, however, give us a better prospect; John Whitelamb in particular.[1] I believe with this you will receive some account from himself how his time is employed. He reads one English, one Latin, and one Greek book alternately, and never meddles with a new one in any of the languages till he has ended the old one. If he goes on as he has begun, I dare take upon me to say that, by the time he has been here four or five years, there will not be such an one of his standing in Lincoln College, perhaps not in the University of Oxford.—I am, Your dutiful and affectionate son.

## 'Diminution of Fortune, Friends, and Reputation.'

Wesley's 'fortune,' or income, was very limited; his use of it in altruistic efforts was lavish. He states of an Oxford Methodist[2]—himself—that when he had £30 a year he lived on £28, and gave away forty shillings. The next year, receiving £60, he still lived on £28, and gave away £32. The third year he received £90 and gave away £62. The

[1] Whitelamb married Wesley's sister Mary.
[2] *Works*, vol. vii. p. 36. See also below, p. 65.

fourth year he received £120. Still he lived as before on £28, and gave to the poor £92.

Here is a strong, brave letter—

*To his Father.*

[Oxford], *June* 13, 1733.

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

My ill-success, as they call it, seems to be what has frightened everyone away from a falling house. On Sunday I was considering the matter a little more nearly, and imagined that all the ill consequences of my singularity were reducible to three—diminution of fortune, loss of friends and reputation. As to my *fortune*, I well know, though perhaps others do not, that I could not have borne a larger than I have; and as for that most plausible excuse for desiring it, 'While I have so little, I cannot do the good I would,' I ask, 'Can you do the good God would have you

do? It is enough! Look no further.' For *friends*, they were either trifling or serious. If serious, those who are more serious are left, whom the others would rather have opposed than forwarded in the service they have done, and still do us. If it be said, 'But these may leave you too, for they are no firmer than the others were,' first, I doubt that fact; but next, suppose they should, we hope then they would only teach us a nobler and harder lesson than they have done hitherto. 'It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man.' And as for *reputation*, though it be a glorious instrument of advancing our Master's service, yet there is a better than that—a clean heart, a single eye, a soul full of God! A fair exchange, if by the loss of reputation we can purchase the lowest degree of purity of heart! We beg my mother and you would not cease to work together with us, that, whatever we lose, we may gain this; and that, having tasted of this good gift, we may count all things else but dung and dross in comparison of it.—I am, Dear father, Your dutiful and affectionate son.

## 'The Subject of Christian Liberty.'

This hitherto almost unknown letter, reproduced here in facsimile, brings out young Wesley's analytical skill and his sanity. He always felt and taught the value of rules—'prudential regulations' he called them—and of the means of grace. Neglect and contempt of them was too high for him.

*To his Mother.*

OXON., *January* 13, 1734[5].

DEAR MOTHER,—Give me leave to say once more that our Folks do, and will, I suppose, to the end of the chapter, mistake the Question. Supposing him changed, say they.

Right, but that Supposition has not Proof yet, whatever it *may* have. When it has, then we may come to our other Point, whether all this be not Providence, *i.e.* Blessing: and whether we are empowered so to judge, condemn, and execute an Imprudent Christian, as, God forbid, I should ever use a Turk or Deist.

I have had a great deal of conversation lately on the subject of Christian Liberty, and should be glad of your thoughts as to the several notions of it which Good Men entertain. I perceive different Persons take it in at least six Different Senses.

1. For Liberty from wilful Sin in opposition to the bondage from natural Corruption.

2. For Liberty as to Rites and Points of Discipline. So Mr. Whiston says: 'Though the Stations were constituted by the Apostles, yet the Liberty of the Christian Law dispenses with them on extraordinary Occasions.'

3. For Liberty from denying ourselves in little things; for trifles 'tis commonly thought we may indulge in safely, because Christ hath made us free. This notion I a little doubt, is not sound.

4. For Liberty from fear, or a Filial Freedom in our intercourse with God. A Christian, says Dr. Knight, is free from Fear on account of his past sins, for he believes in Christ, and Hope frees him from Fear of losing his present labour, or of being a Castaway hereafter.

5. Christian Liberty is taken by some for a Freedom from Restraint as to Sleep or Food. So they would say, Your drinking not one glass of Wine, or my rising at fixed hours was contrary to Christian Liberty.

Lastly, it is taken for Freedom from Rules. If by this he meant making our Rules yield to extraordinary occasions, well: If, the having no Prudential Rules, this Liberty is as yet too high for me, I cannot attain unto it.

# TO FATHER AND MOTHER

We join in begging yours and my Father's Blessing, and wishing you a Happy Year.—I am, Dear mother, Your dutiful and affectionate son.

[Addressed]

To Mrs. Wesley at Epworth.

To be left at the Posthouse,
In Gainsbro',
Lincolnshire.
*per* London.

# CHAPTER III

## TO HIS BROTHERS AND SISTER—THE REV. SAMUEL WESLEY, JUNR., REV. CHARLES WESLEY, AND MISS MARTHA WESLEY

### 'I can better serve God and His Church in my present Station.'

WESLEY was much attached to his brothers and sisters, and they to him. The severe financial limitations and struggles of the Epworth Rector's family drew its members together. In conversation, in letter, and in literary products their affection, wit, high controversial and poetic gifts were displayed and developed. Wesley freely corresponded with them all, often with Samuel, and their sister Martha, and with his greatest coadjutor, Charles, the youngest but one in the large family.

His eldest brother, the Rev. Samuel Wesley, Jun., M.A., Headmaster of Blundell's School, Tiverton, strongly urged his acceptance of a parish cure, and that of Epworth. Wesley sent him a copy of the letter he had sent to their father declining this proposal.[1] Here is his final decision, and reason for it. This was a critical hour. He remained at his beloved Oxford. The next year he was to leave it, never to return, except as a visitor.

*To his brother Samuel.*

OXFORD, *March* 4, 1735.

DEAR BROTHER,—I had rather dispute with you, if I must dispute, than with any man living, because it may be done with so little expense of time and words. The question

[1] See above, p. 52.

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

Accordingly, the post after I received yours, I referred it entirely to him, proposing this single question to him: Whether I had, at my ordination, engaged myself to undertake the cure of a parish or no. His answer runs in these words: 'It does not seem to me that, at your ordination, you engaged yourself to undertake the cure of any parish, provided you can, as a clergyman, better serve God and His Church in your present or some other station.' Now that I can, as a clergyman, better serve God and His Church in my present station, I have all reasonable evidence.—I am, Dear brother, Your most affectionate friend and brother.

## 'The whole Question turns on Matter of Fact.'

Wesley has been to Georgia as missionary, and is now within a few months of his spiritual epoch of May 24, 1738.

His brother Samuel thought 'the knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins' a new faith. He also besought the brothers to 'banish extemporary exposition and extemporary prayers.' Wesley here uses the Baconian argument. He will often use it, and will accumulate material for so wide an induction as will make his conclusions irresistible.

'What we have felt and seen
With confidence we tell,
And publish to the sons of men
The signs infallible.'

*To his brother Samuel.*

BRISTOL,[1] *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 in your heart. If so, you shall know of this doctrine, whether it be of God, though perhaps not by my ministry.

To this hour you have pursued an *ignoratio elenchi.* Your *assurance* and mine are as different as light and darkness. I mean, an assurance that I am now in a state of salvation; you, an assurance that I shall *persevere* therein. The very definition of the term cuts off your second and third observation. As to the first I would take notice. 1st. No kind of assurance (that I know) or of faith, or repentance, is essential to their salvation who die infants. 2nd. 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. 3rd. Persons that were of a melancholy and gloomy constitution, even to some degree of madness, I have known in a moment (let it be called a miracle, I quarrel not) brought into a state of firm lasting peace and joy.

[1] So in *Works*, vol. xii. p. 30; but this is an error, as Wesley was at Dummer.—*Journal*, vol. i. p. 450.

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

Saw you him that was a lion till then and is now a lamb: he that was a drunkard, but now exemplarily sober: the whoremonger that was, that 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 soul's embrace,
> Possess'd of Thy salvation then,
> Then may I, Lord, depart in peace.'

The great blessing of God be upon you and yours.—I am, Dear brother, Your ever affectionate and obliged brother.

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

## 'In this sense I was not a Christian till May the 24th last past.'

Here is, in some respects, the most interesting of all Wesley's letters. It was written at half-past five on a winter Monday morning, and carefully. 'Singing' and 'writ to Brother Samuel' are the only entries in his diary until half-past eight that day. It may well be read and re-read. It deals with the spiritual crisis in his life, which he thought, and his truest interpreters regard, as supremely important. Lecky, the historian of that century, wrote: 'It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the scene which took place at that humble meeting in Aldersgate Street forms an epoch in English history.' By the printed page used in that great hour Wesley touched Luther, and Luther touched St. Paul. What a living line!

Candour, humility, and Christian confidence throb in the letter. Its faithful opening words and closing appeal from this younger brother must have moved the heart of Samuel Wesley, scholar, poet, clergyman as he was, and not less that of his wife Ursula. *The* day, 'May 24 last past,' is now five months away. Wesley's 'cooler thoughts'—to use a favourite expression of his—here tell the meaning of its solemn and glad events. He contrasts it with an earlier day, January 8. Then he was 'in the midst of the great deep' and 'bitterness of soul.' He gives them his diary's

quivering record of his self-analysis. But that is all past, and serves only as a dark background for the brightness and beauty of the evening of May 24, when a light shone from heaven upon him.

## Wesley's great Day.

On that memorable day Wesley was in London, as he is when he writes the letter below to his brother Samuel. He tells us the occupations of the day, every hour of which seemed to lead him onward towards a transforming experience. The full story is given in his *Journal*.[1] In the morning he opened upon Scriptures which told him, 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises,' and 'Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God.' In the afternoon, at St. Paul's Cathedral, the anthem seemed to voice his anxiety in its words, 'Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord.' 'In the evening,' he says, 'I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one[2] was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.'

*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 Susurrus[3] both to you and my sister,[4] as (whether real or feigned) striking at the root of a fault,

[1] Vol. i. pp. 465-77.

[2] For the 'one' who was reading, probably William Holland, and the actual words read, see *Wes. Hist. Proc.*, vol. viii. p. 61 and p. 2.

[3] One of the character studies in Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, chap. xxii.

[4] He means his sister-in-law, Samuel Wesley's wife.

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 until May the 24th last past. For till then sin had the dominion over me, although I fought with it continually; but surely, then, from that time to this it hath not—such is the free grace of God in Christ. What sins they were which till then reigned over me, and from which, by the grace of God, I am now free, I am ready to declare on the house-top, if it may be for the glory of God.

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

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

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

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

'(1) By such a faith in Thee and in Thy Christ as implies trust, confidence, peace in life and death;

'(2) By such humility as may fill my heart from this hour for ever with a piercing, interrupted sense, *nihil est quod hactenus feci*,[1] having evidently built without a foundation;

'(3) By such a recollection that I may cry to Thee every moment, but more especially when all is calm (if it should so please Thee), "Give me faith or I die! Give me a lowly spirit, otherwise *mihi non sit suave vivere*."[2] Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! Υἱὲ Δαβίδ, ἐλέησόν με.'[3]

Some measure of this faith, which bringeth salvation or victory over sin, and which implies peace and trust in God through Christ, I now enjoy by His free mercy; though in very deed it is in me but as a grain of mustard-seed: for the πληροφορία πίστεως[4]—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,[5] 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 of which I know are near, and amen. Those who have not yet received joy in

[1] 'What I have been hitherto doing amounts to nothing.'
[2] 'May life itself no longer be pleasant to me.'
[3] 'Son of David, have mercy upon me.'
[4] 'Fulness of faith.'
[5] A reference to his visit to the Moravians. See below, p. 69.

the Holy Ghost, the love of God, and the plerophory of faith (any or all of which I take to be the witness of the Spirit with our spirit that we are the sons of God), I believe to be Christians in that imperfect sense wherein I may call myself such; and I exhort them to pray that God would give them also 'to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God,' and to feel 'His love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them.'

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

O brother, would to God you would leave disputing concerning the things which you know not (if indeed you know them not), and beg of God to fill up what is yet wanting in you! Why should not you also seek till you receive 'that peace of God which passeth all understanding'? Who shall hinder you, notwithstanding the manifold temptations, from rejoicing with joy unspeakable, by reason of glory? Amen, Lord Jesus! May you, and all who are near of kin to you (if you have it not already), feel His love shed abroad in your 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.

# WESLEY'S LETTER

TO

# HIS MOTHER

From OXFORD, January 13, 1734-5

*FACSIMILE* from the ORIGINAL
in the Collection of Mr. Russell
J. Colman, D.L., J.P., Norwich

*THE TEXT* of this LETTER is
given on page 53

## LETTERS OF JOHN WESLEY

BY REV. GEORGE EAYRS, F.R.HIST.S.

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not how, kept at a distance, and sometimes cavilled a little, at other times, as it were, approved, but never heartily joined in the work. Where did it stick? Did you not thoroughly understand what my brother and I were doing? Did you not see the truth? or did the cause lie in your heart? You had no will to join hand in hand. You wanted resolution, spirit, patience. Well, the day is far spent. What you do, do quickly. 'Life for delay no time will give.'

My work in the country cannot be finished before the latter end of August, as the circuit is now larger by some hundred miles than when I was in the north two years ago. O let the one thing be ever uppermost in our thoughts!

To promote either your temporal or eternal good will always be a pleasure to, Dear Patty, Your affectionate brother.

## 'Money never stays with *me*.'

*To his sister, Mrs. Martha Hall.*

KINGSWOOD, *October* 6, 1768.

DEAR PATTY,—You do not consider, money never stays with *me*: it would burn me if it did. I throw it out of my hands as soon as possible, lest it should find a way into my heart. Therefore you should have spoken to me while I was in London, and before Miss Lewen's money flew away. However, I know not but I may still spare you £5, provided you will not say, 'I will never ask you again,' because this is more than you can tell; and you must not promise more than you can perform.

O how busy are mankind! and about what trifles! Things that pass away as a dream. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, but to love and serve God.—I am, Dear Patty, Your ever affectionate brother.

# TO BROTHERS AND SISTER

## Wesley's great Colleague.

Wesley's brother, the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A. (1707-1788), closely identified with him and frequently by his side, needed few letters from him. Some of those sent follow here. Charles was four years younger than John, and predeceased him by three years. An earlier Oxford Methodist than John, he also entered into the rest and rapture of conscious pardon a few days before him. But he easily waived these and any claims to leadership because of the natural primacy of John, whom he admired and loved with all the wealth of his emotional nature. 'John and Charles Wesley' were the names on almost countless Methodist publications, and are on the nation's tribute in Westminster Abbey. It is the true order. Together they founded and built Methodism. Alike in their conception of their duty to God and man, and of man's chief end and need, they were equal in their complete devotion. They both had the heroic strain, were absolutely faithful to conviction, and fearless in obedience to it. Ease, ambition, fame, and money attracted neither. In gifts and service they were contrasted and complementary. John's genius was for logic, argument, rule, construction; that of Charles for intuition, the lyric, persuasion, submission. John was the greater master and manager of men; Charles, at his best, had the finer powers of popular appeal in sermon and in song. His Oxford University sermon, on the text 'Awake, thou that sleepest,' is one of the greatest sermons in the world. His hymn 'Jesu, lover of my soul' is the best loved prayer-song of the human spirit, and that beginning 'Come, O thou traveller unknown' is the supreme lyric of Christian mysticism. Nevertheless, the calm, logical, terse discourses of John Wesley more deeply affected his hearers both at the time and permanently than did those of Charles. Wesley's translations of German hymns also have all the worth of original compositions, and are of the highest order. He knew the unsurpassed gift of his brother Charles, and constantly stirred him to its exercise, as in these letters; but Wesley had a severer, more strictly classical taste than had his brother. The hymns of

Charles owed much of their final excellence to his brother's criticism and revision.

By the curious irony of occasion and circumstance it fell to Charles, the more conservative of the brothers, to be in some things the innovator and first violator of Church rubric and order. His hymns, hymn-singing, and services lacked episcopal authority, and he first gave the Lord's Supper in an unconsecrated building to the Methodists. He was horrified to find himself arraigned before the justices for sympathising with the Pretender, because he prayed that 'God would bring home His banished'—a Scripture euphemism for unconverted people. Despite his strong wish and careful arrangements, his remains were interred in unconsecrated ground.

The brothers were completely loyal to each other, and such differences between them as these letters disclose were generally concerned with Church order. For this Charles was a stickler. He wrote to John Nelson, one of the most remarkable and useful of the preachers, 'John, I love thee from my heart: yet rather than see thee a Dissenting minister, I wish to see thee smiling in thy coffin.'[1] John Wesley allowed himself to be directed by the logic of facts. He said, 'Soul-damning clergy lay me under more difficulties than soul-saving laymen'; and, 'Church or no Church, we must attend to the work of saving souls.' When Charles threatened to leave the Conference if laymen were allowed to join in its discussions, John promptly said to his neighbour, 'Give my brother his hat.'

## 'The People here,' Herrnhut, Germany.

Wesley was among the Moravian Brethren at their German settlement, Herrnhut. His account of the visit, to be given when 'face to face' with his brother Charles, fills sixty pages of his *Journal*. Evidently, by his exhortations in this letter, he has been profoundly affected by the sermons of Christian David, the mechanic lay-preacher, and by the life of what he calls 'this lovely people.' Here he

[1] Jackson's *Life of Charles Wesley*, vol. i. p. 184.

saw open-air services, meetings for testimony and fellowship, lay-preachers, itinerating preachers, and orphan homes. Without restriction as to sex, special training, or priestly ordination, the members employed their gifts; and over all their life, public and private, were the simplicity and gladness of New Testament Christianity.

*To his brother Charles.*

HERRNHUT, *August* 4, 1738.

DEAR BROTHER,—Thus far hath God greatly helped us in all things. An account of the people here you must not expect till we come face to face, when I hope we shall part no more. O that, after I have proved all things, I may be enabled throughly *δοκιμάζειν τὰ διαφέροντα*,[1] and, calling no man master, in faith, practice, and discipline, to hold fast to that which is good!

Salute our brethren in London and Oxford by name; and exhort them all in the name of the Lord Jesus that they love and study the oracles of God more and more; that they work out their salvation with fear and trembling, never imagining they have already attained, or are already perfect; never deceiving themselves, as if they had now less need than before to be serious, watchful, lowly-minded; and that, above all things, they use great plainness of speech, both with each other and towards all men.

My dearest brother and friend, I commend you to the grace of God, to be more and more renewed in the image of his Son! Pray ye all for me continually! Adieu!

## 'If it be just to obey Men rather than God, judge ye.'

A letter which echoes the solemn decision of Peter and John at Jerusalem (Acts vi.), of Luther at Worms, and of Wesley's nonconforming ancestors, Bartholomew and John

[1] 'To distinguish things that are different.'

Wesley, and Samuel Annesley.[1] Here are asserted the right of private judgement, supremacy of conscience, freedom for nonconformity and dissent; and the inference of divine approval by divine results. In this birth-year of Methodism its birthright is claimed. These principles will make Wesley the greatest innovator of his age, and, despite his continued membership in the Church of England, the human founder of the largest of all the separated free Protestant communions.

Among 'them which trouble Wesley' at this stage in this matter is the learned and saintly Bishop Butler. The wonderful work of Methodism in Bristol has begun,[2] Whitefield and Wesley being the instruments. With characteristic deference Wesley consults the bishop of the diocese. Butler said, 'Well, sir, since you ask my advice, I will give it freely. You have no business here; you are not commissioned to preach in this diocese. Therefore I advise you to go hence.' Wesley replied, 'My lord, my business on earth is to do what good I can. Wherever, therefore, I think I can do most good, there must I stay, so long as I think so. At present I think I can do most good here; therefore here I stay.'

*To his brother Charles.*

BRISTOL, *June* 23, 1739.

DEAR BROTHER,—My answer to them which trouble me is this; God commands me to do good unto all men; to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man commands me not to do this in another's parish; that is, in effect, not to do it at all. If it be just to obey men rather than God, judge ye.

'But,' they say, 'it is just that you submit yourself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.' True; to every ordinance of man which is not contrary to the com-

[1] See my chapter, 'Links Between the Ejected Clergy and Methodism,' in *The Ejectment of 1662.*

[2] See my *Wesley and Kingswood.*

mand of God. But if any man, bishop or other, ordain that I shall not do what God commands me to do, to submit to that ordinance would be to obey man rather than God.

And to do this, I have both an ordinary call and an extraordinary. My ordinary call is, my ordination by the bishop, 'Take thou authority to preach the word of God.' My extraordinary call is witnessed by the works God doeth by my ministry: which prove that He is with me of a truth in this exercise of my office.

Perhaps this might be better expressed in another way: God bears witness in an extraordinary manner, that my thus exercising my ordinary call is well pleasing in His sight.

But what if a bishop forbids this? I do not say as St. Cyprian, *Populus a scelerato antistite separare se debet.*[1] But I say, God being my helper, I will obey Him still: and if I suffer for it, His will be done. Adieu!

## 'I glean after Whitefield. . . . I dare in no wise join the Moravians.'

Here is an important letter to Charles Wesley, from a copy in the Colman Collection, now given with significant additions to it not before published.[2] It shows the critical condition of Wesley's work in London, some features of its early organisation, his resistance of the clericalism of his brother Charles above referred to, and the separateness of their teaching and work from that of Whitefield, and also that of the Moravians.[3] Charles Wesley endorsed this letter, 'when I incline to the Germans,' *i.e.* the Moravians.

Wesley was busy in London, knitting together his societies

[1] 'It is the duty of the people to separate themselves from a wicked bishop.'

[2] Compare Wesley's *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 448.

[3] See *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 307-500, and Mr. Curnock's illuminating summaries, for the facts of this intricate period.

which had been rent by secessions to Whitefield and Calvinism. He wants to set them singing his brother's hymns, which so clearly taught God's love to all—

> 'Father whose *everlasting love*
> Thy only Son for sinners gave,
> Whose grace to *all* did *freely* move,
> And sent Him down a *world to save*.'[1]

And Wesley needed the help of gifted and popular Thomas Maxfield, whom Charles Wesley wished to hinder. Eighteen months earlier than this letter Wesley, on his return to London after a preaching tour, had himself been shocked on finding that Maxfield, a layman, had 'turned preacher.' He had appointed him in his absence to tend the London Methodists at the Foundery and to help in informal services. Maxfield had been drawn on by the manifest acceptance and usefulness of his expositions. This, and the memorable reply of Wesley's mother, then resident at the Foundery, at this critical stage of the work completely carried Wesley's judgement, and Maxfield was allowed to preach. Mrs. Wesley said, 'John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favouring readily anything of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also yourself.' Wesley had previously permitted John Cennick, a surveyor and schoolmaster, to preach; but this was at remote, neglected Kingswood, near Bristol.

Reference is made later to Wesley's separation from Whitefield, and anything which savoured of Calvinism.[2] The Wesleys had already drawn away from the Moravians. As shown, in letters just given and in others,[3] they owed them and their system an incalculable debt for inspiration and pattern. But the Wesleys and their followers had been compelled to separate from the Moravians of Fetter

[1] Verse 1 in this booklet of seventeen hymns, then so significant in their restatement of Scripture teaching. The italics are as in the original.

[2] See p. 102. [3] See p. 95.

Lane, London, in July 1740, because of heresies which some had introduced there. Wesley declares that these are still present. Nowers was a leading Moravian. Note the pointed appeal, mingled of affection, pathos, and satire, which Wesley makes to his brother in the last paragraph of this significant letter, and also the solemn appeal which he makes to the Head of the Church. Six days later he had to write a farewell letter[1] to Joseph Humphreys, his first Moravian lay helper, who now followed Whitefield. To him also Wesley's first Methodist lay preacher, John Cennick, had gone—'to the right hand'; while the Rev. Westley Hall and now his brother Charles were going 'to the left,'—Moravianism.

*To his Brother Charles.*

LONDON, *April* 21, 1741.

It is not possible for me to set out yet. I must go round, and glean after G[eorge] W[hitefield]. I will take care of the books you mention. My Journal is not written yet. The bands and society are my first care. The bands are purged; the society is purging, and we continually feel Whose hand is in the work.

Send the new printed Hymns[2] immediately. We presented a thousand of Barclay[3] to G[eorge] W[hitefield]'s congregation on Sunday. On Sunday next I purpose to distribute a thousand more at the Foundery.

I am settling a regular method of visiting the sick here. Eight or ten have offered themselves for the work—who are like to have full employment; for more and more are taken ill every day. Our Lord will thoroughly purge His floor.

I rejoice in your speaking your mind freely. O let our

[1] See p. 221.

[2] *Hymns on God's Everlasting Love, To which is added the Cry of a Reprobate, and the Horrible Decree.*—Hymns by Charles Wesley, just printed in Bristol.

[3] A tract, *Serious Considerations on Absolute Predestination.*

love be without dissimulation! But I can't yet agree with you in all points. Who is your informer concerning . . . N . . . , Bath? I doubt the facts. Have you had them face to face? Brother Nowers is not . . .[1] Ask him about them. Let the premisses be but proved; and I greatly commend the conclusion.

I am not clear that Brother Maxfield should not expound at Greyhound Lane; nor can I as yet do without him. Our clergymen have miscarried full as much as the laymen; and that the Moravians are other than laymen, I know not.

As yet I dare in no wise join with the Moravians. 1. Because their whole scheme is mystical, not scriptural, refined in every point above what is written—immeasurably beyond the plain doctrine of the Gospel. 2. Because there is darkness and closeness in all their behaviour, and guile in almost all their words. 3. Because they not only do not practise, but utterly despise every self-denial and the daily cross. 4. Because they, upon principle, conform to the world, in wearing gold and gay or costly apparel. 5. Because they extend Christian liberty in this and many other respects beyond what is warranted by Holy Writ. 6. Because they are by no means zealous of good works, or at least only to their own people; and, lastly, because they make inward religion swallow up outward in general. For these reasons (chiefly) I will rather, God being my helper, stand quite alone, than join with them; I mean till I have full assurance that they will spread none of these errors among the little flock committed to my charge.

O my Brother, my soul is grieved for you. The poison is in you. Fair words have stolen away your heart. I fear you can't now find any at Bristol in so great liberty as Marshall.[2] No English man or woman is like the

[1] In love with her. (This is written in Byrom's shorthand.)
[2] A leading London Moravian.

Moravians! So the matter is come to a fair issue. Five of us did still stand together a few months since. But two are gone to the right hand (poor H[umphre]ys[1] and Sennick),[2] and two more to the left (Mr. Hall[3] and you). Lord, if it be Thy Gospel which I preach, Arise and maintain Thine own cause!

## 'I give you a Dilemma.'

The work was spreading on all hands. Its direction by one mind was a necessity at this stage. Meanwhile the claims of his family were increasing upon Charles Wesley. He now confined his labours to London and Bristol, and four years later he ceased to itinerate. Wesley was near the most dangerous illness of his life. It passed, and so did this dilemma. He and his brother had thirty-five more years of triumphant united work.

*To his brother Charles.*

LONDON, *October* 20, 1753.

DEAR BROTHER,—I came back from Bedford last night. I know not whether it was your will or no (I believe not), but I am sure it was God's will for you to call there. How do you judge whether a thing be God's will or no? I hope not by inward impressions. Let us walk warily. I have much constitutional enthusiasm; and you have much more.

I give you a dilemma. Take one side or the other. Either act really in connexion with me, or never pretend to it. Rather disclaim it, and openly avow you do not, and will not. By acting in connexion with me, I mean take counsel with me once or twice a year as to the places where you will labour. Hear my advice before you fix whether you take it or no. At present you are so far from this that I do not

[1] See p. 221. [2] See p. 103.
[3] Hall was 'by turns pious and profligate, a sad specimen of humanity.' He married Wesley's sister Martha.

even know when and where you intend to go, so far are you from following any advice of mine; nay, even from asking it. And yet I may say, without vanity, that I am a better judge in this matter than either Lady Huntingdon, Sally,[1] Jones,[2] or any other; nay, than your own heart; that is, will. I wish you all peace, zeal, and love.

## 'Here is Charles Perronet raving . . . and Charles Wesley . . . and I in the midst, staring.'

It was Wesley's design to revive the Church of England by forming his Methodist societies within it. This was hindered by the Church leaders and their persecution of the Methodists, and by the unwillingness of an ever growing number of Methodists to join the Church. To keep his followers from avowedly separating from the Church, and to justify their slight use of its services, became Wesley's anxious, incessant task.[3] This matter was also the chief cause of trouble between him and his brother Charles. It had been largely and sharply discussed at the annual Conference—the twelfth, at Leeds, a month earlier. Sixty-three preachers were present—twelve of them 'half-itinerants,' fifteen 'our chief local preachers.' On the ground of expediency, the decision was reached which Wesley gives below.

The question of the administration of the Lord's Supper by preachers who had not been ordained had emerged in Ireland, where Thomas Walsh was the chief. Charles Perronet and his brother Edward, like their father, the Rev. Vincent Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, helped Wesley. This was a crisis in the evolution of Methodism. Wesley's calmness and firmness were invaluable. The questions between the brothers remained unanswered. They were not fully answered until after Wesley's death. In the last letter to Charles, given in this series (page 90), Wesley states his position.

[1] Charles Wesley's wife.
[2] Dr. John Jones.
[3] See p. 133.

# TO BROTHERS AND SISTER

*To his brother Charles.*

LONDON, *June* 20, 1755.

DEAR BROTHER,—Do not you understand that they all promised by Thomas Walsh not to administer, even among themselves? I think that an huge point given up; perhaps more than they could give up with a clear conscience.

They 'showed an excellent spirit' in this very thing. Likewise when I (not to say you) spoke once and again, spoke *satis pro imperio*,[1] when I reflected on their answers, I admired their spirit, and was ashamed of my own.

The practical conclusion was, 'Not to separate from the Church.' Did we not all agree in this? Surely either you or I must have been asleep, or we could not differ so widely in a matter of fact!

Here is Charles Perronet raving 'because his friends have given up *all*'; and Charles Wesley, 'because they have given up nothing'; and I in the midst, staring and wondering both at one and the other.

I do not want to do anything more, unless I could bring them over to my opinion; and I am not in haste for that.

I have no time to write anything more till I have finished the *Notes*.[2] Nor am I in haste. I stand open to the light.

Let it be worded anyway. I will give ten pounds[3] between this and Christmas. This I think I can do, though I am just now saddled with Suky Hare,[4] to pay for her board as well as learning her trade. Why do you not send for the boy to Bristol? I do not object.

If Mr. Lampe's tunes are in print already, it is enough. I wish you had told me this six months ago, and the rest

[1] 'With sufficient authority.'
[2] His famous *Notes on the New Testament*.
[3] Most probably for the education of 'the boy,' Wesley Hall, their nephew.
[4] A relation of the Wesleys.

(which only we want) should have been printed before now. Pray send them by Michael Fenwick to me here. He will be in Bristol next week.

Cyprian is a terrible witness of the then Church, for he speaks it not as his own private sense, but an incontestable allowed rule. And by *antistes* there, I really believe he means the minister of a parish. That pinches me. Nevertheless, I think with you till I see more light, though I should be hard set to defend myself against a skilful adversary. When I am convinced it is my duty, I will follow Cyprian's advice. The same say you, and no more. I do not fluctuate yet; but I cannot answer the arguments on that side the question. Joseph Cownley says, 'For such and such reasons I dare not hear a drunkard preach, or read prayers.' I answer, 'I dare.' But I cannot answer his reasons.

I can stay here four or five weeks, then I purpose for Cornwall. Can you come hither when I go? My love to my sister.[1] Adieu!

## 'God's dealings with us have been extraordinary.'

*To his brother Charles.*

PLYMOUTH DOCK, *September* 28, 1760.

DEAR BROTHER,—I have no objection to the bestowing another reading upon Mr. Law's letters.[2] But I think I have answered them *quantum sufficit* by the letter in *Lloyd's Evening Post*; only, if need be, it may be inserted in some of the monthly magazines. Since I wrote that letter I have procured (which I could not before) the 'Address to the

[1] *I.e.*, sister-in-law, Mrs. Charles Wesley, her husband's 'faithful Sally.'

[2] The Rev. William Law, M.A., author of the *Serious Call*, to which work Wesley was deeply indebted at one stage. He had censured Wesley for his condemnation of the Mystics.

Clergy.' It is amazing! Nothing is more plain than that he has never *read* it. I doubt whether he ever *saw* it.

I care not a rush for ordinary means, only that it is our duty to try them. All our lives, and all God's dealings with us, have been extraordinary from the beginning. We have all reason, therefore, to expect that what has been will be again. I have been preternaturally restored more than ten times. I suppose you will be thus restored *for* the journey; and that *by* the journey, as a natural means, your health will be re-established, provided you determine to spend all the strength which God shall give you to His work.

Cornwall has suffered miserably by my long absence, and the unfaithfulness of the preachers. I left seventeen hundred in the societies, and I find twelve hundred. If possible, you should see Mr. Walker.[1] He has been near a month at the Hot-Wells [Bristol]. He is absolutely a Scot in his opinions, but of an excellent spirit.

Mr. Stonehouse's horse performs to a miracle. He is considerably better than when I had him. On Friday evening (if nothing extraordinary occur) I hope to be at Bristol between five and six. Probably I shall leave Shepton Mallet at two. My love to Sally.

If John Fisher is at Bristol, pray desire him to send what Thomas Seccomb left (with an account) for his poor mother. Adieu!

## 'Quack Medicine' and 'Namby-pambical Hymns.'

Wesley was often physician as well as divine. His book, *Primitive Physic*, was primitive, old-fashioned, and largely empirical. It was a well-meant effort, as the preface says—

[1] Rev. Samuel Walker of Truro. He formed 'conversation classes,' but condemned Methodist class-meetings, and dreaded separation from the Church.

'Without obliging or disobliging any man living, a mean hand has made here some little attempt towards a plain and easy way of curing most diseases.' He now urges the use of electricity. He was one of the first public men to show interest in Franklin's startling discovery, and gave a clever summary of it to his people in his *Journal* (February 17, 1753). He set up apparatus at several centres in London, 'that any that desired it may try the virtue of this surprising medicine.'

He stirs his brother to more hymn-writing, but not of 'namby-pambical' hymns.[1] These Wesley hated; and he resented the handling and mangling of his brother's and his own hymns. Brother Sheen and all must note that. In his famous sharp preface to his *Collection of Hymns* for the Methodists (1780), he welcomed any to use the hymns, 'provided they print them just as they are; but I desire they would not attempt to mend them, for they really are not able. None of them is able to mend either the sense or the verse. Therefore I must beg of them one of these two favours; either to let them stand just as they are, to take them for better, for worse; or to add the true reading in the margin, or at the bottom of the page, that we may no longer be accountable either for the nonsense or for the doggerel of other men.[2]

*To his brother Charles.*

LONDON, *December* 26, 1761.

DEAR BROTHER,—Spend as many hours in the congregation as you can. But exercise alone will strengthen your lungs; or electrifying, which I wonder you did not try long ago. Never start at its being a quack medicine. I desire no other; particularly since I was so nearly murdered by being cured of my ague *secundum artem*.[3] You

[1] See above, p. 67.

[2] One hundred and fifty-four alterations and various readings have been traced in the forms given by hymn-menders to the lines of Charles Wesley's hymn, 'Jesu, lover of my soul.'

[3] 'According to the rules of art.'

should always (and I hope you do) write standing and sloping.

We are always in danger of enthusiasm; but I think no more now than any time these twenty years. The word of God runs indeed; and loving faith spreads on every side. Do not take my word, or any one else's, but come and see. It is good to be in London now.

It is impossible for me to correct my own books. I sometimes think it strange that I have not one preacher that will and can. I think every one of them owes me so much service.

Pray tell R. Sheen I am hugely displeased at his reprinting the Nativity Hymns and omitting the very best hymn in the collection—'All glory to God in the sky,' etc.

I beg they may never more be printed without it. Omit one or two, and I will thank you. They are *namby-pambical.* I wish you would give us one or two invitatory hymns. We want such exceedingly. My love to Sally. My wife gains ground. Adieu!

## 'There is need of a Lady's Hand as well as a Lion's Heart.'

Indeed there was. All the five persons named here involved Wesley in anxiety. Happily, he and his brother Charles stood together in their treatment of them, although Charles was inclined to move impetuously. Wesley knew that some troubles settle themselves if left alone. Maxfield and Bell were not of this sort. The former was among Wesley's first and ablest lay-preachers. He was ordained by the Bishop of Derry, so that 'that good man (Wesley) might not work himself to death.' Charles Wesley thought him the 'stubbornest, proudest of men.' He caused serious division among the London Methodists, and took some with him when he separated from Wesley in the next year. Bell disturbed them by his wild enthusiasm, pretensions to

superhuman saintliness, and prophecies of the end of the world.

'But I go on my way,' says Wesley. 'This year,' he wrote later, 'from the beginning to the end, was a year never to be forgotten. Such a season I never saw before. Such a multitude of sinners were converted, in all parts of England and Ireland, and so many were filled with pure love.'

*To his brother Charles.*

LONDON, *January* 5, 1762.

DEAR BROTHER,—You take me right. I am far from pronouncing my remarks *ex cathedra*. I only desire they may be fairly considered.

I was a little surprised to find Bishop Warburton[1] so entirely unacquainted with the New Testament: and, notwithstanding all his parade of learning, I believe he is no critic in Greek.

If Thomas Maxfield continues as he is, it is impossible that he should continue long with us. But I live in hope of better things. Meantime, *festina lente!*[2]

I baptized two Turks two or three weeks ago. They *seem* to be strong in faith, and their story is very probable; but I am not *sure* it is true. I wait for further evidence.

This week I have begun to speak my mind concerning five or six honest enthusiasts. But I move only a hair's-breadth at a time; and by this means we come nearer and nearer to each other. No sharpness will profit. There is need of a lady's hand as well as a lion's heart.

Mr. Whitefield[3] has fallen upon me in public open-mouthed, and only not named my name. So has Mr. Madan. But let them look to it. I go on my way. I

[1] See above, p. 36 and below, p. 124.
[2] 'Haste onwards with caution.'
[3] See below, p. 103.

have a sufficient answer as to George Bell; but I will not give it before the time.

We join in love to you both. My wife gains ground. Adieu!

## 'I was thinking on Christian Perfection.'

A valuable letter of definitions, distinctions, and affirmations. It summarises Wesley's *Plain Account* of this characteristic Methodist doctrine. He thought he saw at this period five hundred witnesses to the truth of it. Charles Wesley held another view—that saintliness, the fulness of Christian life and power, is attained by struggle and discipline rather than as 'an act of faith in the mercy, truth, and power of God.'[1] He expressed this in his two volumes of *Short Hymns on Select Passages of Holy Scripture*. These appeared in 1762 and drew this letter.

*To his brother Charles.*

*Circa* 1762.

Dear Brother,—Some thoughts occurred to my mind this morning which I believe it may be useful to set down, the rather because it may be a means of our understanding each other clearly; that we may agree as far as ever we can, and then let all the world know it.

I was thinking on Christian perfection with regard to the thing, the manner, and the time.

1. By perfection I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God and man, ruling all the tempers, words, and actions: the whole heart and the whole life.

I do not include an impossibility of falling from it, either in part or in whole. Therefore I retract several expressions in our hymns which partly express, partly imply, such an impossibility.

And I do not contend for the term *sinless*, though I do not object against it.

[1] *Life* by Jackson, vol. ii. chap. xxii.

Do we agree or differ here? If we differ, wherein?

2. As to the manner, I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul by faith, by a simple act of faith: consequently, in an instant.

But I believe a gradual work, both preceding and following that instant.

Do we agree or differ here?

3. As to the time, I believe this instant generally is the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body.

But I believe it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before death.

Do we agree or differ here?

I believe it is usually many years after justification; but that it *may be* within five years, or five months, after it. I know no conclusive argument to the contrary. Do you?

If it *must be* many years after justification, I would be glad to know how many. *Pretium quotus arrogat annus?*[1] And how many days, or months, or even years, can you allow to be between perfection and death? How far from justification must it be? and how near to death?

If it be possible, let you and me come to a good understanding, both for our own sakes and for the sake of the people.

'Come let us arise and shake ourselves.'

Here is a leader indeed, and of a truth humble, self-devoted, insistent. 'We must, we must!' Deborah would have sung again,

> 'For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
> Bless ye the Lord';

and Chaucer's commendation was earned—

> 'Christ's lore, and His apostles twelve
> He taught; but first he followed it himself.'

[1] What year would be good enough?

Then the demand and command is passed from these captains to the rank and file, as shown in the letter which follows this.

*To his brother Charles.*

LEWISHAM, *February* 28, 1766.

DEAR BROTHER,—We must, we must, you and I at least, be all-devoted to God! Then wives, and sons, and daughters, and everything else will be real, invaluable blessings. *Eia age, rumpe moras!*[1] Let us *this day* use all the power we have! If we have enough, well; if not, let us this day expect a fresh supply. How long shall we drag on thus heavily, though God has called us to be the chief conductors of *such a work*? Alas! what conductors! If I am (in some sense) the head, and you the heart, of the work, may it not be said, 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint'? Come, in the name of God, let us arise and shake ourselves from the dust! Let us strengthen each other's hands in God, and that without delay. Have *senes sexagenarii*[2] (who would have thought we should live to be such!) time to lose? Let you and I, and our house, serve the Lord in good earnest. May His peace rest on you and yours!

I desire all the Society to meet me on Tuesday evening (March 11), after preaching. Adieu!

## 'Concerning the Work of God in these Kingdoms.'

*To his brother Charles.*

ATHLONE, *June* 21, 1767.

DEAR BROTHER,—For some time I have had many thoughts concerning the work of God in these kingdoms. I have been surprised that it has spread so far, and that it

[1] Virgil's line: 'Come, bestir yourself, and lay aside delay.'
[2] 'Old men that have attained to their sixtieth year.'

has spread no farther. And what hindered? Surely the design of God was to 'bow a nation to His sway': instead of which, there is still only a Christian here and there, and the rest are yet in the shadow of death; although those who would profit by us have need to make haste, as we are not likely to serve them long.

What, indeed, has hindered? I want to consider this. And must we not first say, *Nos Consules?*[1] If we were more holy in heart and life, thoroughly devoted to God, would not all the preachers catch our fire and carry it with them throughout the land? Is not the next hindrance the littleness of grace (rather than of gifts) in a considerable part of our preachers? They have not the whole mind that was in Christ; they do not steadily walk as He walked. And therefore the hand of the Lord is stayed; though not altogether; though He does work still. But it is not in such a degree as He surely would, were they holy as He that hath sent them is holy.

Is not the third hindrance the littleness of grace in the generality of the people? Therefore they pray little, and with little fervency, for a general blessing; and therefore their prayer has little power with God. It does not, as once, shut and open heaven. Add to this, that as there is much of the spirit of the world in their hearts, so there is much conformity to the world in their lives. They ought to be both burning and shining lights; but they neither burn nor shine. They are not true to the rules they profess to observe; they are not holy in all manner of conversation. Nay, many of them are salt that has lost its savour; the little savour they once had. Wherewith, then, shall the rest of the land be seasoned? What wonder that their neighbours are as unholy as ever?

But what can be done to remedy this? I wish you would

[1] 'We who are the chiefs.'

give an attentive reading to the minutes of the last Conference, and see if it will not be worth our while to enforce them with all our might. We have weight enough, and can enforce them. I know not who can and will when we are gone. Let us now fix things on as firm a foundation as possible, and not depend upon seeing another Conference.

Richard Burke, John Dillon, and one or two more in this kingdom, are truly devoted men; so are a few of the preachers in England. *Si sic omnes!*[1] What would be able to stand against them?

How go you on in London? How is Mr. Whitefield, and my Lady,[2] and Mr. Madan, and Romaine, and Berridge? Do you converse with those that are most alive, and sparingly and warily with them that are dead while they live?

I hope Sally and your young ones are well. O what a work is it to train up children for heaven!

Peace be with you and yours!

## 'A Son, Father, Grandfather preaching the genuine Gospel.'

Wesley hoped that 'one of the three' of Charles Wesley's boys might be a minister. John James, whose birth was the occasion of this reference, died in infancy; two, Charles and Samuel, were gifted musicians.[3] The Wesleys were rightly proud of their ancestry.[4] The Rev. John White was the Patriarch of Dorchester (1605). He saw the possibilities of the Dorset traders' venture in North America, and helped to make a refuge there, in Massachusetts, for the Pilgrim Fathers.[5]

[1] 'O that the rest were like-minded.'
[2] Lady Huntingdon.
[3] See chapter xi.
[4] See above, p. 12.
[5] *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. vii. p. 15, and *The United States*, by Chancellor and Hewes, vol. i. pp. 216-19.

*To his brother Charles.*

LONDON, *January* 15, 1768.

DEAR BROTHER,—Six or seven hundred pounds is brought to a conference, of which five hundred at least pays the debt.[1] Then extraordinary demands are answered. How much remains for law? I am now near three hundred pounds out of pocket, which I borrowed to pay Mr. Pardon. When I receive some more from Newcastle, I will send it to Bristol; *probably very soon.*

It is highly probable one of the three will stand before the Lord. But, so far as I can learn, such a thing has scarce been for these thousand years before, as a son, father, grandfather, *atavus*, *tritavus*, preaching the gospel, nay, and the genuine gospel, in a line. You know Mr. White, sometime Chairman of the Assembly of Divines, was my grandmother's father.

Look upon our little ones at Kingswood as often as you can. A word from you will be a quickening to them. O how many talents we are entrusted with!

'But what account can thy bad steward make?' Indeed we have need to gird up the loins of our mind, and run faster the small remainder of our race. 'One thing!' Let us mind one thing only; and nothing, great or small, but as it ministers to it.

Peace be with you and yours! Adieu.

## 'I have neither Leisure nor Inclination to write a Book.'

Here is Wesley's method by which he gave so many books to his followers and the world.[2] His brother urged him to

[1] The debt on chapels in the Connexion.
[2] See above, p. 7.

write a book on Young's *Night Thoughts*. He cannot be drawn to that, nor to hear Handel's music, in which Charles was now deeply interested, because of his son Charles, a musical prodigy.

The last line of this letter hints that his wife[1] has deserted him. Was she at Newcastle?

*To his brother Charles.*

LONDON, *December* 17, 1768.

DEAR BROTHER,—I thank you for your reproof. There is reason in what you say. If there was not evil, there was the appearance of evil.

Matters have not been well carried on at Liverpool; but 'what cannot be cured must be endured.'

Why, you simpleton, you are cutting me out a month's work. Nay, but I have neither leisure nor inclination to write a book. I intend only: 1. to leave out what I most dislike; 2. to mark what I most approve of; 3. to prefix a short preface; and I shall run the hazard of printing it in Bristol. There you yourself can read the proof-sheets.

You do well with regard to my sister Emily. What farther is wanting I will supply. I hear nothing from or of our friend at Newcastle. I have no time for Handel or Avison now.

Peace be with you and yours. Adieu!

I am now a mere Fellow of a College again.

## 'I firmly believe I am a Scriptural Bishop as much as any Man in England.'

Words from this letter have sounded out all over the world. Two years before his brother's death Wesley published it in his *Arminian Magazine* (1786) with the heading, 'On the Church: in a Letter to the Rev. ——.' The omitted name was that of his brother Charles.[2] It gives

[1] See below, p. 356. [2] See his *Life* by Jackson, vol. ii. p. 394.

Wesley's final judgement on his own attitude towards the Church of England. 'I do not separate . . . I vary.' He names some, not all, the features in which he varied from it. The Rules for the Methodists had always left them free in this matter. His brother Charles declared that Wesley separated from the Church, and in his reply to this letter refers to a 'fatal step at Bristol.' This was taken in 1784, and was the ordination there, at 6 Dighton Street, by Wesley, who was only a presbyter, of some of his preachers. Wesley says that he had never exercised in England the right which he had to ordain. He means *for* England. The preachers he ordained, as just stated, were for America. Later, he ordained others for Scotland; then for England. In all, twenty-seven of his preachers were so set apart by him. 'Ordination is separation' from the Church of England, was the legal dictum of Lord Mansfield on Wesley's act, since it was that of a presbyter only.

In that year also Wesley constituted his Conference, giving it control of his preachers and chapels. What more could he do to indicate separation? Charles Wesley disowned his bitter juvenile line here quoted as to 'heathenish priests'; his brother was compelled to say it was 'a sad truth. I see fifty times more of England than you do; and I find few exceptions to it.' Wesley's assertions of his adherence to the Church, attendance at it, and commands that his followers should not leave it, were largely nullified by his declaration here, as often, that he would do what 'I believe meet, right, and my bounden duty, Church or no Church'; and more by his actions. These decided the course of Methodism. In 1788 he wrote: 'A kind of separation has already taken place, and will inevitably spread, though by slow degrees.'

*To his brother Charles.*

PLYMOUTH DOCK, *August* 19, 1785.

REV. SIR,—I will tell you my thoughts with all simplicity, and wait for better information. If you agree with me,

well; if not, we can (as Mr. Whitefield used to say) agree to disagree.

For these forty years I have been in doubt concerning the question: What obedience is due to

'Heathenish priests and mitred infidels?'

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

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

But here another question occurs, 'What is the Church of England?' It is not 'all the people of England.' Papists and Dissenters are no part thereof. It is not all the people of England except Papists and Dissenters. Then we should have a glorious Church indeed! No; according to our Twentieth Article, a particular Church is 'a congregation of faithful people' (*cœtus credentium*, the

words in our Latin edition) 'among whom the word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered.' Here is a true logical definition, containing both the essence and the properties of the Church. What then, according to this definition, is the Church of England? Does it mean, 'All the believers in England (except the Papists and Dissenters) who have the word of God and the sacraments duly administered among them?' I fear this does not come up to your idea of 'the Church of England.' Well, what more do you include in that phrase? 'Why, all the believers that adhere to the doctrine and discipline established by the Convocation under Queen Elizabeth.' Nay, that discipline is well-nigh vanished away, and the doctrine both you and I adhere to.

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

# CHAPTER IV

## CONCERNING THE METHODISTS AND METHODISM

THE letters now given show us Wesley as he builds Methodism. At his death there were 120,183 Methodist members with 511 ministers; of these, 48,165 members with 193 ministers were in America and Canada.[1]

### 'If this Work be of God . . . who shall overthrow it?'

'The rise of the United Society' of Methodists, says Wesley, was 'first in London in the latter end of 1739, and then in other places.'[2] There were Methodists and Methodist societies before they were united in one connexion, under one leader and the same Rules.[3] One such society met in Fetter Lane, London. Of this, Wesley was a member. This letter shows us the emergence of another such society at Bristol in this memorable year of Methodist origins. Wesley usually wrote to his 'Brethren at Fetter Lane' on Monday, as here, and gave them a day by day, sometimes almost hour by hour, account of his experience and his doings. The letters were addressed 'To Mr. James Hutton, Bookseller, near Temple Bar, London.' He was

[1] The statistics of world-wide Methodism in 1913 were:—ministers, 54,658; lay-preachers, 105,384; Church members and probationers, 9,228,385; Sunday-schools, 88,384; officers and teachers, 865,838; Sunday scholars, 7,991,037; churches, etc., 100,916; members and adherents estimated, 32,728,000.

[2] *A New History of Methodism*, vol. ii. Appendix D.

[3] Green, in his *John Wesley, Evangelist*, traces these and the merging of them in the United Society, pp. 291; cf. 190, 192.

Wesley's friend, 'Dear Jemmy,' and a prominent Moravian. This deeply interesting and vivid letter adds much to the account of these events given by Wesley in his *Journal*, and has not hitherto appeared in complete permanent form. In it the evolution of new religious organisms goes forward before our eyes.

Whitefield has been in Bristol. His burning enthusiasm and fervid Christian oratory, and his open-air preaching among the colliers of Kingswood, has searched and stirred many. They must be drawn into Christian fellowship. The Church of England wants them not, indeed shuts them out of her buildings. Whitefield must leave the city to range further on his errands of mercy. He calls Wesley to take his place.[1] Not even Whitefield's vigorous imagination prefigured the results which were to follow the response. Under the brooding Spirit of God, as Wesley takes up the task, life and form and features appear which will be reproduced a thousand times in city, town, village, and hamlet, in cottage homes and the green fields.

Here is the incessant toil of a lover of souls who hastes with quick-springing sustained interest from duty to duty; here the abundant use of, and constant appeal to, the Bible and the Bible only; and here the offering of the good news of God's love, as on the hillsides of Galilee, wherever the people can be gathered, and it is free for all. On this Monday, April 2, Wesley conducts his first open-air service in England. Vast crowds eagerly listen. Christian people look on the sight with wonder. Presbyterians, Anabaptists, a minister, soldiers, and several of the rich are there. They that fear the Lord, women and men, draw together in groups and bands that they may speak often one to another. Some declare aloud what God has done for their souls. We see the beginnings of Methodist fellowship—its bands and class-meetings. The criminals and the poor in Newgate, the prison of the city, are visited. Tears course down the cheeks of grimy colliers at Kingswood and Hanham, and

[1] Wesley lodged at the house of Whitefield's sister, Mrs. Grevil, named in letter, in Wine Street—the Winch Street.

their natures are renewed. The trees are clapping their hands, and the little hills are rejoicing on every side.

'Break forth into singing,
Ye trees of the wood,
For Jesus is bringing
Lost sinners to God.'

This is a great week in the history of England and of Christianity.

*To the Brethren at Fetter Lane, London,*
*by Mr. James Hutton.*

BRISTOL, *April* 9, 1739.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—On Sunday evening, the 1st instant, I began to expound, at Nicholas Street Society, our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. The room, passage, and staircase were filled with attentive hearers. On Monday I talked with several in private to try what manner of spirit they were of; and at 4 in the afternoon went to a brickyard adjoining to the city,[1] where I had an opportunity of preaching the Gospel of the kingdom (from a little eminence) to 3000 or 4000 people. The Scripture on which I spoke was this, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' At 7 I began expounding the Acts of the Apostles to the society in Baldwin Street. We had more company than the room would hold, and the power of our Lord was with us.

On Tuesday, the 3rd, I began preaching at Newgate (as I continue to do every morning) on the Gospel of St. John.

[1] This and other historic Methodist sites in Bristol and Kingswood, and the significant events of these days, are traced in my *Wesley and Kingswood.*

Many Presbyterians and Anabaptists came to hear. Afterwards I transcribed some of the Rules of our Society for the use of our (future) brethren here. In the evening I expounded on 'Blessed are they that mourn,' at Nicholas Street Society. I hope God spake to the hearts of many there.

The next day the audience increased at Newgate. At 4 in the afternoon I offered the free grace of God from those words, 'I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely,' to about 1500 in a plain near Baptist Mills, a sort of suburb or village not far from Bristol, where many, if not most, of the inhabitants are Papists. O may they effectually lay hold on the one Mediator, between God and man, Christ Jesus!

About 7 in the evening, three women, who desire only to know Jesus Christ and Him crucified—Mrs. Norman, Mrs. Grevil, and Mrs. Panou—agreed to meet together once a week to confess their faults to one another, and pray one for another, that they may be healed. And Mrs. Panou desired she might propose their design to her two sisters, and offer them the liberty of joining with them. At 8, Samuel Wathen, surgeon, Richard Cross, upholsterer, Charles Bonner, distiller, and Thomas Westal, carpenter, met and agreed to do the same; who also desired they might make the offer of joining with them to three or four of their acquaintance. If this work be not of God, let it come to nought. If it be, who shall overthrow it?

On Thursday, at 5 in the evening, I began the Epistle to the Romans, at a society in Castle Street, where, after the expounding, a poor man gave glory to God by openly confessing the things he had done. About 8 a young w[illegible] the [illegible] of Nicholas Street Society sank down as on[illegible] d[illegible]m, and [illegible]man prayed for her, and she soon revived, an[illegible]rs. Grevil, na[illegible]d. We strengthened and comforted both in body a[illegible] [illegible] went home [illegible] in spirit.

A Presbyterian minister was with us at Newgate on Friday and Saturday. On Friday evening we were at a society without Lawford's Gate, where, the yard being full as well as the house, I expounded part of the first chapter of the first Epistle of St. John at the window. On Saturday evening Weavers' Hall was quite full. A soldier was present at the preaching on Monday, two at the expounding on several of the following days, and five or six this evening. I declared to them all that they were damned sinners; but the Gospel was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

Beginning at 7 (an hour earlier than usual) at the Bowling Green (which is in the heart of the city) yesterday morning, there were not, I believe, above 1000 or 1200 persons present. And the day being very cold and stormy (beside that much rain had fallen in the night), many who designed it were hindered from going to Hanham Mount, which is at least 4 miles distant from the town. Between 10 and 11 I began preaching the Gospel there in a meadow on the top of the hill. Five or 600 people from Bristol (of whom several were Quakers) were there, and (I imagine) about 1000 of the colliers. I called to them in the words of Isaiah, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money. Come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.'

On Rose Green (which is a plain upon the top of a high hill) are several small hills, where the old coalpits were. On the edge of one of these I stood in the afternoon, and cried in the name of my Master, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me' (as the Scriptures have said) 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' About 5000 were present, many of whom received the word gladly, and all with deep attention.

From thence we went to the society in Baldwin Street; whose room, containing but a small part of the company, we opened the doors and windows, by which means all that was spoken of the true Christian life, described in the end of the 2nd chapter of the Acts, was heard clearly by those in the next room, and on the leads, and in the court below, and in the opposite house, and the passage under it. Several of the soldiers and of the rich were there; and verily, the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

My dear brethren, who among you writes first to strengthen our hands in God? Where is our Brother Bray[1] and Fish, and whosoever else finds his heart moved to send unto us the word of exhortation? You should no more be wanting in your instruction to, than your prayers for, Your affectionate, but weak, brother.

'Turning to Nash she said, "Sir, we come for the Food of our Souls. You care for your Body."'

A month has passed. Wesley writes another of his usual Monday letters on his work in the west of England. Again, this record of formative events and historic scenes in Methodism is fuller and fresher in this newsy, descriptive, talking letter than that in his *Journal*. As one handles the faded original, all its words seem to quiver with life, down to the exclamations of the postscript, 'O Jemmy, Jemmy.' The scenes reappear, humorous and pathetic by turns. What a dark England it is! 'I offered them books,' says Wesley, 'but they could not read.' As on page 53, we give Wesley's many capitals in his letter.

Here are some preludious drops of the showers and wild storms of opposition which Wesley and his helpers will meet. And here are his consummate tact and happy wit which will help him through as if he possessed a charmed

[1] A brazier and a godly man in Little Britain, London, at whose house Charles Wesley lodged.

life. Beau Nash, the strange leader and exacting ruler of fashion and folly, was styled 'King of Bath.' On his gains by gambling he held high revel in that city, and drove about in royal style. Here he rudely pushes through the crowd of listeners to stop Wesley preaching. The famous encounter was evidently in the open air, probably in Richard Marchant's field. Neither the Pump Room, where Nash's portrait and 'Rules' now hang, nor the Assembly Room, would contain the 'thousand new hearers' of that day. When he asked why the people came to hear Wesley, he got his answer home from an unnamed sufferer from man's ancient hunger.

*To the Brethren at Fetter Lane, London,*
*by Mr. James Hutton.*

BRISTOL, *June* 7, 1739.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—After I came from preaching at Weavers' Hall on Monday, many came to advise me not to go to the Brickyard in the afternoon, because of some terrible things that were to be done there if I did. This Report brought many thither of what they call the better sort, so that it added a thousand, at least, to the usual audience. . . . My nose began bleeding in the midst of the Sermon, but presently stopped, so that I went on without interruption and the power of God fell on all, so that the scoffers stood looking one on another, but none opened his mouth.

All Bath on Tuesday was big with expectation of what a great Man was to do to me there; And I was much intreated not to preach, because no one knew what might happen. By this Report also I gained (I believe) a thousand new Hearers, of the Rich and Great of this world. I told them plainly, 'The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, High and Low, Rich and Poor, one with another.' They appeared not a little surprised, and sinking apace into Seriousness, when their Champion appeared, and having forced his way

through the People, asked by what authority I did these things. I answered, 'By the Authority of Jesus my Master, conveyed to me by the (now) Archbishop of Canterbury.' He said it was contrary to the Act of Parliament: there was an Act of Parliament against Conventicles. I replied, 'The Conventicles there mentioned were seditious Meetings. But there were no such here.' He said, 'Yes, it was—for I frighted People out of their wits.' I asked 'If he had ever heard me preach? If not, how he could judge of what he never heard?' He said, 'By common Report, for he knew my Character.' I then asked, 'Pray, Sir, are you a Justice of Peace, or the Mayor of this City?' Answer: 'No, I am not.' Q. 'Why, then, Sir, Pray, by what authority do you ask me these things?' (Here he paused a little, and I went on.) 'Give me leave, Sir, to ask, is not your name Nash?' Answer: 'Sir, my name is Nash.' [Wesley says], 'Why then, Sir, I trust common Report is no good Evidence of Truth.' (Here the Laugh turned full against him, so that he looked about and could scarce recover. Then a Bystander said) 'Sir, let an old woman answer him.' Then turning to Mr. Nash she said, 'Sir, if you ask what we come here for; we come for the Food of our Souls. You care for your Body. We care for our Souls.' He replied not one word, but turned and walked away.

We immediately began praying for him, and then for all the Despisers. As we returned, they followed and hissed us along the Streets: But when any of them asked, Which is He? And I answered 'I am He,' they were immediately silent. Ten or 12 fine ladies followed me into the Passage of Richard Marchant's House. I turned back to them and told them I supposed what they wanted was to look at me; such they were very welcome to do: Perceiving them to be more Serious, I added, 'I do not expect the Rich of the world to hear me. For I speak plain Truth; a

thing you know little of, and do not desire to know.' A few words more passed between us, and, I hope, not in vain.

Wednesday 6. Two men and one woman were baptized. About 2500 were at Baptist Mills, to whom I explained the ninth of St. John. In the evening, after our Meeting in Baldwin Street, I went (in obedience to God's command by Lot) to the house of Mrs. Cooper, the supposed Prophetess. Her agitations were nothing near so violent as those of Mary Plewit are. She prayed awhile (as under the Hand of God) and then spoke to me for above half an hour. What Spirit she spoke by I know not. The words were good. Some of them were these. 'Thou art yet in darkness. But yet a little while and I will rend the veil, and Thou shalt see the King in his Beauty.' I felt no power while she spoke. Appearances are against her, but I judge nothing before the time.

On Thursday, after exhorting the little Society at Pensford (who stand as a rock, continually battered but not shaken), I went to Priestdown, where we had a larger Company than before. I preached on 'What must I do to be saved?' It rained hard, but none went away except one young woman, who came again in a few minutes. In the midst of the Prayer Two men (who came for that purpose) began singing a Ballad. After a few mild words (for I saw none that were angry) we began singing a Psalm, which utterly put them to Silence. We then prayed for them, and they were quite confounded. I offered them Books, but they could not read. I trust this will be a day much to be remembered by them, for the loving-kindness of the Lord.

My brethren, Be Meek and Lowly; Be Wise, but not Prudent. Stir up the gift that is in you by keeping close together. Love one another, and be ye Thankful. You

are much in the Heart, as well as in the Prayers of, Your affectionate Brother in Christ.

Jemmy Hutton, If I have not 50 more Hymns next Friday, I will not thank you. Where are the 12 Haliburton's and the Nalson's[1] Sermons which Mr. Seward writes me word He ordered you to send me, with 20 Hymns on his account.

O Jemmy, Jemmy!

'It is a poor Case that you and I must be talking thus.'

Here Wesley defends Methodist work and teaching in a letter to the Rev. George Whitefield (1714-1770). Argument, plea, satire, rebuke, are all here. At Oxford, in London, Bristol, and Kingswood, he was closely associated with the Wesleys in their early work. In a letter in the Everett Collection, Whitefield styles Wesley 'my Spiritual Father in Christ,' and in our letter Wesley makes pathetic appeal to him as his son. Whitefield was an impassioned dramatic evangelist. The immediate effects of his appeals in England and America recall those which followed Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. A month earlier than this letter, a separation occurred between Whitefield and the Wesleys, occasioned by different doctrinal views. John Wesley preached his classic sermon 'On Free Grace'[2] (Rom. viii. 32) in June 1739. It was soon published in Bristol. This proved to be another decisive step taken there. Southey thought it 'one of the most able and eloquent of all Wesley's discourses, a triumphant specimen of impassioned argument.' It is a reasoned statement of evangelical Arminianism which offers the saving grace of God freely to all men, and a stern repudiation of Calvinism and its teach-

[1] So Wesley always spelled the name of Robert Nelson, the Nonjuror, author of *Festivals and Fasts*.

[2] Curiously, Wesley did not include this in the volumes of his standard sermons, but among his controversial writings (see *Works*, 1811 ed., vol. viii. p. 409). Southey and Tyerman gave large extracts.

ing of the election of some men to eternal life and some to eternal death. Charles Wesley's hymn of thirty-six stanzas, entitled 'Universal Redemption,' was appended to it. Whitefield's teaching had become pronouncedly Calvinistic. He declared to Charles Wesley, 'I cannot preach the gospel now without speaking of election.' 'So there were now,' says Wesley, 'two sorts of Methodists: those for particular and those for general redemption.' Adherents of the former view were gathered into the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion and the Calvinistic (Presbyterian) Methodist Church in Wales; while those who held the latter view followed Wesley. Happily, the strained relations between him and the Wesleys were soon relieved, and continued to be brotherly and cordial until Whitefield's death. Wesley and the defenders and opponents of these opposed views were involved in perhaps the bitterest of all doctrinal controversies. Prejudiced reports were behind such letters from Whitefield as Wesley here replies to.

The quaint references in this letter to the earliest Methodist buildings, their beginnings and simple furnishings, are full of interest. 'The Society Room at Bristol'—Wesley's 'New Room in the Horsefair,' and Broadmead (now the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist (Presbyterian) Chapel)—was erected in May 1739, to accommodate two religious societies in the city. Many of their members became Methodists, and this building was their meeting-place. In part it is the oldest Methodist building in the world. Much of it was rebuilt in 1748. With its many small rooms and primitive furniture, it is sacred to all Methodists everywhere, as redolent of Wesley and his early work and workers.[1] 'The school for poor colliers' which his letter refers to also still stands in the grounds of the Reformatory at Kingswood, Bristol. It is the oldest entire Methodist building in the world.[2] John Cennick, named in the letter, formerly a

[1] *Wesley and Kingswood*, p. 127 *et seq.*; *Journal*, vol. ii. pp. 194, 253.

[2] *Wesley and Kingswood*, pp. 49, 119 *et seq.* While these pages are in the press, local representative Methodists are raising a fund to preserve the exterior and interior of this ancient building as nearly as possible unaltered, while providing for necessary repairs; and for erecting memorial tablets on it and other historic Methodist buildings in Bristol and Kingswood.

surveyor and schoolmaster, came to help Wesley at Kingswood, and was the first Methodist lay-preacher.[1] He followed Whitefield, and later became a Moravian preacher.

*To the Rev. George Whitefield.*

LONDON, *April* 27,[2] 1741.

Would you have me deal plainly with you, my brother? I believe you would. Then by the grace of God I will.

Of many things I find you are not rightly informed. Of others you speak what you have not well weighed.

'The Society Room at Bristol,' you say, 'is adorned.' How? Why with a piece of green cloth nailed on the desk, two sconces for eight candles each in the middle, and—— Nay, I know no more. Now which of these could be spared. I cannot tell: nor would I desire either more adorning or less.

'But lodgings are made for me or my brother.' That is, in plain English, there is a little room by the school where I speak with the people that come to me; and a garret in which a bed is placed for me. And do you grudge me this? Is this the voice of my brother, my son Whitefield?

You say further that 'the children at Bristol are clothed as well as taught.' I am sorry for it; for the cloth is not paid for yet, and was bought without my consent or knowledge.

'But those of Kingswood have been neglected.' This is not so, notwithstanding the heavy debt which lay upon it: one master and one mistress have been in the house ever since it has been capable of receiving them. A second master was placed there some months since, and I have long been seeking for two proper mistresses. So that as

[1] *Wesley and Kingswood*, p. 88; *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. p. 292.
[2] Wesley's diary for this day makes no mention of writing to Whitefield. It does on the next day, 28th.—*Journal*, vol. ii. p. 450.

much has been done (as matters stand), if not more than I can answer for to God and man.

Well but, 'You sent down brother Cennick to be schoolmaster, whom I have turned out.' What, from being schoolmaster? You know he never was so at all. You know he now neither designs nor desires it.

Hitherto then there is no ground for the heavy charge of 'perverting your design for the poor colliers.' Two years since, your design was to build them a school that their children also might be taught to fear the Lord. To this end you collected some money more than once; how much I cannot say till I have my papers. But this I know, it was not near one-half of what has been expended on the work. This design you then recommended to me, and I pursued it with all my might through such a train of difficulties as (I will be bold to say) you have not yet met with in your life. For many months I collected money wherever I was; in Kingswood for that house only; in Bristol for the schoolhouse to be built there; in other places, generally for Bath. In June 1739, being able to procure none any other way, I bought a little piece of ground and began building thereon, though I had not then a quarter of the money requisite to finish. However, taking all the debt upon myself, the creditors were willing to stay; and then it was that I took possession of it in my own name, viz. when the foundation was laid, and from that time to this. Only I immediately made my will fixing my brother and you to succeed me therein.

Now, my brother, I will answer your main question. I think you can claim no right to that building, either in equity or law, before my demise. And every honest lawyer will tell you the same. But if you repent of your collecting the money towards it, I will repay it as speedily as I can; although I now owe more than two hundred pounds on account of Kingswood School only.

But it is a poor case that you and I must be talking thus. Indeed, these things ought not so to be. It lay in your power to have prevented all, and yet to have borne testimony to what you call the truth. If you had disliked my sermon,[1] you might have printed another on the same text, and have answered my proofs, without mentioning my name. This had been fair and friendly. Whereas, to proceed as you have done is so far from friendship that it is not moral honesty. Moral honesty does not allow of a treacherous wound, or of the bewraying of secrets. I will refer the point even to the judgement of Jews, Turk, infidel, or heretic.

Indeed among the latter (*i.e.* heretics) you publicly place me; for you rank all the maintainers of *universal redemption* with Socinians themselves. Alas, my brother, do you not know even this—that the Socinians allow *no redemption* at all? that Socinus himself speaks thus, *Tota redemptio nostra per Christum metaphora*?[2] and says expressly Christ did not die *as a ransom* for any, but only as an *example* for all mankind? How easy were it for me to hit many other palpable blots in that which you call an answer to my sermon? And how above measure contemptible would you then appear to all impartial men either of sense or learning? But I spare you. Mine hand shall not be upon you. The Lord be judge between me and thee!

Alas, my brother, in what manner are you proceeding now? In what manner have you been proceeding, even since you unwisely put that weapon into the enemies' hands? You have been continually gathering up all the improper expressions of those who were supposed to be (in some sense) perfect, and then reciting them in your public preaching to the scoffers of the world. Now you well know that this was

[1] The sermon entitled "Free Grace" printed in above.
[2] "The whole of our redemption in Christ is a metaphor."

just the same thing (in effect), and made the same impression on your hearers, as if under every one of those pictures [you wrote], 'John Wesley.' Was this fair or upright dealing? A Spaniard would have behaved more tenderly to his English prisoner.

Put the case now that I should make reprisals!—that I should deal with you as you have done with me!—that I should publicly repeat all the wrong expressions which I have heard from predestinarians! What would follow? Why, all that heard me would run from a predestinarian as they would from a mad dog.

But you are very safe. I cannot meet you here. This field you have all to yourself. I cannot dwell on those things which have an immediate tendency to make you odious and contemptible. The general tenor both of my public and private exhortations, when I touch thereon at all (as even my enemies know if they would testify), is, 'Spare the young man, even Absalom, for my sake.'

## 'Every Man has Authority to save the Life of a dying Man . . . every Christian to save Souls.'

By a parallel argument between the case of a doctor whose title is proved by the cures he effects, and the results of the labours of his lay preachers, Wesley defends these workers as true ministers of the Gospel. How shrewdly he applies his test all round! His logic is remorseless. Twenty-three years later he repeated this letter to another objector.[1]

*To a serious Clergyman.*

TULLAMORE, *May* 4, 1748.

REVEREND SIR,—I have at present neither leisure nor inclination to enter into a formal controversy; but you will

[1] 'A letter to the Reverend Mr. Fleury,' *Works*, vol. ix. p. 182.

give me leave just to offer a few hints relating to the subject of last night's conversation :—

I

1. Seeing life and health are things of so great importance, it is, without question, highly expedient that physicians should have all possible advantages of learning and education.

2. That trial should be made of them, by competent judges, before they practise publicly.

3. That after such trial, they be authorised to practise by those who are empowered to convey that authority.

4. And that, while they are preserving the lives of others, they should have what is sufficient to sustain their own.

5. But supposing a gentleman, bred at the university in Dublin, with all the advantages of education, after he has undergone all the usual trials, and been regularly authorised to practise:

6. Suppose, I say, this physician settles at —— for some years, and yet makes no cures at all; but, after trying his skill on five hundred persons, cannot show that he has healed one; many of his patients dying under his hands, and the rest remaining just as they were before he came:

7. Will you condemn a man who, having some skill in physic, and a tender compassion for those who are sick or dying all around him, cures many of those, without fee or reward, whom the doctor *could* not cure?

8. At least *did* not (which is the same thing as to the case in hand), were it only for this reason, because he did not go to them, and they would not come to him?

9. Will you condemn him because he has not learning, or has not had an university education?

What then? He cures those whom the man of learning and education cannot cure!

10. Will you object that he is no physician, nor has any authority to practise?

I cannot come into your opinion. I think, *Medicus est qui medetur*, 'He is a physician who heals'; and that every man has authority to save the life of a dying man.

But if you only mean he has no authority to take fees, I contend not: for he takes none at all.

11. Nay, and I am afraid it will hold, on the other hand, *Medicus non est qui non medetur*; I am afraid, if we use propriety of speech, 'He is no physician who works no cure.'

12. 'O, but he has taken his degree of Doctor of Physic, and therefore has authority.'

Authority to do what? 'Why, to heal all the sick that will employ him.' But (to waive the case of those who will not employ him; and would you have even their lives thrown away?) he does not heal those that do employ him. He that was sick before is sick still; or else he is gone hence, and is no more seen.

Therefore his authority is not worth a rush; for it serves not the end for which it was given.

13. And surely he has no authority to kill them, by hindering another from saving their lives!

14. If he either attempts or desires to hinder him, if he condemns or dislikes him for it, it is plain to all thinking men he regards his own fees more than the lives of his patients.

II

Now, to apply: 1. Seeing life everlasting, and holiness, or health of soul, are things of so great importance, it is highly expedient that ministers, being physicians of the soul, should have all advantages of education and learning.

2. That full trial should be made of them in all respects, and that by the most competent judges, before they enter

on the public exercise of their office, the saving souls from death.

3. That after such trial they should be authorised to exercise that office by those who are empowered to convey that authority. (I believe bishops are empowered to do this and have been so from the apostolic age.)

4. And that those whose souls they save ought, meantime, to provide them what is needful for the body.

5. But suppose a gentleman bred at the university of Dublin, with all the advantages of education, after he has undergone the usual trials, and been regularly authorised to save souls from death:

6. Suppose, I say, this minister settles at —— for some years, and yet saves no souls at all, saves no sinners from their sins; but after he has preached all this time to five or six hundred persons, cannot show that he has converted one from the error of his ways; many of his parishioners dying as they lived, and the rest remaining just as they were before he came:

7. Will you condemn a man who, having compassion on dying souls, and some knowledge of the gospel of Christ, without any temporal reward, saves them from their sins whom the minister *could* not save?

8. At least *did* not, nor ever was likely to do it; for he did not go to them, and they would not come to him.

9. Will you condemn such a preacher because he has not learning, or has not had an university education?

What then? He saves those sinners from their sins whom the man of learning and education cannot save.

A peasant being brought before the College of Physicians at Paris, a learned doctor accosted him, 'What, friend, do you pretend to prescribe to people that have agues? Dost thou know what an ague is?' He replied, 'Yes, sir, an ague is what I can cure, and you cannot.'

Will you object, 'But he is no minister, nor has any authority to save souls'?

I must beg leave to dissent from you in this. I think he is a true evangelical minister, Διάκονος, 'servant' of Christ and His Church, who οὕτως διακονεῖ, 'so ministers' as to save souls from death, to reclaim sinners from their sins; and that every Christian, if he is able to do it, has authority to save a dying soul.

But if you only mean, 'He has no authority to take tithes,' I grant it. He takes none. As he has freely received, so he freely gives.

11. But, to carry the matter a little farther; I am afraid it will hold, on the other hand, with regard to the soul as well as the body, *Medicus non est qui medetur*, 'He is not a physician who effects no cures.' I am afraid reasonable men will be much inclined to think, 'He that saves no souls is no minister of Christ.'

12. 'O, but he is ordained, and therefore has authority.'

Authority to do what? 'To save all souls that will put themselves under his care.' True; but (to waive the case of them that will not, and would you desire that even those should perish?) he does not, in fact, save them that are under his care. Therefore, what end does his authority serve? He that was a drunkard is a drunkard still. The same is true of the Sabbath-breaker, the thief, the common swearer. This is the best of the case; for many have died in their iniquity, and their blood will God require at the watchman's hand.

13. For surely he has no authority to murder souls, either by his neglect, by his smooth, if not false, doctrine, or by hindering another from plucking them out of the fire and bringing them to life everlasting.

14. If he either attempts or desires to hinder him, if he condemns or is displeased with him for it, how great reason

is there to fear that he regards his own profit more than the salvation of souls!—I am, Reverend sir, Your affectionate brother.

## 'The unspeakable Advantages which the Methodists enjoy in regard to Public Worship.'

The London Methodist services here described and so warmly commended by Wesley were held in the Foundery and the West Street Chapel. He or his brother Charles, or some other clergyman conducted the service, read and offered extempore prayers, preached there, and administered the sacraments. In the absence of the Wesleys one of the Methodist preachers usually preached the sermon. It was not until long afterwards (1826) that the Methodist preachers were allowed to give the Lord's Supper, of which Wesley speaks, at City Road Chapel, the successor of the old Foundery. This sacerdotal restriction brought the Society into straits and made it sometimes dependent on unworthy clerics.[1]

Wesley had evidently been present in his journeyings at ineffective Church services, and had been distressed by unseemly behaviour thereat. Choir-boys, clergymen, and parish clerks get stern words. As to the last, he was perhaps thinking of the ridiculous clerk [2] who served at Epworth. Wesley liked quick, hearty singing. He often sang eight times a day, privately, or with others. His picture of the London Methodist services may be compared with the freer and heartier ones at Bristol which Joseph Williams, a Dissenter of Kidderminster, saw in 1739 and described. Charles Wesley's fervent preaching and praying greatly impressed him. He says, 'Never did I hear such praying or such

[1] See *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. p. 489.

[2] He gave out there 'a hymn of my own composing,' to mark the return of King William to London after a journey, thus—

'King William is come home, come home,
King William home is come;
Therefore together let us sing
The hymn that 's call'd *Te D'um*.'

—Clarke, *Wesley Family*, p. 233.

singing; never did I see and hear such marks of fervency of spirit in the service of God, as that in this Society. At the close of every single petition, a serious "Amen," like a rushing sound of waters, ran through the whole Society.'

*To a Friend.*

PENRYN, CORNWALL, *September* 20, 1757.

DEAR SIR,—The longer I am absent from London, and the more I attend the service of the Church in other places, the more I am convinced of the unspeakable advantage which the people called Methodists enjoy. I mean with regard to public worship, particularly on the Lord's Day. The church where they assemble is not gay or splendid, which might have been a hindrance on the one hand; nor sordid or dirty, which might give distaste on the other; but plain as well as clean. The persons who assemble there are not a giddy crowd who come chiefly to see and be seen; nor a company of goodly, formal, outside Christians whose religion lies in a dull round of duties; but a people most of whom do, and the rest earnestly seek to, worship God in spirit and in truth. Accordingly they do not spend their time there in bowing and curtsying, or in staring about them; but in looking upward and looking inward, in hearkening to the voice of God, and pouring out their hearts before Him.

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

Nor are their solemn addresses to God interrupted either

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

Nor is it a little advantage as to the next part of the service, to hear a preacher whom you know to live as he speaks, speaking the genuine gospel of present salvation through faith, wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost; declaring present, free, full justification, and enforcing every branch of inward and outward holiness. And this you hear done in the most clear, plain, simple, unaffected language; yet with an earnestness becoming the importance of the subject, and with the demonstration of the Spirit.

With regard to the last and most awful part of divine service, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, although we

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

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

## 'You are not in the Society. Why not?'

Since the Methodists enjoy such advantages, and other privileges also, Wesley here urges one to join in membership with them. He is a worshipper already. Here are—to adapt a famous title from Richard Baxter—'More Reasons for Church Membership, and No Reason against it.' Wesley published this letter in his *Journal*, and 'I desire it may be seriously considered by those to whom it belongs.' It deserves such consideration. Age has not withered this earnest pleading. It might be copied and sent to-day to any devout, generous, unattached Christian, like this, on the fringe of a Christian Church. It might well be

reprinted and widely used. Where is there a more cogent appeal on this scriptural duty and privilege?

*To a Worshipper among the Methodists.*

MANCHESTER, *July* 11, 1764.

DEAR SIR,—There was one thing, when I was with you, that gave me pain: you are not in the society. But why not? Are there not sufficient arguments for it to move any reasonable man? Do you not hereby make an open confession of Christ, of what you really believe to be His work, and of those whom you judge to be, in a proper sense, His people and His messengers? By this means do you not encourage His people, and strengthen the hands of His messengers? And is not this the way to enter into the spirit, and share the blessing, of a Christian community? Hereby, likewise, you may have the benefit of the advices and exhortations at the meeting of the society: and also of provoking one another, at the private meetings, to love and good works.

The ordinary objections to such an union are of little weight with you. You are not afraid of the expense. You already give unto the Lord as much as you need do then: And you are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, even in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Perhaps you will say, 'I am joined in affection.' True; but not to so good effect. This joining half-way, this being a friend to, but not a member of, the society, is by no means so open a confession of the work and servants of God. Many go thus far who dare not go farther, who are ashamed to bear the reproach of an entire union. Either you are ashamed, or you are not. If you are, break through at once; if you are not, come into the light, and do what those well-meaning cowards dare not do. This imperfect union is not so

encouraging to the people, not so strengthening to the preachers. Rather it is weakening their hands, hindering their work, and laying a stumbling-block in the way of others; for what can any man think who knows you are so well acquainted with them, and yet do not join their society? What can he think but that you know them too well to come any nearer to them; that you know that kind of union to be useless, if not hurtful? And yet by this very union is the whole (external) work of God upheld throughout the nation; besides all the spiritual good which accrues to each member. O delay no longer, for the sake of the work, for the sake of the world, for the sake of your brethren! Join them inwardly and outwardly, heart and hand, for the sake of your own soul. There is something not easily explained in the fellowship of the Spirit, which we enjoy with a society of living Christians. You have no need to give up your share therein, and the various blessings that result from it. You have no need to exclude yourself from the benefits of the advice and exhortations given from time to time. These are by no means to be despised, even supposing you have yourself more understanding than him that gives them. You need not lose the benefit of those prayers which experience shows are attended with a peculiar blessing. 'But I do not care to meet a class; I find no good in it.' Suppose you find even a dislike, a loathing of it; may not this be natural, or even diabolical? In spite of this, break through, make a fair trial. It is but a lion in the way. Meet only six times (with previous prayer), and see if it do not vanish away. But if it be a cross, still bear it for the sake of your brethren. 'But I want to gain my friends and relations.' If so, stand firm. If you give way, you hurt them, and they will press upon you the more. If you do not, you will probably gain them, otherwise you confirm both their wrong notions and wrong tempers. Because I

love you I have spoken fully and freely; to know that I have not spoken in vain will be a great satisfaction to, Your affectionate brother.

## 'A great desire of Union between the Preachers of the Gospel.'

The letter from the Colman Collection, given incompletely by Tyerman, is of special interest. Selina, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791), founded the denomination which bears her name, and by reason of her abilities, character, and social and religious influence, is one of the notable figures of the eighteenth century.[1] She appointed Whitefield and other clergymen as her chaplains, so that without difficulty they might minister irregularly to the neglected, rich and poor. As shown on page 102, the doctrines which she held and vigorously encouraged were in sharp contrast with those of Wesley and his followers. The rival leaders were sometimes in conflict, even at the end of their long lives, as we shall see in Wesley's letter to Lady Maxwell (page 418). Onlookers and critics referred to them satirically as Pope John and Pope Joan.

Here, however, as before, Wesley seeks an amicable arrangement between the two bands of workers, and others also. The Countess appeared to be anxious for it, as did also a few clergymen. A month earlier than this letter, Wesley had sent an important proposal[2] for it to fifty of them. He sought unity with them, not in 'opinion,' 'expression,' or 'outward order,' but 'a good understanding' and friendliness in 'propagating vital religion.' The Countess sent him an encouraging letter. Wesley names the Rev. Richard Hart, vicar of St. George's Church, Bristol, in which city the Methodists were numerous, who was one of three clergymen who responded to his catholic appeal. But the Countess did not attend the next Methodist Con-

[1] See her *Life and Times*, by a member of the Houses of Shirley and Hastings (1839), and *The Countess of Huntingdon and her Circle*, by Sarah Tytler.

[2] *Journal*, vol. v. *et seq.*

ference at Bristol, as Wesley suggests. Twelve of the clergy to whom Wesley had appealed did so, and requested that the Methodist preachers should be withdrawn from every parish where there is 'an awakened minister.' Neither Wesley nor his preachers, except Charles Wesley, would agree to this, and this attempt to secure brotherly concord and co-operation failed.

*To the Countess of Huntingdon.*

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, *May* 16, 1764.

MY DEAR LADY,—I am much obliged to your ladyship for your encouraging answer, which plainly speaks a heart devoted to God, and longing for the furtherance of His kingdom. I have likewise received an exceeding friendly letter from Mr. Hart, testifying a great desire of union between the preachers of the gospel. Only he carries the point considerably farther than I do, proposing a free debate concerning our several opinions. Now this, I fear, we are not yet able to bear. I fear it might occasion some sharpness of expression, if not of spirit too, which might tear open the wounds before they are fully closed. I am far from being assured that I could bear it myself, and perhaps others might be as weak as I. To me therefore it still seems most expedient to avoid disputing of every kind, at least for a season, till we have tasted each other's spirit, and confirmed our love to each other. I own freely, I am sick of disputing; I am weary to bear it. My whole soul cries out 'Peace! Peace!' at least with the children of God, that we may all unite our strength to carry on the war against the 'rulers of the darkness of this world.' Still, I ask but one thing, I can require no more, 'Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? If it be, give me thy hand; let us take sweet counsel together, and strengthen each other in the Lord.'

And the advantage in the proposal I make is this: If it

should be (which God forbid !) that I should find none to join with me therein, I will (by God's help) comply with it myself. None can hinder this; and, I think, my brother will be likeminded, yea, and all who act in connection with us. Probably it might contribute much to this end, if those of our brethren who have opportunity would be at Bristol on Thursday, the ninth of August. We might then spend a few hours in free conversation, either apart from, or in conjunction with, the other preachers. I apprehend if your ladyship could then be near, it might be of excellent service, in confirming any kind and friendly disposition which our Lord might plant in the hearts of His servants. Surely if this can be effectually done, we shall again see Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Then

> 'The children of thy faith and prayer
> Thy joyful eyes shall see;
> Shall see the prosperous church, and share
> In her prosperity!'

—I am, my dear lady, your ladyship's most affectionate and obedient servant.

## 'By these Marks the Methodists *desire* to be distinguished.'

With much spirit and vigour Wesley here defines and defends a characteristic Methodist doctrine, Christian Perfection, and deals with the notorious Dr. Dodd. In his tract *The Character of a Methodist*, published in 1742,[1] Wesley says that the distinguishing marks of a Methodist 'are not his opinions,' 'his words or phrases,' his 'actions, customs, or usages of an indifferent nature; nor is he distinguished by his laying the whole stress of religion on any single part of it.' 'A Methodist is one who has "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him"; one who "loves the Lord his God with

[1] *Works*, vol. viii. p. 340.

all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength." God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul.' 'And while he thus always exercises his love to God, by praying without ceasing, rejoicing evermore, and in everything giving thanks, this commandment is written in his heart, "That he who loveth God, love his brother also." And he accordingly loves his neighbour as himself; he loves every man as his own soul.' Chalmers was evidently right when he said, 'Methodism is Christianity in earnest.' Wesley here emphasises that this is the ideal: what the Methodist desires to be. For himself he says, 'I tell you flat, I have not attained the character I draw.'

William Dodd (1729-1777), here 'Rusticulus,' had a sad career. He was a fashionable preacher in London and a Royal chaplain. From this office he was displaced for offering a large bribe to secure a valuable Church living. Soon afterwards he was convicted of forgery, for which crime he was executed. He had pursued Wesley and the Methodists for many years, and poured the vilest abuse upon him and them. Nevertheless, he thrice sent for Wesley to visit him in Newgate. Wesley went. He believed Dodd died penitent and pardoned.[1]

*To the Editor of* Lloyd's Evening Post.

LONDON, *March 5*, 1767.

SIR,—Many times the publisher of the *Christian Magazine* has attacked me without fear or wit; and hereby he has convinced his impartial readers of one thing at least—that (as the vulgar say) his fingers itch to be at me; that he has a passionate desire to measure swords with me. But I have other work upon my hands; I can employ the short remainder of my life to better purpose.

The occasion of his late attack is this:—Five or six and thirty years ago, I much admired the character of a perfect Christian drawn by Clemens Alexandrinus. Five or six and

[1] See his account of Dr. Dodd, *Arminian Magazine*, 1783, p. 358.

twenty years ago, a thought came into my mind of drawing such a character myself, only in a more scriptural manner, and mostly in the very words of Scripture. This I entitled *The Character of a Methodist*, believing that curiosity would incite more persons to read it, and also that some prejudice might thereby be removed from candid men. But that none might imagine I intended a panegyric either on myself or my friends, I guarded against this in the very title-page, saying, both in the name of myself and them, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.' To the same effect I speak in the conclusion, 'These are the principles and practices of our sect: these are the marks of a true Methodist'; *i.e.* a true Christian, as I immediately after explain myself: 'By these alone do those who are in derision so called *desire* to be distinguished from other men' (p. 11). 'By these marks do we *labour* to distinguish ourselves from those whose minds or lives are not according to the Gospel of Christ' (p. 12).

Upon this Rusticulus, or Dr. Dodd, says, 'A Methodist, according to Mr. Wesley, is one who is perfect, and sinneth not in thought, word, or deed.'

Sir, have me excused. This is not 'according to Mr. Wesley.' I have told all the world I am not perfect; and yet you allow me to be a Methodist. *I tell you flat, I have not attained the character I draw.* Will you pin it upon me in spite of my teeth?

'But Mr. Wesley says, the other Methodists have.' I say no such thing. What I say, after having given a scriptural account of a perfect Christian, is this:—'By these marks the Methodists *desire* to be distinguished from other men; by these we *labour* to distinguish ourselves.' And do you not yourself *desire* and *labour* after the very same thing?

But you insist, 'Mr. Wesley affirms the Methodists' (*i.e.*

all Methodists) 'to be perfectly holy and righteous.' Where do I affirm this? Not in the tract before us. In the front of this I affirm just the contrary; and that I affirm it anywhere else is more than I know. Be pleased, sir, to point out the place. Till this is done, all you add (bitterly enough) is mere *brutum fulmen*; and the Methodists (so called) may still declare (without any impeachment of their sincerity) that they do not come to the holy table 'trusting in their own righteousness, but in God's manifold and great mercies.'—I am, sir, Yours, etc.

In an important note[1] Wesley cleverly summarised the system, condition, and position of Methodism thirty years after its rise. Professor Liden, a distinguished Swede, professor of History at Lund, visited England in 1769. He was much attracted by the Wesleys and their work, and heard Wesley preach. Wesley answered his questions thus:—

'1. There are many thousand Methodists in Great Britain and Ireland which are not formed into societies. Indeed, none are but those (or rather a part of those) who are under the care of Mr. Wesley. These at present contain a little less than thirty thousand persons.

2. The places at which there is constant preaching (three or four times a week at least) are the Foundery, near Moorfields, the French Church (in West Street), near the Seven Dials (at these two places there is preaching every morning and evening), the French Church, in Spitalfields, the chapel in Snowsfields, Southwark, the chapel in Wapping, and one not far from Smithfield.

3. They have many schools for teaching, reading, writing, and arithmetic, but only one for teaching the higher parts of learning. This is kept in Kingswood, near Bristol, and

[1] From 'British Methodism,' vol. ii. p. 799, by Rev. Thos. E. Brigden, in Hurst's *History of Methodism*.

contains about forty scholars. These are all boarders, and might be abundantly more, but the house will not contain them. "The rules of Kingswood School" give an account of the books read and the method pursued therein.

4. I believe some of the best preachers are James Morgan, Peter Jaco, Jos. Cownley, T. Simpson, John Helton, John Pawson, Alex. Mather, Tho. Olivers, Sam Levick, Duncan Wright, Jacob Rowell, Christopher Hopper, Dan Bumstead, Alexander M'Nab, and William Thompson. Each of these preachers has his food wherever he labours, and twelve pounds a year for clothes and other expenses. If he is married, he has ten pounds a year for his wife. This money is raised by the voluntary contributions of the societies. It is by these likewise that the poor are assisted where the allowance fixed by the laws of the land does not suffice. Accordingly the stewards of the societies in London distribute seven or eight pounds weekly among the poor.

5. Mr. Whitefield is a Calvinist, Messrs. Wesley are not; this is the only material difference between them. And this has continued without any variation ever since Mr. Whitefield adopted those opinions. The consequences of that difference are touched upon in the letter sent two or three years ago to the persons named therein.

6. There are only three Methodist societies in America; one at Philadelphia, one at New York, and one twelve miles from it. There are five preachers there; two have been at New York for some years; three are lately gone over. Mr. Whitefield has published a particular account of everything relative to the Orphan House (in Georgia).

7. The most eminent writers against the Methodists are the late Bishop of London (Dr. Gibson), Dr. Church, the Bishop of Gloucester (Dr. Warburton), and Bishop Lavington. Bishops Gibson and Lavington were thoroughly convinced of their mistake before they died. I believe

Dr. Church was so too. None, I think, but Mr. Perronet has wrote *for* the *Methodists*.'

'They cannot join with me any longer than they are directed by me.'

To an unknown correspondent, Wesley here contends for his own absolute supremacy in Methodism over his preachers, and in its Conference. He had often to do so in these later days when his helpers had apprehended the New Testament principles of church government, had behind them a record of devoted service, and within them as deep a concern for God's work, in their measure, as he had. He had just expelled his godly and gifted preacher Alexander M'Nab[1] of Bath because he declined to permit Edward Smythe, an Irish clergyman whom Wesley wished 'to preach every Sunday evening in our chapel while he remained in Bath,' to do so.[2]

[London], *January* 1780.

My dear Brother,—You seem to me not to have well considered the rules of a helper, or the rise of Methodism. It pleased God, by me, to awaken, first my brother and then a few others, who severally desired of me, as a favour, that I would direct them in all things. After my return from Georgia, many were both awakened and converted to God. One, and another, and another of these desired to join with me as sons in the Gospel, to be directed by me. I drew up a few plain rules (observe, there was no Conference in being), and permitted them to join me on these conditions. Whoever, therefore, violates these conditions, particularly that of being directed by me in the work, does *ipso facto* disjoin himself from me. This Brother M'Nab has done (but he cannot see that he has done amiss); and he would have it a common cause: that is, he would have all the preachers

[1] Tyerman, *Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 303.

[2] See p. 91.

do the same. He thinks 'they have a right to do so.' So they have. They have a right to disjoin themselves from me whenever they please. But they cannot in the nature of the thing join with me any longer than they are directed by me. And what if fifty of the present preachers disjoined themselves! What should I lose thereby? Only a great deal of labour and care, which I do not seek, but endure, because no one else either can or will.

You seem likewise to have quite a wrong idea of a Conference. For above six years after my return to England, there was no such thing. I then desired some of my preachers to meet me, in order to advise, not control me. And you may observe, they had no power at all, but what I exercised through them. I chose to exercise the power which God had given me in this manner, both to avoid ostentation, and gently to habituate the people to obey them when I should be taken from their head. But as long as I remain with them, the fundamental rule of Methodism remains inviolate. As long as any preacher joins with me, he is to be directed by me in his work. Do not you see then, that Brother M'Nab, whatever his intentions might be, acted as wrong as wrong could be? and that the representing of this as the common cause of the preachers was the way to common destruction? the way to turn all their heads, and to set them in arms? It was a blow at the very root of Methodism. I could not therefore do less than I did. It was the very least that could be done for fear that evil should spread.

I do not willingly speak of these things at all, but I do it now out of necessity, because I perceive the mind of you and some others is a little hurt by not seeing them in their true light.—I am, your affectionate brother.

'Persons who knew no more of saving Souls than of catching Whales. . . . I mourn for poor America.'

In this loyal, reasonable letter Wesley pleads with the Bishop of London, the eminent Dr. Robert Lowth (1710-1787), to ordain one of his preachers to minister to Methodists in America. He and Lowth had dined together about three years before at the house of Wesley's valued friend, Ebenezer Blackwell.[1] Behind the aged Wesley's pathetic pleadings, as for souls for which he must give an account, were his own missionary experiences in Georgia and Savannah, and his ample present information as to the religious needs of the vast country and the character of the colonial clergy there. He had previously applied to the bishop for a clerical helper and had been refused. The request now preferred met with a like fate. Four years later (1784), at Bristol, whence he sent this letter, Wesley himself, 'with Thomas Coke and James Creighton, presbyters of the Church of England,' gave presbyterial ordination to two Methodist preachers, Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, to meet the crying needs of America; and Wesley ordained Coke as superintendent of the great far-spreading work there.[2]

*To Bishop Lowth.*

BRISTOL, *August* 10, 1780.

MY LORD,—Some time since I received your Lordship's favour, for which I return your Lordship my sincere thanks. Those persons did not apply to the Society,[3] 'because they had nothing to ask of them.' They wanted no salary for their minister; they were themselves able and willing to maintain him. They therefore applied, by me, to your Lordship, as members of the Church of England, and

[1] See below, p. 289.
[2] See *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. p. 231.
[3] 'The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in Foreign Parts'; see p. 259.

desirous so to continue, begging the favour of your Lordship, after your Lordship had examined him, to ordain a pious man who might officiate as their minister.

But your Lordship observes, 'There are three ministers in that country already.' True, my Lord: but what are three to watch over all the souls in that extensive country? Will your Lordship permit me to speak freely? I dare not do otherwise. I am on the verge of the grave, and know not the hour when I shall drop into it. Suppose there were threescore of those missionaries in the country, could I in conscience recommend these souls to their care? Do they take any care of their own souls? If they do (I speak it with concern!) I fear they are almost the only missionaries in America that do. My Lord, I do not speak rashly: I have been in America; and so have several with whom I have lately conversed. And both I and they know what manner of men the far greater part of these are. They are men who have neither the power of religion nor the form; men that lay no claim to piety nor even decency.

Give me leave, my Lord, to speak more freely still: perhaps it is the last time that I shall trouble your Lordship. I know your Lordship's abilities and extensive learning: I believe, what is far more, that your Lordship fears God. I have heard that your Lordship is unfashionably diligent in examining the candidates for holy orders; yea, that your Lordship is generally at the pains of examining them yourself. *Examining them!* In what respects? Why, whether they understand a little Latin and Greek, and can answer a few trite questions in the science of divinity! Alas, how little does this avail! Does your Lordship examine whether they serve Christ or Belial? whether they love God or the world? whether they ever had any serious thoughts about heaven or hell? whether they have any real desire to save their own souls, or the souls of others? If not, what

have they to do with holy orders? And what will become of the souls committed to their care?

My Lord, I do by no means despise learning: I know the value of it too well. But what is this, particularly in a Christian minister, compared to piety? What is it in a man that has no religion? 'As a jewel in a swine's snout.'

Some time since I recommended to your Lordship a plain man, whom I had known above twenty years, as a person of genuine piety and of unblameable conversation. But he neither understood Greek nor Latin; and he affirmed, in so many words, that he believed that it was his duty to preach, whether he was ordained or no. I believe so too. What became of him since, I know not; but I suppose he received Presbyterian ordination; and I cannot blame him if he did. He might think any ordination better than none.

I do not know that Mr. Hoskins[1] had any favour to ask of the Society. He asked the favour of your Lordship to ordain him, that he might minister to a little flock in America. But your Lordship did not see good to ordain him. But your Lordship did see good to ordain, and send into America, other persons who knew something of Greek and Latin, but who knew no more of saving souls than of catching whales.

In this respect also I mourn for poor America; for the sheep scattered up and down therein. Part of them have no shepherds at all, particularly in the northern colonies; and the case of the rest is little better, for their own shepherds pity them not. They cannot; for they have no pity on themselves. They take no thought or care about their own souls.

Wishing your Lordship every blessing from the Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, I remain, My Lord, Your Lordship's dutiful son and servant.

[1] See below, p. 259.

In these two new letters to John Valton, one of his preachers, Wesley maintains his personal supremacy, and then that of the annual Conference, to which he summoned whom he would, to appoint the preachers. Trustees were not allowed to place or displace them. 'The case' here referred to was that of the chapel at Birstal, Yorkshire, the trustees of which maintained their right to do so. The letter to the Dewsbury trustees, which follows these, fixed the annual Conference in Methodism as the supreme court in regard to her preachers. This was vital to the Connexional system.[1]

## 'The Question is, Methodism or no Methodism.'

*To John Valton.*

St. Neots, *December* 3, 1782.

My dear Brother,—You are thoroughly satisfied that there is nothing wherein conscience is not concerned, which I would not do for *your* sake. But here conscience is very deeply concerned. 'What I do, I do unto the Lord.' The question is, in the last resort, Methodism or no Methodism? A blow is struck at the very roots of our whole discipline, as appears by the short state of the 'case' which I have sent to Joseph Benson. And if this work is not obviated while I live, probably it never will be. None can stem the tide when I am gone; therefore I must now do what I can, God being my helper. And I know the fierceness of man shall turn to his praise!—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Should Trustees place and displace Preachers?'

*To John Valton.*

London, *January* 16, 1783.

My dear Brother,—Here are two questions. 1. Whether I have acted right? I answer, No. I ought to

[1] Tyerman, *Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 373.

have resolutely withstood all importunity. 2. Whether trustees should place and displace preachers? (This is the essential question.) I say 'No,' again; otherwise intolerable consequences will follow.—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

Pray send my love to George Brown and tell him I have his letter.

## 'By whom shall the Preachers be judged?

*To the trustees of Dewsbury chapel.*

LONDON, *July* 30, 1788.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—The question between us is, 'By whom shall the preachers sent, from time to time, to Dewsbury be judged?' You say, 'By the trustees.' I say, 'By their peers—the preachers met in Conference.' You say, 'Give up this, and we will receive them.' I say, 'I cannot, I dare not, give up this.' Therefore, if you will not receive them on these terms, you renounce connection with your affectionate brother.

## 'I leave these my last Words with you.'

When time had shaken the aged Wesley by the hand, to use his own striking phrase, he enrolled in Chancery a Deed of Declaration (Feb. 28, 1784) constituting a Conference of one hundred of his preachers, to continue his relation to Methodism and all his preachers. The Conference in its successors, in several communities and many lands, was destined to become a Church court of unique authority and influence. As Wesley had almost two hundred preachers, the selection now made aroused jealousies and fears. Hence this famous letter. Perhaps he recalled cases like that of Alexander M'Nab (page 126). He lived almost six years after preparing this message. It was read at the Conference after his death (1791), when it was unanimously resolved 'That all the preachers that are in full connexion with them shall

enjoy every privilege that the members of the Conference enjoy, agreeably to the above-written letter of our venerable deceased Father in the Gospel.'

*To the Methodist Conference.*

CHESTER, *April* 7, 1785.

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

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

In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for Kingswood School, in disposing of the yearly contribution, and the Preachers' Fund, or any other public money: but to do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even unto the end.

## 'Your Lordship leaves the Methodists only this Alternative, Leave the Church or starve.'

This dilemma still confronted Wesley's followers, although Methodism had been established fifty years. They must starve at the meagre, lifeless services of the Church of England, or be expelled from the Church if they went to the supplementary and complementary services of Methodism

which they loved. Little wonder that they chose to leave the Church, and that those who had never been within it declined to enter. Modern Anglican historians show by every token regret at the attitude and conduct of their Church in this day of her visitation. The Methodists were in a cleft stick. Many did not wish to ally themselves with their natural congeners in principle, Nonconformists and Dissenters ; yet they wanted, they needed their own separate services. They had no legal protection in these except by the Toleration Act for Religious Dissenters. In deference to Wesley's wish as a Churchman, they long delayed to avail themselves of this provision. This left them exposed to brutal, sometimes almost fiendishly ingenious, and long-continued persecution.[1] Three years before this letter, however, Wesley advised that all his chapels and preachers should be licensed, as he here says—the preachers simply as preachers of the Gospel. Wesley was now eighty-seven and venerated and beloved. The Methodists numbered seventy thousands in England. It seems almost incredible that with his and their shining records a letter like this was needed.

*To the Bishop of* ——.[2]

HULL, *June* 26, 1790.

MY LORD,—It may seem strange that one who is not acquainted with your Lordship should trouble you with a letter, but I am constrained to do it. I believe it is my duty both to God and your Lordship ; and I must speak plain, having nothing to hope or fear in this world, which I am on the point of leaving.

The Methodists in general, my Lord, are members of the

[1] Mr. Birrell's references above, p. 21, must be supplemented by Lecky's account *in loc.*, in his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century.* A study of contemporary records is behind the summaries given in *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. p. 323-30.

[2] Wesley did not publish the name of this bishop, nor that of him to whom he sent the letter next given.

Church of England. They hold all her doctrines, attend her service, and partake of her sacraments. They do not willingly do harm to any one, but do what good they can to all. To encourage each other herein, they frequently spend an hour together in prayer and mutual exhortation. Permit me then to ask, *Cui bono?* 'For what reasonable end' would your Lordship drive these people out of the Church? Are they not as quiet, as inoffensive, nay, as pious, as any of their neighbours? except perhaps here and there a hare-brained man who knows not what he is about. Do you ask, 'Who drives them out of the Church?' Your Lordship does, and that in the most cruel manner, yea, and the most disingenuous manner. They desire a licence to worship God after their own conscience. Your Lordship refuses it, and then punishes them for not having a licence! So your Lordship leaves them only this alternative, 'Leave the Church, or starve.' And is it a Christian, yea, a Protestant bishop that so persecutes his own flock? I say *persecutes*; for it is persecution to all intents and purposes. You do not burn them indeed, but you starve them. And how small is the difference! And your Lordship does this under colour of a vile, execrable law, not a whit better than that *de hæretico comburendo.*[1] So persecution, which is banished out of France, is again countenanced in England!

O my Lord, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for pity's sake, suffer the poor people to enjoy their religious, as well as civil, liberty! I am on the brink of eternity! Perhaps so is your Lordship too! How soon may you also be called to give an account of your stewardship to the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls! May He enable both you and me to do it with joy! So prays, My Lord, Your Lordship's dutiful son and servant.

[1] 'Concerning the burning of heretics.'

'Think and let think.'

Yet another plea for tolerance and Christian charity. It brought no adequate response. The process of separation of the Methodists from the Church of England, regretfully prepared for by Wesley in his arrangements and provisions, was quickened upon his death, and was, ere long, completed.[1] It is good to have, almost in his last days, his terse utterance of the catholic, inclusive demand of the human mind in all ages—'Think and let think.' It was a favourite motto of his.

*To the Bishop of* ——.

*Circa* 1790-91.

My Lord,—I am a dying man, having already one foot in the grave. Humanly speaking, I cannot creep long upon the earth, being now nearer ninety than eighty years of age. But I cannot die in peace before I have discharged this office of Christian love to your Lordship. I write without ceremony, as neither hoping nor fearing anything from your Lordship, or from any man living. And I ask, in the name and in the presence of Him to whom both you and I are shortly to give an account, why do you trouble those that are quiet in the land? those that fear God and work righteousness? Does your Lordship know what the Methodists are? that many thousands of them are zealous members of the Church of England, and strongly attached, not only to His Majesty, but to his present ministry? Why should your Lordship, setting religion out of the question, throw away such a body of respectable friends? Is it for their religious sentiments? Alas, my Lord! is this a time to persecute any man for conscience' sake? I beseech you, my Lord, do as you would be done to. You are a man of

[1] See above, p. 131. For the stages in the process, see *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. pp. 373, 381, 485-89; and in the nineteenth century, pp. 64-7, article by Dr. H. B. Workman.

sense; you are a man of learning; nay, I verily believe (what is of infinitely more value) you are a man of piety. Then think, and let think. I pray God to bless you with the choicest of His blessings.—I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's dutiful son and servant.

# CHAPTER V

## TO SOME OF THE CHIEF METHODIST PREACHERS

It says much for Wesley's character and work that he was able to attach to himself so many helpers. In addition to several clergy of the Church of England who, remaining in their cures or otherwise, did the work of Methodist preachers, Wesley called out six hundred and ninety itinerants. Some of these were men of parts and learning; many of them of much natural ability; all, of rare devotion. Like that of Mazzini to his young Italians, his was the call 'to come and suffer.' He had nothing to offer them, especially at first, but hard fare, incessant labour, dangerous journeyings, contumely, persecution, the probability of a shortened life; but, with him, they had mystic Meat to eat which some know not of; they drank of the Brook by the Way, and they knew the rapture of service.

Wesley was their chief everywhere and always. Natural primacy, unique labours, and ever-growing popularity kept him enthroned. This permitted counsels, commands, demands, discipline, promotions, degradings and dismissals, as in these letters. A charmed life among moving accidents and incidents by flood and field and wild mobs inspired awe towards him in the earlier days. In the later, this grew into loving reverence which truly styled him, 'Our Venerable Father in the Gospel.' His eminence could not be challenged. Like Napoleon at his best, he could do the work of several of his generals. All over the country spread stories of his triumphs, which confirmed the records given in the instalments of his *Journal*. 'Between five and six I called upon

all that were present (about three thousand) at Stanley, on a little green, near the town, to accept Christ. I was strengthened to speak as I never did before, and continued speaking near two hours; the darkness of night and a little lightning not lessening the number, but increasing the seriousness of the hearers.' Again, 'In the midst of a mob, I called for a chair; the winds were hushed, and all was calm and still; my heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed. They were ashamed. They were melted down. They devoured every word.'

Here we give letters to John William Fletcher, Duncan Wright, Christopher Hopper, Joseph Benson, Samuel Bradburn, Robert Carr Brackenbury, Adam Clarke, and Thomas Coke.

## Letters to John Fletcher.

Besides the Rev. Vincent Perronet, M.A., vicar of Shoreham, whom Charles Wesley styled the 'Archbishop of Methodists,' William Grimshaw, B.A., vicar of Haworth, Yorkshire, Dr. Thomas Coke,[1] and John William Fletcher,[2] vicar of Madeley, Shropshire, were the most distinguished clergymen who closely associated themselves with the Wesleys in the work of Methodism. Of these three mighties, John William Fletcher (Jean Guillaume de la Flechère, 1729-1785) was the mightiest. Indeed, in combination of native ability, scholarly equipment, and Christlike saintliness he was second to none of those who led the Revival of the eighteenth century. He was commonly and rightly styled 'Holy Mr. Fletcher.' Wesley regarded his coming to him as a divine provision: 'when my bodily strength failed and none in England were able and willing to assist me, He sent me help from the mountains of Switzerland.' Wesley and he had been friends eleven years when Wesley sent him this characteristic letter.

[1] See page 180.

[2] The Bible he constantly used in Madeley Church pulpit is in the Library of Drew Theological College, Madison, New Jersey, U.S.A.

# TO CHIEF PREACHERS

## 'One had need to be an Angel to converse three or four Hours.'

Wesley held a high and serious view of conversation and its possibilities. He noted exactly in his Diary the time he gave to it. A 'weak, washy, everlasting flood' of mere talk, which frothed on and on, he could not bear. Dr. Johnson said, 'John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have out his talk, as I do.'

### *Letter I.*

BIRMINGHAM, *March* 20, 1768.

DEAR SIR,—I was told yesterday that you are sick of the conversation even of them who profess religion; that you find it quite unprofitable, if not hurtful, to converse with them three or four hours together; and are sometimes almost determined to shut yourself up, as the less evil of the two.

I do not wonder at it at all; especially considering with whom you have chiefly conversed for some time past, namely, the hearers of Mr —— and Mr ——. The conversing with them I have rarely found to be profitable to my soul. Rather, it has damped my desires, and has cooled my resolutions; and I have commonly left them with a dry, dissipated spirit.

And how can you expect it to be otherwise? For do we not naturally catch their spirit with whom we converse? And what spirit can we expect them to be of, considering the preaching they sit under? Some happy exceptions I allow; but, in general, do men gather grapes of thorns? Do they gather the necessity of inward and outward self-devotion, of constant, universal self-denial, or of the patience of hope, or the labour of love, from the doctrine they hear? Do they gather from that amorous way of praying to Christ,

or that luscious way of preaching His righteousness, any real holiness? I never found it so. On the contrary, I have found that even the precious doctrine of salvation by faith has need to be guarded with the greatest care, or those who hear it will slight both inward and outward holiness.

I will go a step further. I seldom find it profitable to converse with any who are not athirst for full salvation; and who are not big with earnest expectation of receiving it every moment. Now, you find none of these things among those we are speaking of; but many, on the contrary, who are in various ways, directly or indirectly, opposing this blessed work of God; the work, I mean, which God is carrying on throughout this kingdom, by unlearned and plain men.

You have for some time conversed a good deal with the genteel Methodists. Now, it matters not a straw what doctrine they hear, whether they frequent the Lock, or West Street, if they are as salt which has lost its savour; if they are conformed to the maxims, the spirit, the fashions, and customs of the world. Certainly, then, if you converse much with such persons, you will return less a man than you were before.

But were either the one or the other of ever so excellent a spirit, you conversed with them too long. One had need to be an angel, not a man, to converse three or four hours at once, to any good purpose. In the latter part of such a conversation, we shall be in great danger of losing all the profit we had gained before.

But have you not a remedy for all this in your hands? In order to converse profitably, may you not select a few persons who stand in awe of Him they love; persons who are vigorously working out their salvation; who are athirst for full redemption, and every moment expecting it, if not already enjoying it?

Though it is true, these will generally be poor and mean, seldom possessed of either riches or learning, unless there be now and then one of higher rank; if you converse with such as these, humbly and simply, one hour at a time, with earnest prayer for a blessing; you will not complain of the unprofitableness of conversation, or find any need of turning hermit.

Do you not observe that all the lay preachers who are connected with me are maintainers of general redemption? And it is undeniable that they are instrumental of saving souls. God is with them, and He works by them, and has done so for near these thirty years. Therefore, the opposing them is neither better nor worse than fighting against God. —I am, your ever affectionate brother.

## 'Thou art the Man!'

Wesley regarded Fletcher as his divinely appointed successor. Comparing him with his beloved early helper and friend Whitefield, Wesley held that Fletcher 'had a far more striking person; equal good breeding; an equally winning address; together with a richer flow of fancy; a stronger understanding; a far greater treasure of learning, both in languages, philosophy, philology, and divinity; and above all, a more deep and constant communion with the Father, and with the Son Jesus Christ.' Charles Wesley would not and could not lead the Methodists. Wesley here claims Fletcher for that service; for he could 'never believe it was the will of God that such a burning and shining light should be hid under a bushel. No; instead of being confined to a country village, it ought to have shone in every corner of our land.' Madeley, Shropshire, of which Fletcher was vicar, should give its treasure to enrich England.

*Letter II.*

[London,] *January*, 1773.

Dear Sir,—What an amazing work has God wrought in these kingdoms, in less than forty years! And it not only

continues, but increases, throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland; nay, it has lately spread into New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, and Carolina. But the wise men of the world say, 'When Mr. Wesley drops, then all this is at an end!' And so it surely will, unless, before God calls him hence, one is found to stand in his place. For, Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη. Εἷς κοίρανος ἔσω.[1] I see more and more, unless there be one πρόεσως,[2] the work can never be carried on. The body of the Preachers are not united. Nor will any part of them submit to the rest; so that either there must be one to preside over all, or the work will indeed come to an end.

But who is sufficient for these things? qualified to preside both over the preachers and the people? He must be a man of faith and love, and one that has a single eye to the advancement of the kingdom of God. He must have a clear understanding; a knowledge of men and things, particularly of the Methodist doctrine and discipline; a ready utterance; diligence and activity, with a tolerable share of health. There must be added to these, favour with the people, with the Methodists in general. For unless God turn their eyes and their hearts towards him, he will be quite incapable of the work. He must likewise have some degree of learning; because there are many adversaries, learned as well as unlearned, whose mouths must be stopped. But this cannot be done, unless he be able to meet them on their own ground.

But has God provided one so qualified? Who is he? *Thou art the man!* God has given you a measure of loving faith; and a single eye to His glory. He has given you some knowledge of men and things; particularly of the

[1] It is not good that the supreme power should be lodged in many hands. Let there be one chief governor.

[2] A person who presides over the rest.

old plan of Methodism. You are blessed with some health, activity, and diligence; together with a degree of learning. And to all these, He has lately added, by a way none could have foreseen, favour both with the preachers and the whole people. Come out, in the name of the Lord! Come to the help of the Lord against the mighty! Come while I am alive and capable of labour!

> *Dum superest Lachesi quod torqueat, et pedibus me*
> *Porto meis, nullo dextram subeunte bacillo.*[1]

Come while I am able, God assisting, to build you up in faith, to ripen your gifts, and to introduce you to the people. *Nil tanti.*[2] What possible employment can you have, which is of so great importance?

But you will naturally say, 'I am not equal to the task; I have neither grace nor gifts for such an employment.' You say true; it is certain you have not. And who has? But do you not know Him who is able to give them? perhaps not at once, but rather day by day. As each is, so shall your strength be. 'But this implies,' you may say, 'a thousand crosses, such as I feel I am not able to bear.' You are not able to bear them now; and they are not now come. Whenever they do come, will He not send them in due number, weight, and measure? And will they not all be for your profit, that you may be a partaker of His holiness?

Without conferring, therefore, with flesh and blood, come and strengthen the hands, comfort the heart, and share the labour of,—Your affectionate friend and brother.

[1] 'While Lachesis has some thread of life to spin,
And I walk on my own feet, without the help of a staff.'
JUVENAL, *Sat.* iii. 27.

[2] Nothing is of equal consequence with this.

'The People generally are prejudiced in your Favour.'

Wesley urges his plea again, doubtless after consulting his intimate friend, Ebenezer Blackwell, a leading London Methodist, from whose house he sent this letter. The *Checks to Antinomianism*—unfortunate in their title—were Fletcher's defence of Methodists and their teaching against the charges and errors of Calvinists. He is the earliest and best expositor in English of the Remonstrant theology of Jacobus Arminius. Of this, his works are at once a storehouse and an armoury.

*Letter III.*

LEWISHAM, *July* 21, 1773.

DEAR SIR,—It was a great satisfaction to me, that I had the opportunity which I so long desired, of spending a little time with you. And I really think it would answer many gracious designs of Providence were we to spend a little more time together. It might be of great advantage both to ourselves and the people, who may otherwise soon be as sheep without a shepherd. You say indeed, 'Whenever it pleases God to call me away, you will do all you can to help them.' But will it not then be too late? You may then expect grievous wolves to break in on every side; and many to arise from among themselves, speaking perverse things. Both the one and the other stand in awe of me, and do not care to encounter me; so that I am able, whether they will or no, to deliver the flock into your hands. But no one else is. And it seems, this is the very time, when it may be done with the least difficulty. Just now the minds of the people in general are, on account of the *Checks*, greatly prejudiced in your favour. Should we not discern the providential time? Should we stay till the impression is worn away? Just now, we have an opportunity of breaking the ice, of making a little trial. Mr. Richardson is desirous of

making an exchange with you, and spending two or three weeks at Madeley. This might be done either now, or in October, when I hope to return from Bristol. And till something of this kind is done, you will not have that στοργή for the people, which alone can make your labour light in spending and being spent for them. Methinks 'tis pity we should lose any time; for what a vapour is life!—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Let Sister Fletcher do as much as she can for God, and no more.'

Fletcher's modesty, frail health, and perhaps the feeling that he would probably predecease Wesley, did not allow him to accept Wesley's designation of him as successor. However, Fletcher travelled with him on a preaching tour of twelve hundred miles, and with him 'launched into Christian politics' on the American War.

In 1775 he sent a remarkable letter to Wesley, which the latter secretly preserved.[1] It outlined a carefully articulated scheme for the development of Methodism, largely upon episcopal lines, after the death of the Wesleys. 'Three or five of the most steady Methodist ministers, under the title of Moderators,' would ordain others, and 'overlook the flocks and the other preachers as Mr. Wesley does now.' In 1781 Fletcher married Miss Mary Bosanquet,[2] his equal in saintliness and Methodist service. Wesley wrote the following letter on the happy event. Fletcher died four years later (1785), six years before Wesley. He wrote Fletcher's life, and with extraordinary diligence, working at it fifteen hours a day until completed. He naïvely said, 'From five in the morning till eight at night are my studying hours; I cannot write longer in a day without hurting my eyes'! Who could, at his age of eighty-three!'

[1] Letter, Aug. 1, 1775, Rev. J. Telford's *John Wesley*, p. 388.
[2] See p. 358.

LONDON, *November* 24, 1781.[1]

DEAR SIR,—There is not a person to whom I would have wished Miss Bosanquet joined besides you. But this union, I am thoroughly persuaded, is of God; and so are all the children of God with whom I have spoken. Mr. Bosanquet's being so agreeable to it, I look upon as a token for good; and so was the ready disposing of the house and the stock, which otherwise would have been a great encumbrance. From the first day which you spend together in Madeley, I hope you will lay down an exactly regular plan of living; something like that of the happy family at Leytonstone. Let your light shine to all that are round about you.

And let Sister Fletcher do as much as she can for God, and no more. To His care I commit you both.

And am, my dear friends, your very affectionate brother.

## To his Stone-mason Preacher, John Nelson.

This precious fragment is all that is known of many letters from Wesley to John Nelson (1707-1774). He was one of the early trophies of Wesley's gospel, his valiant follower, companion, and defender, a beloved friend, and a singularly powerful and successful itinerant. The story of Nelson's reformation is a romance comparable with that of Bunyan, and his *Journal*[2] of his life combines much of the interest of *Grace Abounding* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Like St. Paul, Nelson often worked at his trade, in which he was skilled, while serving as a preacher; for only ten shillings a week was allowed him for himself and family, by the Methodists.

[1] The year 1783 given in *Works*, xi. 149, is an error. The Fletchers went to Madeley in January 1782.

[2] *Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers*, vol. i.; or *Wesley's Veterans*, ed. by Rev. John Telford.

# TO CHIEF PREACHERS

## 'We shall cry out together, . . . we are more than Conquerors.'

This letter was sent to Nelson while imprisoned in York Castle, after his impressment for the army. Wesley's view of the opportunities of his imprisonment was justified by Nelson's use of them. Lady Huntingdon procured his discharge.

*To John Nelson.*

*Circa, May* 1744.

Well, my brother, is the God whom you serve able to deliver you; and do you still find Him faithful to His word? Is His grace still sufficient for you? I doubt it not. He will not suffer you to be weary or faint in your mind. But He had work for you to do that you knew not of, and thus His counsel was to be fulfilled. O lose no time! Who knows how many souls God may by this means deliver into your hands? Shall not all these things be for the furtherance of the gospel? And is not the time coming when we shall cry out together, 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us?'

## Letters to Duncan Wright.

Wesley reckoned Duncan Wright (1736-1791) one of his best preachers.[1] He often wrote to hearten him, when preaching in Erse to his own countrymen in the Highlands of Scotland. The original of this hitherto unpublished letter is in the library of Drew Methodist Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey, U.S.A. 'The better part' here referred to was Wright's choice of Christ, and of the life of a Methodist preacher, instead of that of a soldier. '"Our major, a warm blunderer," thought it a disgrace to have a sergeant-preacher in the regiment.' Next year Wesley called him to itinerate.

[1] See page 124.

The second letter we give rings like a general's orders. It might have been written by Wellington, Wesley's remote relative.[1] Wesley was much interested in soldiers, especially his soldier-preachers. He helped Haime, Staniforth, and Bond to be heroes indeed—soldiers and saints, in tent, trench, and battle.

## 'You . . . will never regret of your Choice.'

*Letter I.*

[LONDON], *July* 4, 1763.

DEAR DUNCAN,—You have chosen the better part, and will never regret of your choice. Write down the sermon you preached upon that subject, with what additions you see good, and I will correct and print it, if I live to return to London. Perhaps I may likewise print 'The Advice concerning Children' in a separate tract. I am glad Rd. Blackwell goes to Colchester. Perhaps he and you, by turns, may spend the ensuing year in London.—I am, yours affectionately.

## 'You and I may speak freely to each other.'

*Letter II.*

LONDON, *September* 24, 1781.

DEAR DUNCAN,—Surely you and I may speak freely to each other; for we love one another.

If George Holder goes out, either you must keep his mother or she must go to the workhouse. You must not give an exhortation to the bands, but encourage them to speak.

I would be much obliged to you if you would (1) accept the key of the book-room, and immediately take the books into your own care; (2) clip the wings of the local preachers,

[1] Wellington was descended from a collateral branch of the same family as the Wesleys. For many years he styled himself 'Arthur Wesley.'

stewards, and leaders, changing them as need requires; (3) fix bands where they are wanting; (4) if James Bogie is willing to remain single, let him travel; (5) do not receive the blind man hastily, let him be thoroughly tried first; (6) be of good courage, and conquer everything.—I am, dear Duncan, yours faithfully.

## Letters to Christopher Hopper.

These are of interest as sent to another type of preacher, and as other examples of Wesley's military style. His shrewd comments on men and movements are notable, *e.g.*, the war with America[1] (Letter IV.), and our Lord's millennial reign (Letter V.).

Christopher Hopper (1722-1802) was a pioneer of Methodism in Scotland and elsewhere. No difficulties could drive him back to his comfortable post as schoolmaster. He was aptly styled the tall cedar in the goodly forest of the early preachers, a Boanerges to the stout hearted, a Barnabas to the sorrowful. When Wesley was absent from the Conference of 1780, Hopper had the unique distinction of being appointed to preside over it. Wesley used his clerical abilities and organising skill to remove much of the debt upon the work, and to act as his deputy in critical affairs.

Nelson, Manners, and Rowell were all preachers. So was Thomas Olivers, now much desired at Newcastle. He was the stout defender of Wesley against the polemics of Toplady and Hill in the Calvinistic controversy, and was more helpful by his hymns, notably that beginning 'The God of Abraham praise.' Wesley here refers to his wife as his 'best friend—in a sense.'

### 'In God's name, one of you go into that Round.'

*Letter I.*

LEEDS, *March* 24, 1761.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I stepped over from Manchester hither yesterday, and am to return thither to-morrow. I

[1] See p. 247.

cannot fix my route through Scotland till I hear from Mr. Gillies; but I expect to be at Aberdeen in four or five weeks, and at Newcastle about the middle of May. My best friend (such she undoubtedly is, in a sense) remains still in London. I do not expect any change till the approach of death, and I am content. With regard to me, all is well.

John Nelson and John Manners both write to me from York, that they wish T. Olivers to spend some time longer in the Newcastle circuit. I wish so too. I think it would be better for himself, and for many others. O let us follow after the things that make for peace!—I am, yours affectionately.

Alas! alas! So poor Jacob Rowell says, Mr. Wesley has nothing to do with his round; and all the societies in it, but Barnard Castle, are willing to separate. In God's name, let one of you go into that round without delay!

## 'Do just as I would do if I were in your Place.'

Hopper was now at Newcastle-on-Tyne. Here was Wesley's northern centre, with his preachers' hostel and seminary, and an orphanage. 'Public affairs' were Pitt's resignation a few months earlier, and the war with Spain.

### *Letter II.*

NORWICH, *January* 18, 1762.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Public affairs do look exceeding dark; and the clouds gather more and more. Yet the Lord sitteth above the waterfloods, and remaineth a King for ever. And He (whatever be the lot of His enemies) shall give His people the blessing of peace.

If you do not establish good order in the Orphan House, it is pity you should go there. This is the very design of

your Master; for this end are you sent. Do just as I would do in every instance if I were in your place. Act just the thing that is right, whoever is pleased or displeased. I hereby give it under my hand, I will stand by you with all my might.

I am glad you have had a free conversation with T. Olivers. There is good in him; though he is a rough stick of wood. But love can bow down the stubborn neck. By faith and love we shall overcome all things.

Peace be with you and yours.—I am, your ever affectionate brother.

I set out for London to-morrow.

## 'Pray dispatch Letters. You have a ready Mind, and a ready Pen.'

The debt on Methodist chapels was now almost £12,000.[1] He asked the help of 'the chief men in our society' to pay it—a thousand to pay two guineas each, another thousand a guinea and a half, and so on in lesser sums. This proposal and scheme seem to have been Hopper's. In the Everett Collection is a copy of Wesley's printed circular letter on this debt, dated 'London, November 24, 1767.' It says that a few days before he had received 'a Letter from a Gentleman' which he subjoins, signed 'A. H.' These initials the Rev. N. Curnock thinks stand for Assistant Hopper. Writing to the latter on the debt, Wesley said, 'See how nearly we have adopted your scheme before we saw it.' Then comes the bugle-call and general's order which we give. Hopper was later appointed Conference clerk for this debt scheme (1769). In the circular letter before us, addressed to his friend Richard Cawley of Alpraham, Cheshire, Wesley follows his written signature with the postcript, 'I shall expect a line from you.' This he received, and two guineas for the debt.

[1] See page 218, in the Letters to James Oddie.

*Letter III.*

*Circa August*, 1767.

My dear Brother,—I constitute you, Christopher Hopper by name, Lord President of the north. Enter upon your province, Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Durham, Yorkshire, and Lincolnshire without delay. Pray dispatch letters to Jacob Rowell, Jo. Heslop, Richard Boardman, and your other deputies without loss of time; and quicken them to put forth all their strength, and make one push for all. But hold! John Fenwick writes to me, 'I will give £25!' Do not abate him the five! No drawing back! I think the time is come for rolling this reproach from us. Your thought concerning the preachers is a noble one. If fifty of them set such an example, giving a little out of their little, such an instance would have an effect upon many. Let one stir up another. Spare no pains. Write east, west, north, and south. You have a ready mind, and a ready pen; and it cannot be used in a better cause.

'Cut off all other Connexion with them than we have with Holland or Germany.'

Wesley's rash judgement here as to Britain and her American colonies was modified afterwards, as shown on page 473.

*Letter IV.*

London, December 26, 1775.

My dear Brother,—I see no possibility of accommodation. The one point is, Has the supreme power a right to tax, or not? If they have, they cannot, they ought not, to give it up. But I say as Dean Tucker, 'Let them drop.' Cut off all other connexion with them than we have with Holland or Germany. Four-and-thirty millions they have



X wrong date; letter on p 473 - June 15, '75

cost us *to support them* since Queen Anne died. Let them cost us no more. Let them have their desire, and support themselves.

You sent Harry Brooke one book; but I left two, the larger of which was not sent. If it is lost, I must buy another.

The disorder is universal throughout Great Britain and Ireland; but hitherto, scarce any die of it in London: so God lightly afflicts us at first. It is well if the people will now bear the rod, and Him that hath appointed it.—I am, with love to S[ister] Hopper, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'These Calculations are far above, out of my Sight.'

This hitherto undated letter is copied from the original in the Rylands Library, Manchester. Wesley, now eighty-five, has still only one thing to do. As at Bradford, Yorkshire, a month earlier, he is now welcomed to the churches to preach, and his utterances on any subject are regarded by all as of importance.

*Letter V.*

[NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE], *June* 3, 1788.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I said nothing, less or more, in Bradford church, concerning the end of the world, neither concerning my own opinion, but what follows:—That Bengelius had given it as his opinion, not that the world would then *end*, but that the millennial reign of Christ would *begin* in the year 1836. I have no opinion at all upon the head: I can determine nothing at all about it. These calculations are far above, out of my sight. I have only one thing to do—to save my soul, and those that hear me.—I am, yours affectionately.

## Letters to Joseph Benson.

After serving as classical tutor at Wesley's School, Kingswood, Bristol (Letter I.), and as master at Lady Huntingdon's Trevecca College, Joseph Benson (1748-1821) was called by Wesley into his itinerancy in 1771. He was to serve Methodism fifty years as preacher and official editor, and twice as President of Conference. His learning blended finely with his evangelism. Thousands were brought to religious decision under his appeals. Said one who often heard him, 'Benson could knock a sinner down with a quotation from the Greek New Testament.'

Wesley's many letters to him have features all their own: choice epigrams, discriminating judgements, succinct statements of truth, close personal touches.

## 'An Ounce of Love is worth a Pound of Knowledge.'

Here Wesley, master of the disputations when at Oxford, resumes his office to help and guide Benson and Peter Price at Kingswood School (Letters I. and II.). We see the logician's method and thoroughness. Thus he planned for the boys, for advanced studies by the masters, and for his preachers.

He was a true bookman, too, and went to book sales. What a priceless counsel he gives at the close of Letter I. to bookmen and to all!

*Letter I.*

WYCOMBE, *November* 7, 1768.

DEAR JOSEPH,—You have now twenty more volumes of the *Philosophical Transactions.* Dr. Burton's Latin and Greek poems you have in the study. Malebranche, and some other books, are coming. Logic you cannot crack without a tutor; I must read it to Peter and you, if we live to meet. It would not be amiss if I had a catalogue of the books at Kingswood; then I should know the better what

to buy. As fast as I can meet with them at sales I shall procure what are yet wanting. But beware you be not swallowed up in books. An ounce of love is worth a pound of knowledge.—I am, dear Joseph, your affectionate brother.

## 'Interposing other Books is not good Husbandry.'

*Letter II.*

SHOREHAM, *December* 22, 1768.

MY DEAR JOSEPH,—You do not quite take my meaning yet. When I recommend to any one a method or scheme of study, I do not barely consider this or that book separately, but in conjunction with the rest. And what I recommend I know; I know both the style and sentiments of each author; and how he will confirm or illustrate what goes before, and prepare for what comes after. Now, supposing Mr. Stonehouse, [James] Roquet,[1] or any other, to have ever so great learning and judgement, yet he does not enter into my plan. He does not comprehend my views, nor keep his eye fixed on the same point. Therefore, I must insist upon it, the interposing other books between these, till you have read them through, is not good husbandry. It is not making your time and pains go as far as they might go. If you want more books, let me recommend more, who best understand my own scheme. And do not ramble, however learned the persons may be that advise you so to do. This does indulge curiosity, but does not minister to real improvement, as a stricter method would do. No; you would gain more clearness and strength of judgement by reading those Latin and Greek books (compared with which most of the English books are whipped syllabub) than by four score modern books. I have seen the proof, as none of your Bristol friends

[1] Another classical master at Kingswood.

have done, or can do. Therefore, I advise you again, keep to your plan (though this implies continual self-denial), if you would improve your understanding to the highest degree of which it is capable.—I am, dear Joseph, your affectionate brother.

## 'I was never afraid of any but the almost Christians.'

'An Almost Christian,' 'an Altogether Christian,' and 'a Bible Christian,' are favourite phrases with Wesley. Benson was now thinking of graduating at Oxford, but this was prevented. Kingswood School prospered later, and still prospers.

*Letter III.*

CORK, *May* 27, 1769.

DEAR JOSEPH,—You have now (what you never had before) a clear, providential call to Oxford. If you keep a single eye, and have courage and steadiness, you may be an instrument of much good. But you will tread on slippery ground; and the serious persons you mention may do you more hurt than many others. When I was at Oxford, I never was afraid of any but the almost Christians. If you give way to them and their prudence a hair's-breadth, you will be removed from the hope of the gospel. If you are not moved, if you tread in the same steps which my brother and I did, you may be a means, under God, of raising another set of real Bible Christians.[1] How long the world will suffer them (whether longer than they did us or not) is in God's hand.

With regard to Kingswood School, I have one string more. If that breaks, I shall let it drop. I have borne the burden one and twenty years; I have done what I could.

[1] Later, a devoted body of Methodists actually bore this beautiful name (1815-1907), until they merged in the United Methodist Church.

Now, let some one else do more.—I am, dear Joseph, your affectionate brother.

## 'They will find Fault because I say it.'

Wesley's sharp summary of the warped judgements of his opponents is parallel to Burke's condemnation of his: 'They are willing for anything to be done—providing they do it.' Benson was at Trevecca College, Wales, and found Calvinistic teaching so pronounced and unacceptable that, with John Fletcher, then Principal, he resigned connection with it, and opposed Lady Huntingdon's views. Wesley thought that passion, prejudice, emotion, were strongly at work in the representatives of her Ladyship, and that they often are everywhere. The aged rector of Epworth told him that, long before. In this and Letter v. Wesley distinguishes Methodist doctrine on holiness from what is known as Keswick teaching.

### *Letter IV.*

BRISTOL, *October* 3, 1770.

DEAR JOSEPH,—You need no apology for your writing; the more frequently and freely you write, the better. I cannot doubt but your neighbour means well; but he is a thorough enthusiast, and has hardly one clear conception of anything, natural or spiritual. Mr. Beard, from Aberdeen, and Mr. Wootton (our new writing master, a man of an excellent spirit) are at Kingswood. But does Mr. J. know the price? Sixteen pounds a year. Does he know the rules of the school? Again, of what age are the children? I will take none that is above nine years old: now, especially; because I will not have our children corrupted; nine of whom, together with our three maid-servants, have just now experienced a gracious visitation, and are rejoicing in a pardoning God.

I am glad you had the courage to speak your mind on so

critical an occasion. At all hazards, do so still; only with all possible tenderness and respect. She is much devoted to God, and has a thousand valuable and amiable qualities. There is no great fear that I should be prejudiced against one whom I have known intimately for these thirty years. And I know what is in man; therefore, I make large allowance for human weaknesses. But what you say is exactly the state of the case. They are 'jealous of their authority.' Truly there is no cause: *Longe mea discrepat illi et vox et ratio.*[1] I fear and shun, not desire, authority of any kind. Only when God lays that burden upon me, I bear it, for His and the people's sake.

'Child,' said my father to me, when I was young, 'you think to carry everything by dint of argument. But you will find, by and by, how very little is ever done in the world by clear reason.' Very little indeed! It is true of almost all men, except so far as we are taught of God:

> 'Against experience we believe,
> We argue against demonstrations;
> Pleased while our reason we deceive,
> And set our judgement by our passions.'

Passion and prejudice govern the world; only under the name of reason. It is our part, by religion and reason joined, to counteract them all we can. It is yours, in particular, to do all that in you lies, to soften the prejudices of those that are round about you, and to calm the passions from which they spring. Blessed are the peacemakers!

You judge rightly: perfect love and Christian liberty are the very same thing; and those two expressions are equally proper, being equally scriptural. 'Nay, how can you and they mean the same thing? They say, you insist on holiness in the creature, on good tempers, and sin destroyed.' Most surely. And what is Christian liberty, but another word

[1] Far different are my thoughts and strain.—HORACE.

for holiness? And where is this liberty or holiness, if it is not in the creature? Holiness is the love of God and man, or the mind which was in Christ. Now, I trust, the love of God is shed abroad in your heart, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto you. And if you are holy, is not that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus?

And are not the love of God and our neighbour good tempers? And so far as these reign in the soul, are not the opposite tempers, worldly-mindedness, malice, cruelty, revengefulness, destroyed? Indeed, the unclean spirit, though driven out, may return and enter again; nevertheless, he was driven out. I use the word *destroyed*, because St. Paul does. *Suspended* I cannot find in my Bible. 'But they say, you do not consider this as the consequence of the power of Christ dwelling in us.' Then what will they not say? My very words are, 'None feel their need of Christ, like these; none so entirely depend upon Him. For Christ does not give light to the soul separate from, but in and with, Himself. Hence His words are equally true of all men, in whatever state of grace they are: 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in Me. Without (or separate from) Me, ye can do nothing.' For our perfection is not like that of a tree, which flourishes by the sap derived from its own root; but like that of a branch which, united to the vine, bears fruit; but severed from it, is 'dried up and withered.'

At length, *veris vincor*[1] I am constrained to believe (what I would not for a long time) these are not the objections of judgement, but of passion; they do not spring from the head, but the heart. Whatever, I say it will be all one. They will find fault, because I say it. There is implicit envy at my power (so called), and a jealousy rising therefrom. Hence prejudice in a thousand forms; hence

[1] I am constrained by the force of truth.

objections springing up like mushrooms. And while those causes remain, they will spring up whatever I can do or say. However, keep thyself pure; and then there need be no strangeness between you and, dear Joseph, your affectionate brother.

## 'One Point hold fast: Let neither Men nor Devils tear it from you.'

This point was that Benson was a child of God. The thoughtful scholar and growing theologian was, like Bishop Joseph Butler even on his death-bed, humbly diffident about his acceptance with God. Earnestly and wisely Wesley deals with him, and meanwhile defines Christian teaching.

*Letter V.*

LONDON, *December* 28, 1770.

DEAR JOSEPH,—What a blessing it is, that we can speak freely to each other, without either disguise or reserve! So long as we are able to do this, we may grow wiser and better every day.

One point I advise you to hold fast, and let neither men nor devils tear it from you. You are a child of God; you are justified freely, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Your sins are forgiven! Cast not away that confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

Now, can any be justified, but by faith? None can. Therefore you are a believer; you have faith in Christ; you know the Lord; you can say, 'My Lord and my God.' And whoever denies this, may as well deny that the sun shines at noonday.

> 'Yet still ten thousand lusts remain,
> And vex your soul, absolved from sin;
> Still rebel nature strives to reign,
> And you are all unclean, unclean!'

This is equally clear and undeniable. And this is not only

your experience, but the experience of a thousand believers beside, who yet are sure of God's favour, as of their own existence. To cut off all doubt on this head, I beg you to give another serious reading to those two sermons, 'Sin in Believers,' and the 'Repentance of Believers.'

'But, is there no help? Is there no deliverance, no salvation from this inbred enemy?' Surely there is; else many great and precious promises must fall to the ground. 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and all your idols will I cleanse you.' 'I will circumcise thy heart' (from all sin), 'to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.' This I term sanctification (which is both an instantaneous and a gradual work) or perfection, the being perfected in love, filled with love, which still admits of a thousand degrees. But I have no time to throw away in contending for words; especially where the thing is allowed. And you allow the whole thing which I contend for; an entire deliverance from sin, a recovery of the whole image of God, the loving God with all our heart, soul, and strength. And you believe God is able to give you this; yea, to give it you in an instant. You trust He will. O hold fast this also; this blessed hope, which He has wrought in your heart! And with all zeal and diligence confirm the brethren—(1) in holding fast that whereto they have attained; namely, the remission of all their sins, by faith in a bleeding Lord: (2) in expecting a second change, whereby they shall be saved from all sin, and perfected in love.

If they like to call this 'receiving the Holy Ghost,' they may. Only the phrase, in that sense, is not scriptural, and not quite proper; for they all 'received the Holy Ghost,' when they were justified. God then 'sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father.'

O Joseph, keep close to the Bible, both as to sentiment

and expression! Then there will never be any material difference between you and your affectionate brother.

## 'To sit still in one Place is neither for the Health of our Souls nor Bodies.'

Wesley is determined to maintain his type of itinerating preachers and house-to-house pastors. Neither Scottish ways nor a bookish preacher shall alter it. 'Be zealous and humble; but never be still,' Wesley quotes in another letter, and declares, 'While I live, Itinerant Preachers shall be itinerants.' In the busiest of all his busy years he said, 'I find time to visit the sick and the poor, and I must do it if I believe the Bible. These are the marks by which the Great Shepherd will know His sheep.' Wesley's manifold ability and ceaseless labour amazed Benson, as it did all. Next year he was with him. 'I was constantly with him for a week. I had an opportunity of narrowly examining his spirit and conduct; and, I assure you, I am more than ever persuaded, he is a *none such*. I know not his fellow, first, for abilities, natural and acquired; and secondly, for his incomparable diligence in the application of those abilities to the best of employments. His lively fancy, tenacious memory, clear understanding, ready elocution, manly courage, indefatigable industry, really amaze me.'

### *Letter VI.*

LONDON, *October* 23, 1773.

DEAR JOSEPH,—I wish every one of our preachers, who goes to Scotland, were of the same mind with you. We are not called to sit still in one place; it is neither for the health of our souls nor bodies. Billy Thompson never satisfied me on this head, not in the least degree. I say still, we will have Travelling Preachers in Scotland, or none. The thing is fixed: the manner of effecting it is to be considered. Now, set your wit to this: Find out the *τo*

πῶς.[1] How shall this matter be accomplished? You did not do well in selling your horse, and thereby laying another bar in the way. Though I am (by the exquisite negligence of my later book-keeper) a thousand pounds worse than nothing, I would have spared a few pounds to have eased that burden. However, you must do as you can. Our preachers shall either travel there, as in England, or else stay in England.—I am, dear Joseph, yours affectionately.

## 'You are in danger of reading too much.'

*Letter VII.*

LONDON, *January* 8, 1774.

DEAR JOSEPH,—Many persons are in danger of reading too little; you are in danger of reading too much. Wherever you are, take up your cross, and visit all the society from house to house. Do this according to Mr. Baxter's plan, laid down in the *Minutes* of the Conference. The fruit which will ensue (perhaps in a short time) will abundantly reward your labour. Fruit also we shall have, even in those who have no outward connexion with us.

I am glad you 'press all believers' to aspire after the full liberty of the children of God. They must not give up their faith in order to do this: herein you formerly seemed to be in some mistake. Let them go on from faith to faith; from weak faith to that strong faith, which not only conquers but casts out sin. Meantime it is certain, many call themselves believers who do not even conquer sin; who are strangers to the whole inward kingdom of God, and void of the whole fruit of the Spirit.

We must not go on at Dunbar in this manner. Rather we must quit the place. For who will pay that debt?

On Tuesday I was under the surgeon's hands, but am

[1] The way how to do it.

now (blessed be God!) quite recovered.—I am, dear Joseph, yours affectionately.

## 'Taking Opium is full as bad as taking Drams.'

*Letter VIII.*

CHATHAM, *November* 26, 1776.

DEAR JOSEPH,—If any leader oppose, you see your remedy: put another in his place. Nay, if he does not join heart and hand; for, 'he that gathereth not with you scattereth.' The 'Word to a Smuggler' is plain and home, and has done much good in these parts.

Taking opium is full as bad as taking drams. It equally hurts the understanding, and is, if possible, more pernicious to the health than even rum or brandy. None should touch it, if they have the least regard either for their souls or bodies.

I really think you are in the right. It is better to help R. W.[1] where he is, than to burden the Dales with an additional weight. But then what shall we do? We have no supernumerary preachers. See if you can do anything with Edward Jackson.—I am, dear Joseph, yours affectionately.

## 'That one word, *Grace*!'

*Letter IX.*

MANCHESTER, *April* 2, 1781.

DEAR JOSEPH,—Although our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we walk in simplicity and godly sincerity, this no way contradicts, 'God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of Christ.' In all, and after all,

'His passion alone, the foundation we own;
And pardon we claim,
And eternal redemption in Jesus's name.'

[1] ? Robert Wilkinson, then at Dundee.

How admirably pardon and holiness are comprised in that one word *grace*! Mercy and strength! So are our justification and sanctification woven together.

I hope your sermons will do good. But why do not you publish your poems? I think you can make verses as fast as John Murlin; yea, indeed, if need were, *stans pede in uno.*[1] I commend sister Benson for her care of her mother. One can never do too much for a parent.—I am, dear Joseph, your affectionate brother.

## 'I will engage to eat it.'

Even grave Benson would surely smile at this. Wesley admitted that George Yard Chapel, Hull, was 'well built and elegantly finished; handsome, but not gaudy'; but equal to City Road Chapel, which he himself had built—never!

*Letter X.*

[London, *December* 1787.]

Dear Joseph,—I greatly rejoice in the erection of your new preaching house; and in the tokens of the Divine presence with which you and the people were favoured at the opening; but if it be at all equal to the new chapel in London, I will engage to eat it.—I am, yours affectionately.

## Letters to Samuel Bradburn.

A calm, incisive preacher himself, Wesley knew the value of the emotional preacher. Such an one he found in Samuel Bradburn (1759-1816), to whom he sent this letter. The original is in the British Museum. His short life showed he needed the advice here given for Ridel, who became one of Wesley's preachers. Called out by Wesley in 1774, Bradburn became 'the Demosthenes of Methodism.' His wife, Sophia Cooke, suggested to Raikes the scheme for Sunday schools for children, which interested Wesley greatly.

[1] Standing on one foot.

## 'Tell Brother Ridel not to please the Devil by preaching himself to death.'

*Letter I.*

BIRMINGHAM, *March* 25, 1783.

DEAR SAMMY,—You send me good news concerning the progress of the work of GOD in Colne Circuit. I should think Brother Jackson or Sagar might set the heads of the people at Bacup right. Brother Jackson should advise Brother Ridel not to please the Devil by preaching himself to death. I still think, when the Methodists leave the Church of England, GOD will leave them. Every year more and more of the clergy are convinced of the truth, and grow well affected towards us. It would be contrary to all common sense, as well as to good conscience, to make a separation now.—I am, dear Sammy, your affectionate brother.

## 'He that made the Heart can heal the Heart.'

Bradburn had the defects of his humorous, oratorical qualities. His excitable nature exposed him to deep grief and, in later years, to regrettable instability. In this letter, from the original in the library of Drew Methodist Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey, U.S.A., Wesley consoles him by recalling his own poignant experience. The reference is to his rejection by Miss Hopkey, whom he loved.[1]

*Letter II.*

LONDON, *January* 14, 1786.

DEAR SAMMY,—It is well we know 'that trouble springeth not out of the dust, but that the Lord reigneth.' But still, even when we can say, *It is the Lord*, 'tis hard to add, *Let Him do what seemeth Him good.* I remember formerly, when I read those words in the church at Savannah, '*Son of*

[1] See p. 310.

*man, behold, I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke*,' I was pierced through as with a sword, and could not utter a word more. But our comfort is, He that made the heart can heal the heart! Your help stands in Him alone. He will command all these things to work together for good.

To His tender care I commend you, and am, dear Sammy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## Letters to Robert Carr Brackenbury.

Wesley often wrote to Robert Carr Brackenbury (1752-1819), a young gentleman of wealth, culture, and poetic talent,[1] of Raithby Hall, Lincolnshire. There, 'a palace in the midst of a paradise,' Wesley liked to stay. He delighted in Brackenbury's company and friendship. He was appointed as a Methodist preacher for about forty years, irregularly and at intervals.

### 'What is Mine is Yours.'

*Letter I.*

BRISTOL, *September* 27, 1779.

DEAR SIR,—I hope your stay at —— will be of use to many. But do not hurt yourself in order to help others. Mr. S—— is an upright, valuable man. His wife is a jewel indeed. I wish we had many like her. Your being at —— during this critical time is a singular providence. Both parties have a regard for you; and will hear you when they will not hear each other. I am glad you think of spending the winter in town, and doubt not but it will be for the glory of God. Go to my house, *what is mine is yours*; you are my brother, my friend; let neither life nor death

[1] His hymn on the Holy Spirit is combined with one by Charles Wesley in *Methodist Free Church Hymns*.

divide us! Your visit to N—— will, I am persuaded, be of considerable use; the more because you love and recommend discipline. But I must beg of you to spend a night or two at Y—— and at L——. The sooner you come the more welcome you will be. Wrap yourself up warm, particularly your head and breast.—I am, your very affectionate friend and brother.

## I give it under my hand . . . you are welcome to preach in any of our Preaching-houses.

*Letter II.*

BRISTOL, *March* 9, 1782.

DEAR SIR,—What a comfort it is that we know the Lord reigneth; and that He disposes all things in heaven and earth in the very manner which He sees will be most for His own glory, and for the good of those that love Him! I am firmly persuaded the present dispensation, severe as it may appear, will be found in the event a means of greater blessing than any you have yet received. Even already you find the consolations of the Holy One are not small with you. And He enables you to make the right use of this providence, by devoting yourself more entirely to His service.

On April 4 I expect to be in Manchester, in order to visit the societies in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire; and thence, if God permit, to Scotland. Perhaps it would be of use if you took part of the journey with me. Let me know your thoughts.

It is exceeding clear to me, first, that a dispensation of the gospel is committed to you; and secondly, that you are peculiarly called to publish it in connexion with us. It has pleased God to give so many and so strong evidences of this, that I see not how any reasonable person

can doubt it. Therefore, what I have often said before I say again, and give it under my hand,—that you are welcome to preach in any of our preaching-houses, in Great Britain or Ireland, whenever it is convenient for you. I commend you for preaching less frequently where you find less liberty of spirit (because no necessity is laid upon *you* with regard to this or that particular place), and for spending most time in those places where you find most probability of doing good. We have need to work while it is day.—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and servant.

## 'Trust God, and speak as well as you can.'

Very tenderly Wesley deals with the frail health of his friend, on account of which Brackenbury travelled to the Channel Islands and to Holland this year (1783). Wesley, then eighty years of age, accompanied him to Holland. This was the veteran's first holiday for forty years. On their return, Brackenbury went again to Guernsey and Jersey with Alexander Kilham[1] of Epworth, Lincolnshire, as travelling companion and evangelist. Amid much persecution they founded the flourishing Methodism of those islands.

*Letter III.*

[London,] *January* 4, 1783.

Dear Sir,—I rejoice to hear that you have had a safe passage, and that you have preached both in Guernsey and Jersey. We must not expect many conveniences at first; hitherto it is the day of small things. I should imagine the sooner you begin to preach in French the better: as surely you need not be careful about accuracy. Trust God, and speak as well as you can.

While those poor sheep were scattered abroad without a

[1] Later he became one of Wesley's preachers, contended for the administration of the sacraments among the Methodists, and for the adoption of the representative principle in their government. With William Thom he founded the Methodist New Connexion (1797-1907).

shepherd, and with no proper connexion with each other, no wonder they were cold and dead. It is good that every one should know our whole plan. We do not want any man to go on blindfold.

Peace be with your spirit! I wish you many happy years, and am, dear Sir, your very affectionate friend and servant.

## 'He calls you not so much to act as to suffer.'

*Letter IV.*

[SHOREHAM, KENT,] *January* 10, 1783.

DEAR SIR,—As I expect to remain in London till the beginning of March, I hope to have the pleasure of spending a little time with you before I set out on my spring and summer journeys, which I shall probably continue as long as I live. And who would wish to live for any meaner purpose than to serve God in our generation? I know my health and strength are continued for this very thing. And if ever I should listen to that siren song, 'Spare thyself,' I believe my Master would spare me no longer, but soon take me away. It pleases Him to deal with you in a different way. He frequently calls you not so much to act as to suffer. And you may well say—

> 'O take Thy way! Thy way is best;
> Grant or deny me ease;
> This is but tuning of my breast
> To make the music please.'

I am glad you are still determined to do what you can, and to do it without delay. But all are not of this mind. I have just received a letter from Mr. ——, formerly one of our travelling preachers, informing me, whereas it has pleased God to take away his dear partner, he is resolved again to give himself up to the work,—after he has settled

his worldly business, which he thinks will take but sixteen or seventeen months! Would one think he had ever read the Epistle of St. James? or that he had heard those words, 'What is your life? It is even a vapour, which appeareth and vanisheth away.' Commending you to Him who is able to save you to the uttermost, I am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Make the Opportunities that you cannot find.'

The year after this letter Wesley's companionship on a month's tour in Holland, for a second time, enforced this counsel upon his friend. He was eighty-three, but he found and made opportunities for incessant work for God and men. Whilst at Amsterdam he wrote the Preface to his *Life of Fletcher*.

*Letter V.*

LONDON, *February* 15, 1785.

DEAR SIR,—Your having the opportunity of giving them a few discourses in Dover, and then travelling with so pious and friendly a person as Mr. Ireland,[1] I could not but look upon as clear instance of a gracious Providence. I cannot doubt but the mild air which you now breathe will greatly tend to the re-establishment of your health. And so will the suspension of your public labours till you are better able to bear them.

With regard to perfecting yourself in the French language, it is certain this may be done more speedily and effectually in a family where only French is spoken. And undoubtedly you may learn the purity of the language far better in Languedoc than in Normandy. It is clear that you are not called at present to any public labours. But should you not be so much the more diligent in private? to redeem the time? to buy up every opportunity? Should you not be

[1] A valued Bristol friend of Wesley and Fletcher.

'instant in season and out of season'; that is, to *make* the opportunities which you cannot *find*? Surely the all-wise and all-merciful Saviour did not send you into France for nothing. Oh no! you are at least to pluck one brand (perhaps several) out the burning.

May the Lord whom you serve in all things direct your paths! So prays, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'I, not you, will judge.'

Here is Wesley, the general, not to say the autocrat. But what a golden maxim he also here gives his friend: 'I have often repented of judging too severely; but very seldom of being too merciful.'

*Letter VI.*

LONDON, *October* 20, 1787.

DEAR SIR,—Mr. —— is undoubtedly a good young man; and has a tolerably good understanding. But he thinks it better than it is; and in consequence is apt to put himself in your or my place. For these fifty years, if any one said, 'If you do not put such an one out of society, I will go out of it'; I have said, 'Pray go: I, not you, will judge who shall stay.' I therefore greatly approve of your purpose, to give Mr. W—— a full hearing in the presence of all the preachers. I have often repented of judging too severely; but very seldom of being too merciful.

As the point is undoubtedly of very great importance, it deserved serious consideration; and I am glad you took the pains to consider it, and discussed it so admirably well according to Scripture and sound reason.

I enclose a few lines for Mrs. ——, for whom I feel an affectionate concern.

The God whom you serve will shortly deliver you from

the heaviness you feel.—I ever am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'This Doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists.'

This, one of Wesley's most memorable statements, is in our closing letter to this friend. Next year the death of Wesley broke their fellowship. Brackenbury took Wesley's appointment at City Road eleven days before Wesley died, and lovingly watched by the aged leader's side when that event occurred. Even then Wesley asked for a pen; but could no longer do as much as he describes in the pretty closing turn of this letter.

*Letter VII.*

BRISTOL, *September* 15, 1790.

DEAR SIR,—Your letter gave me great satisfaction. I wanted to hear where and how you were; and am glad to find you are better in bodily health, and not weary and faint in your mind. My body seems nearly to have done its work, and to be almost worn out. Last month my strength was nearly gone, and I could have sat almost still from morning to night. But, blessed be God, I crept about a little, and made shift to preach once a day. On Monday I ventured a little farther; and after I had preached three times (once in the open air) I found my strength so restored that I could have preached again without inconvenience.

I am glad brother D—— has more light with regard to full sanctification. This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up. I congratulate you upon sitting loose to all below; steadfast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free.

Moderate riding on horseback, chiefly in the south of

England, would improve your health. If you choose to accompany me in any of my little journeys on this side Christmas, whenever you was tired you might go into my carriage. I am not so ready a writer as I was once; but I bless God I can scrawl a little, enough to assure you that I am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and brother.

## Letters to Adam Clarke and one to his Wife.

The aged Wesley attracted in Adam Clarke (1760-1832) a young Timothy of exceptional scholarly aptitudes, combined with strength and sweetness of character. He became an itinerant in 1782. He was then miserably poor; but happening to turn up half a guinea while gardening at Kingswood School, Bristol, where he waited to be accepted by Wesley as a preacher, he, with the scholar's enthusiasm, handed it to Bayley, a master there, for a copy of the Hebrew grammar which he was then preparing. This was the foundation of Clarke's mastery in Biblical scholarship. He became a Briareus in languages and learning, and was employed as editor and antiquarian by the Government.[1] His *Commentary* on the whole Bible nourished several generations of Methodists.

## 'You should not forget French, or anything you have learned.'

Wesley was a true humanist in range and catholicity of taste. Any scholar among his friends and preachers, as well as the simplest evangelist, found him a shining example and an appreciative helper.

[1] This was in 1808-1818, to complete Rymer's *Fœdera* for the State Papers Commission. That Wesley would have undertaken such a task weighed much with Clarke. Some brethren thought it was a providential call; others that it was a trick of the devil to divert him; others that it would hinder his proper work. As a fact, it helped that; as he was also faithful to all preaching and pastoral duties while he carried four folio volumes through the press. 'I did it,' he said, 'for the honour of my God and the credit of my people.'

# TO CHIEF PREACHERS

*Letter I.*

LONDON, *Feb.* 3, 1786.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—You do well in insisting upon full and present salvation, whether men will hear or forbear; as also in preaching abroad, when the weather permits, and recommending fasting, both by precept and example. But you need not wonder that all these are opposed, not only by formalists, but by half-Methodists.

You should not forget French, or anything you have learned. I do not know whether I have read the book you speak of. You may send your translation at your leisure.

Be all in earnest, and you shall see greater things than these.—I am, my dear Adam, your affectionate brother.

## 'Wary in choosing Names for our Children.'

Wesley was bound to Bristol by strong ties, as many references in this volume show. He wants his friend there. His remark on names is curious. His own name was certainly an 'example' to him. He admired St. John's style of writing most of all; and that apostle's message, 'God is love,' was also Wesley's favourite theme.

*Letter II.*

BRISTOL, *March* 9, 1789.

DEAR ADAM,—If I should live to see you another Conference, I should be glad to have sister Clarke and you here, rather than at most other places, because I spend more time here myself than at any other place, except London. I am glad to hear that God has raised up so able a preacher from the Islands;[1] but certainly you should spare no pains in teaching him to read and write English. And I do not doubt but if he learned with a single eye, he would be largely strengthened by the blessing of God.

[1] Probably John de Queteville of Guernsey. Clarke was now at Jersey.

It would be a reason for being very wary in choosing names for our children, if that old remark were true—

> 'That our first tempers from example flow,
> And borrow that example from our names.'

Peace be with you and yours!—I am, dear Adam, your affectionate friend and brother.

'"Oh, what will the end be?" Why, glory to God in the highest.'

Surely a prophetic utterance. Many times has that devout exclamation been heard concerning Wesley's work in Ireland. This question and answer make a fine cordial for faltering faith. Clarke was Irish by birth; but at the Conference at Leeds Wesley did not send him into that 'strange land,' but to Bristol, as Wesley most wished.

While there Clarke's frail health broke down completely. Hence there followed a letter of practical kindness from Wesley to Mrs. Clarke (Letter IV.). Wesley would recall his own case and his recovery at the Hot Wells thirty-six years before.

*Letter III.*

*Near* DUBLIN, *June* 25, 1789.

DEAR ADAM,—You send me good news with regard to the Islands. Who can hurt us, if God is on our side? Trials may come, but they are all good. I have not been so tried for many years. Every week, and almost every day, I am bespattered in the public papers, either by Mr. Smyth or by Mr. Mann, his curate. Smooth, but bitter as wormwood, are their words; and five or six of our richest members have left the society, because (they say) 'I have left the Church.' Many are in tears on account of it; and many are terribly frightened, and crying out, 'Oh, what will the end be?' What will it be? Why, 'Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and goodwill among men.'

But, meantime, what is to be done? What will be the most effectual means to stem this furious torrent? I have just visited the classes, and find still in the society upwards of a thousand members; and, among these, many as deep Christians as any I have met with in Europe. But who is able to watch over them, that they may not be moved from their steadfastness? I know none more proper than Adam Clarke and his wife. Indeed, it may seem hard for them to go into a strange land again. Well, you may come to me at Leeds, at the latter end of next month; and if you can show me any that are more proper, I will send them in your stead. That God may be glorified, is all that is desired by, dear Adam, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'I think he must do this, or die.'

*Letter IV.*

*To Mrs. Adam Clarke.*

DUMFRIES, *June* 1, 1790.

MY DEAR SISTER,—The great question is, What can be done for Adam Clarke? Now, will you save his life? Look round; consider if there be any circuit where he can have much rest, and little work; or shall he and you spend September in my rooms at Kingswood, on condition that he shall preach but twice a week, and ride to the Hot Wells every day? I think he must do this, or die; and I do not want him (neither do you) to run away from us in haste. You need not be told that this will be attended with some expense; if it be, we can make it easy. I am apt to think this will be the best way. In the meantime, let him do as much as he can, and no more.

It is probable I shall stay with you a little longer, as my strength does not much decline. I travelled yesterday

nearly eighty miles, and preached in the evening without any pain. The Lord does what pleases Him. Peace be with all your spirits!—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'The People of Bristol are honest, yet so dull.'

A racy letter, with characterisations of cities and folk, and full of shrewdness and optimism. Ailing Adam Clarke would read this with interest after the letter to his wife. What mountains of church debts have been lifted on Wesley's plan! It was a development from Captain Foy's.[1]

*Letter V.*

[POCKLINGTON,] *June* 28, 1790.

DEAR ADAM,—I often wonder at the people of Bristol. They are so honest, yet so dull, 'tis scarce possible to strike any fire into them. Only with God all things are possible. Many years ago I put the society at Bath into a way wherein, if they had persevered, they would now have owed nothing. They were at Plymouth but thirty in number, and their debt was £1400. I advised them, let every member subscribe monthly what he can; and a hundred at the dock promised to do the same. 'I,' said one, 'will give a crown a month'; 'I,' said another, 'half a crown.' Many subscribed a shilling, sixpence, or threepence a month. And now the debt is paid. I began such a subscription in Bath, as I have done in many places with success. But they left it off in two or three weeks. Why? Because I gave four guineas to prevent one, that was arrested, from going to jail! Good reason, was it not? 'Why,' said one and another, 'might he not have given it to *me*?'

On Monday four weeks I shall probably set out for Bristol. Peace be with your spirits.—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

[1] See p. 300.

'I followed one rule: You must either bend or break.'

Clarke recovered, and at length Wesley sends him to serve for a season in his native land, with a characteristic letter of instructions.

*Letter VI.*

BRISTOL, *September* 9, 1790.

DEAR ADAM,—Did not the terrible weather that you had at sea make you forget your fatigue by land? Come, set one against the other, and you have no great reason to complain of your journey.

You will have need of all the courage and prudence which God has given you. Indeed, you will want constant supplies of both. Very gently and very steadily, you should proceed between the rocks on either hand. In the great revival at London, my first difficulty was, to bring into temper those who opposed the work; and my next, to check and regulate the extravagances of those that promoted it. And this was far the hardest part of the work; for many of them would bear no check at all. But I followed one rule, though with all calmness: 'You must either bend or break.' Meantime, while you act exactly right, expect to be blamed by both sides.

I will give you a few directions: 1. See that no prayer-meeting continue later than nine at night, particularly on Sunday. Let the house be emptied before the clock strikes nine. 2. Let there be no exhortation at any prayer-meeting. 3. Beware of jealousy, or judging one another. 4. Never think a man is an enemy to the work, because he reproves irregularities. Peace be with you and yours!—I am, dear Adam, your affectionate friend and brother.

## Letters to Thomas Coke.

In the light of the results which followed them, these two brief, quiet letters are of profound interest. The first is Wesley's sanction to the formation of the first Methodist foreign missionary society. Broad rivers with streams, making everything live where they come and bearing argosies with portly sail and rich with treasure for earth and heaven, were to flow from the fountain thus unsealed. The least important of these treasures is the vast sum of money raised every year for this work by world-wide Methodism—in round figures £1,500,000 ($7,500,000). Wesley's first notable work was as foreign missionary in Georgia (1735-7). He originated, or caught from Whitefield, a great slogan, worthy to rank with that of Luther at Worms—a charter for novel world-wide work and for every evangelist and missionary: 'I look upon all the world as my parish.'[1] In 1759 he encouraged Nathaniel Gilbert, sometime Speaker of the House of Assembly in Antigua, to spread the gospel among his slaves and the negroes there. He made a collection in August 1767, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, 'at the request of Mr. Whitaker of New England, for the Indian schools in America.' Now he gives authority and his blessing to Coke, who must be regarded as the father of organised Methodist foreign missionary work. He dreamed of Wesley's world-wide parish. Wesley was wiser than Dr. Rylands, who tried to kill Carey's proposal for modern missions by declaring that God would convert the world without his help. Coke dedicated many years of his life, and his fortune also, to this work; died on his way to India in its interest, and was buried at sea.

Thomas Coke, LL.D. (1747-1814), was a gift of Wales to Methodism. Born at Brecon, he was dismissed from the curacy of South Petherton for his Methodistic earnestness, came to Wesley in 1776, and, said the latter, 'an union then began which I trust shall never end.' It never did. Coke's

[1] See Whitefield's *Life* by Andrews, and Wesley Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, iii. 36.

deep piety, forensic and classical attainment, and social status made him greatly influential in England, especially after Wesley's death. He was diminutive in stature and had a countenance of cherubic beauty. His somewhat strange manner of speech disturbed Wesley. He drew Adam Clarke to the lantern on the upper floor of the New Room at Bristol and listened with him as Coke preached. 'There, Adam,' said Wesley, 'you have heard how the doctor *mouths* his words.'

The second letter shows Coke, then in Ireland, straining under Wesley's regulations, by some of which he tried to keep the Methodists a mere society in the Church of England. Henry Moore was one of Wesley's chief preachers, and, with Coke, his biographer. Coke was destined to aid the separate organisation of Methodism in England and in America. Of his work there, letters tell in chapter VII.

## 'Your Proposal to send Missionaries.'

*Letter I.*

BRISTOL, *March* 12, 1786.

DEAR SIR,—I greatly approve of your proposal, for raising a subscription, in order to send missionaries to the Highlands of Scotland, the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, the Leeward Islands, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. It is not easy to conceive the extreme want there is, in all these places, of men that will not count their lives dear unto themselves, so they may testify the gospel of the grace of God.—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate brother.

## 'Thus far only I could go.'

*Letter II.*

GLASGOW, *May* 16, 1788.

DEAR SIR,—I came hither this morning. There is a fair opening at Dumfries, and a prospect of much good. I like

your proposal concerning Joseph Cownley, and will talk with him about it if I live to see Newcastle.

As I said before, so I say still, I cannot, I dare not, leave the Church, for the reasons we all agreed to thirty years ago in the Conference at Leeds. Thus far only I could go. On condition, that our people would receive the Lord's Supper once a month either at St. Patrick's or their own parish church (the reasonableness of which should be strongly and largely explained),—on this condition, I would allow Henry Moore to read the morning service at Whitefriars on the other Sundays.

I wonder at the imprudence of Mr. Edward Smyth, to say nothing of his unkindness. You did well in changing the stewards at Waterford.—I am, dear Sir, yours most affectionately.

# CHAPTER VI

## TO ECCENTRIC THOMAS WRIDE, STEADY JOSEPH TAYLOR, AND OTHER METHODIST PREACHERS

WESLEY's tact and resourcefulness come out strikingly in his dealings with the rank and file of his preachers. These were of all types. There was Goodman Dull, like John Easton, who, to Wesley's amazement, neither laughed nor cried when he read Wesley's favourite novel, which he abridged for the Methodists—Henry Brooke's *Fool of Quality*. There was 'Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence'; and 'John, whose surname was Mark, who departed' from the work because of its difficulties, and, unlike the nephew of Barnabas, never returned to it. Wesley's good-humour seldom or never failed in dealing with these and many other varieties. He saw instantly the possibilities of a situation and used them. Michael Fenwick complained that, although he travelled with Wesley, he had not figured in the published extracts from his Journal. He had his wish gratified, and more, in the next issue. Wesley so wrote, 'I preached at Clayworth; I think none was unmoved except Michael Fenwick, who fell fast asleep under an adjoining hayrick.' Another preacher, when with Wesley at the table of a wealthy Methodist, bemoaned the departure of many from the Spartan simplicity of early Methodism. 'My brother,' said Wesley, glancing at the preacher's well-filled plate, 'here is an opportunity for self-denial.'

### I

### Letters to 'eccentric Thomas Wride.'

Steady and skilful in leadership as were most of his preachers, like Joseph Taylor, it was inevitable that among

the large number which Wesley employed the eccentric should appear now and again. Such an one was Thomas Wride. Probably none tried Wesley more than he did. He was often officious and exacting as a martinet, and sometimes the embodiment of stupidity. He was suspicious and bitingly sarcastic, and could manage neither himself nor those under him. During the period covered by these letters Wesley was compelled to reduce him in status, and at length to dismiss him. He afterwards restored him, and he died in the work in 1807, sixteen years after Wesley's death. The official record is unusually brief.[1] There is much mercy in its omissions, and the loose statement, 'between thirty and forty years,' is significant:—'Thomas Wride; who laboured in the Christian ministry between thirty and forty years. He was a man of comprehensive mind, and an able preacher; but his singularities of spirit and manners prevented him from being so acceptable and useful as he otherwise might have been. From the testimony of several friends who visited him in his last illness, we conclude that he died in peace.'

Why did Wesley so long suffer such a man? Because he knew that Wride was saving his own soul by this service, that he had real ability and devotion, and that in a field so wide and varied as the Methodist societies there was room for every style of preacher and worker. Moreover Wride had an almost dog-like devotion to Wesley, was punctilious in following his instructions, and Wesley liked liveliness. Dulness tried him. It was most probably with Wride that this colloquy took place. Said Wesley, pointing to a dock weed in the field where they were walking, 'Tommy, touch that.' He did so. 'Do you feel anything?' Wesley asked. 'No,' was the reply. 'Touch that,' said Wesley, pointing this time to a nettle. Tommy did so and was stung. Wesley added, 'Some men are like docks; say what you will to them, they are stupid. Others, like nettles, resent even a touch. Tommy, you are a nettle; and for my part, I would rather have to do with a nettle than a dock.'

[1] *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences* (1807), octo. edit., 1813, p. 381.

# TO WRIDE AND OTHERS

Of the thirty-one letters to Wride which follow, twenty-seven are new to present-day historians and collectors. They are representative of thousands of the brief messages sent by Wesley to his preachers. They cover more than twenty years of a strange, little-known, Methodist preacher's life, allude to some interesting features in the development of Methodism, help to fix points in Wesley's itinerations,[1] and show that he was virtually the superintendent of Wride's, as of every circuit, although he always maintained the authority of his representatives there. They bring out more impressively than any set of his letters Wesley's patience, his frank, faithful dealing with men, and his large exercise of that charity which hopeth and endureth, suffereth long and is kind.

## 'Labour to be steadily Serious, Weighty in Conversation, and to Walk humbly and closely with God.'

*Letter I.*

LONDON, *February* 14, 1771.

DEAR TOMMY,—If we live till August, the matter of David Evans must be thoroughly inquired into. I do not see that you could do anything more with regard to Longtown.

The providence of God has remarkably interposed in behalf of the poor people at Whitehaven. I am in hopes there will be more peace among them, and more life than has been for some time.

Now, Tommy, you have good encouragement to stir up the gift of God that is in you. Labour to be steadily serious, to be weighty in conversation, and to walk humbly and closely with God.—I am, Your affectionate friend and brother.

[1] *E.g.* Letter XXIII., p. 199, fills in particulars needed for the *Itinerary*, Wesley Historical Society *Proceedings*, p. cxxiii.

## 'Let all that were of the Church keep to the Church.'

*Letter II.*

ARMAGH, *June* 23, 1771.

DEAR TOMMY,—I said before, we will pay the five pounds to brother Littledale at the Conference. If T. Colbeck had done as I ordered, it would have been paid long ago. Then also we will make up what C. Garnet wants. If he desires it, he may come to the Conference in your stead. If not, send your account of things by R. Seed. Will not the yearly subscription pay both those debts? If there be an overplus, it may lessen the debt on Whitehaven House.

I desire that neither any preacher of ours nor any member of our Society would on any pretence go to an Anabaptist meeting. It is the way to destroy the Society. This we have experienced over and over. Let all that were of the Church keep to the Church.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Be zealous, serious, active.'

*Letter III.*

BRISTOL, *September* 7, 1771.

DEAR TOMMY,—The preachers appointed for Whitehaven circuit are John Mason and William Linnell. Jos. Garnet is appointed for Sheffield, and Thomas Wride assistant in the Armagh circuit. Many of the people there are much alive. Probably you may cross over to Newry, which brings you just to the spot.

Let C. Mason and Linnell follow the blow at Keswick. I am glad to hear so good an account of John M'Combe.

Be zealous, serious, active! Then you will save your own soul and them that hear you!—I am, Your affectionate friend and brother.

# TO WRIDE AND OTHERS

## 'Be exact in Everything.'

*Letter IV.*

OTLEY, *June* 30, 1772.

DEAR TOMMY,—How poor John Smith has lost himself, and given occasion to the enemy to blaspheme! I do not see that he can any longer remain with us as a travelling preacher. It seems his best way would be quietly to return to his business.

Tho. Dixon or Jo. Witham may bring over your accounts to the Conference. Be exact in everything!—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Suffer none to ride over your Head. Only be mild!'

*Letter V.*

COLCHESTER, *November* 5, 1772.

DEAR TOMMY,—You was in the right. Let the allotment for the wives of the preachers (at least for the present) stand as it did before.

It seems to me that the alteration made in the travelling-plan by bro. M'Nab is wise and well grounded. I advise you to adhere thereto till you see some good reason to the contrary. *You* are the assistant, not bro. Pepper: you *need* suffer none to ride over your head. Only be *mild*! I require John Murray to follow the same plan. If he does not, I will let him drop at once.

I suspect *the hives* to be what we call *the nettle rash.* I know nothing that helps it but rubbing the part with *parsley.*—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Miss no Congregation, at the Peril of his Life.'

*Letter VI.*

SHOREHAM, *December* 16, 1772.

DEAR TOMMY,—I am afraid there is truth in what you say, that poor John Murray has not the work of God at heart, and that he will leave us as soon as he can conveniently.

Two things, however, I desire in the meantime: one, that he will miss no congregation, at the peril of his life; the other, that he will preach no more at Terryhoogan on a Sunday morning.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Pay . . . what is due to him.'

*Letter VII.*

TULLAMORE, *April* 15, 1773.

DEAR TOMMY,—Six pounds lie in John Johnson's hands. Let it be paid into the hands of Ezekiel Saunderson and Jas. Stewart. Let the forms and desk at Belfast be finished immediately. Out of what remains you may pay C. Stewart what is due to him from the society—I suppose about thirty shillings.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Be gentle to all Men.'

*Letter VIII.*

LONDON, *November* 12, 1773.

DEAR TOMMY,—The matter is short; I see no reason yet why you should remove from York circuit. Do all the good you can there. Observe and enforce all our rules.

Exhort all the believers to go on to perfection, and be gentle to all men.—I am, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Were we to engage little Poets, we should be overrun.'

*Letter IX.*

LONDON, *January* 22, 1774.

DEAR TOMMY,—John Helton is a pleasing preacher, but perhaps not so deep as some others. Yet I suppose he is, and will be a popular one. He has a good person and an agreeable utterance.

You did exactly right in not countenancing hymns not publicly received among us. Were we to encourage little poets, we should soon be overrun. But there is not the least pretence for using any new hymns at Christmas, as some of my brother's Christmas hymns are some of the finest compositions in the English tongue.

Arthur Kershaw should have wrote to me before he left Northampton. Where is he? Or what is he doing?

Tommy, be mild, be gentle toward all men.—I am, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Alas! Alas! . . . I have no Heart to send you Anywhere. You have neither Lowliness nor Love.'

Wride was now in charge of the Athlone circuit in Ireland, with two other preachers to help him. Wesley's last line gave to him again the advice that had been so often necessary. It was unheeded. The next letter was written in sorrow which was deepening to despair. The absence of any commencement, of the usual 'Dear Tommy' at the close, and of any friendly assurance with the bare signature, are very significant.

*Letter X.*

TAUNTON, *August* 29, 1774.

Alas! Alas! You have now confirmed beyond all contradiction what many of our preachers, as many as have had any intercourse with you, alleged concerning you! I am persuaded, had I read your last letter (that of the 17th inst.) at the Conference, condemning, with such exquisite bitterness and self-sufficiency, men so many degrees better than yourself, the whole Conference, as one man, would have disclaimed all connexion with you. I know not what to do. You know not what spirit you are of. Therefore there is small hope of cure. I have no heart to send you anywhere. You have neither lowliness nor love. What can I say or do more! J. WESLEY.

## 'I do not say they defraud; but I say they act unkindly.'

Another letter of remonstrance was necessary in the following February.—'You bite like a bull-dog. When you seize you never let go.' Five months after this a crisis was reached. Meanwhile Wride made anxious inquiry of Wesley concerning the division of the meagre income from the societies for the support of himself and his superintendent. The money allowance for the preachers had been fixed by the Conference of 1765 at £12 each per annum.[1] Hospitality in the homes of the people was generally received in addition to this; but the allowance was pitiably small. These were not in the priest's office for a morsel of bread. In some circuits the money taken at the testimony and fellowship meeting—'the Love feast'—was divided among the preachers. 'This was very little indeed,' says Myles, speaking of the Norwich circuit. One can understand Wride's question, if he and his colleague must

[1] See *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. p. 303.

anticipate the claims of another helper soon to come into the circuit. Wesley begged they would not act unkindly.

*Letter XI.*

LONDON, *February* 24, 1775.

DEAR TOMMY,—Beware of your own spirit! You bite like a bull-dog. When you seize you never let go. I advise you to think of William Hunter no more: go on your way as if he was under the earth.

At a quarterly meeting, if the collection is only six pounds and two preachers are present, they commonly share it between them. In this case I do not say they *defraud* a third preacher who is expected; but I say they *act unkindly*.

But you should tell me without fear or favour who has neglected the round.[1]

Part of the books which I borrowed of Mr. Hammond I left at Waterford with one who has promised to send them back directly. The other part, one promised to send from Dublin. I am ashamed of their vile negligence. I hope to be in Dublin next month, and am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Your Language is such as an Archangel would not use to the Devil.'

Wesley is roused at last. This is one of his sharpest, sternest letters. Bishop Lavington[2] felt and deserved the same lash. Little wonder that Wride was deposed from his position as assistant to Wesley in the superintendency of a circuit, when the annual Conference was held at Leeds ten days after this July letter. John Floyde was the second

[1] *I.e.* the circuit of societies in the care of Wride as superintendent preacher.

[2] Author of *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared.* See Wesley's *Works*, vol. ix. pp. 1-64.

preacher in the circuit; but 'the present question concerns . . . Thomas Wride.'

*Letter XII.*

DUBLIN, *July* 22, 1775.

The present question concerns not John Floyde but Thomas Wride.

The words which I heard you speak at Limerick were such as no civilised Turk or heathen would have suffered to come out of his mouth.. I hoped this would have been the last time; but you now repeat the same in cool blood. Your letter was read at the Conference,[1] and our brethren desired me to inform you you are no longer fit for our Connexion. Such a foul-mouthed railer (upon whatever provocation) is quite unfit for a Methodist preacher. Such base language is too bad for the fishwives of Billingsgate. It is such as an archangel would not use to the devil. You must have done with it for ever, if you desire to have any further fellowship with JOHN WESLEY.

## 'You will give a good Account of the Circuit.'

Wride learned his lesson; but only in part and for the time. Wesley restored him to his office a year later (August 1776), and he was given the charge of the large circuit of Whitehaven with two colleagues to assist him. Empringham, here named, was one of them.

*Letter XIII.*

LONDON, *January* 17, 1777.

DEAR TOMMY,—If your fellow-labourers and you are zealous and active, you will give me a good account of the circuit. I found it in a flourishing state. So will you before you leave it.

[1] Probably a small Conference of Wesley and the preachers in Ireland.

Robert Empringham has done exactly right as to the Sacrament. I advise you to tread in his steps.

I wish you would inquire at what price I could have some kind of vessel to carry me from Whitehaven by the Isle to Dublin.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

I take no horses with me.

## 'The Summer is before us.'

In his neat handwriting—strangely neat for such a man—Wride often endorsed Wesley's letters with the date of his receipt of them. He says on this, 'Received it Monday the 18th, by Mr. Bradford.' The latter took Empringham with him to mission the Isle of Man. Methodism had been introduced there two years earlier by John Crook.

*Letter XIV.*

DARLINGTON, *May* 7, 1777.

DEAR TOMMY,—I am resolved to make one fair trial of the Island. So I have desired brother Empringham and Joseph Bradford to go over immediately together, and preach in every town and village. Now the summer is before us, and let us try what can be done, and let brother Seed and you exert yourselves in England!—I am, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'I cannot see any Objection to your choosing her.'

Some financial allowance was made for the wife of the preacher—'wife's quarterage.' This was fixed by the Conference of 1769 at £10 per annum. Later, a house was provided for the preacher and his family. As much of the preacher's success and the smooth working of the itinerant system depended upon the suitability and co-operation of

the preacher's wife, Wesley took a close interest in the matrimonial affairs of the preachers, and occasionally gave practical and sharp advice to preachers' wives about the condition of the preacher's house. In later letters Wesley sends his 'love to S[ister] Wride.' Wesley's bitter experience of his own ill-assorted marriage lies behind the last words of this letter.

*Letter XV.*

*Near* MARYBOROUGH, *April* 20, 1778.

DEAR TOMMY,—I do not remember J. Woodcock. But if the account you give of her be just (and I have no reason to believe the contrary), I cannot see any objection to your choosing her; although you do well not to depend upon her brother, for his humour may easily change. Whatever you do should be done with much prayer, as the matter is of no small importance.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate brother.

I hope the 'Sword-drawer' is not a preacher.

## 'You know, Love is full of Fears.'

Wride was in Scarborough when he received this tactful letter.

*Letter XVI.*

OXON, *August* 10, 1779.

DEAR TOMMY,—George Story gives me a pleasing account of your behaviour last year. Yet I am afraid there is something wanting still. As you know, love is full of fears. I am afraid your soul is not alive to God, and that you are not deeply and steadily serious.

I am afraid your common conversation is not weighty and meet to minister grace to the hearers. O Tommy, stir yourself up before the Lord! Pray that you may be all alive! Labour to be serious, earnest, edifying in your daily

conversations! And one thing never forget! At least be serious in the pulpit! Let nothing queer, odd, or ludicrous pass your lips there! Then the work of the Lord will prosper in our hands, and you will be a comfort to, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'A mere groundless Imagination.'

*Letter XVII.*

LYNN, *November* 1, 1779.

DEAR TOMMY,—You will never disoblige me by telling me anything that you think or fear. No preacher in our Connexion ever dealt more plainly with me than Thomas Walsh did. And there never was any that I loved better, or put more confidence in. So that it is a mere groundless imagination which some of our friends have entertained that I love persons less for their plain-dealing.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate brother.

I expect to be at London on Friday.

## 'You mean well even where you judge ill.'

*Letter XVIII.*

BRISTOL, *March* 9, 1780.

DEAR TOMMY,—I take nothing ill that is meant well. Therefore I take nothing amiss in your letter, because I am fully persuaded you mean well even where you judge ill. Part of what you say I believe, part I do not. But I know *you* patently believe it. Still, however, you must think and let think.[1] I must act by my own conscience, not yours. And I really have a conscience. And I labour to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.—I am, Your affectionate brother.

[1] See p. 136.

## 'You might now be useful.'

Notwithstanding all his patience, Wesley has at length to dismiss Wride from the work for a time, or to require him to desist from it. He had tried him in subordinate positions in The Dales, Yarm, and Scarborough circuits. He can be no longer borne with; the work of God is being grievously injured. Question 4 at the Bristol Conference of August 1780 was, 'Who desist from travelling?' 'Answer, . . . Thomas Wride, William Barker, and John Beauland for want of health.' There follows this, which Wride would hear of and read with pain and surely with shame: *N.B.*—As we admit no one as a travelling preacher unless we judge him to have grace, gifts, fruit, so we cannot receive any one any longer than he retains those qualifications.'[1]

But Wride loved Wesley and the work of preaching. By winter he is begging Wesley's correction and advice with a view to resuming the work.

### *Letter XIX.*

LONDON, *December* 14, 1780.

DEAR TOMMY,—What I wish for you is—

1. That your soul may be truly alive to God.
2. That you may be steadily serious and profitable in conversation.
3. That you may rise as early in the morning as health will permit.
4. That you may abstain from satire, both in speaking and writing.

I think (if these points were secured) you might now be useful as a local, and by and by, as a travelling preacher.—I am, Your affectionate brother.

[1] *Minutes*, 1780 (octo. edit., 1812, p. 143).

## 'I desire you to come to the Conference.'

It was not until three years later (1783) that Wesley re-admitted Wride to the work and rank of travelling preacher. These had been sad but useful years to him. Now he is encouraged and honoured, though only second preacher in the Epworth circuit, by being summoned to the London Conference of 1785. Wesley's autocracy, paternal though it was, comes out in this letter.

*Letter XX.*

DUBLIN, *July* 8, 1785.

DEAR TOMMY,—I wonder at nothing in poor Nicholas, but I wonder much at James Kershaw. Unless our preachers had already left their preaching-house, surely he would not have let it to any others!

I love John Fenwick well, but I know he was a faulty man that once or twice. However, if there be no fresh matter of complaint, what is past shall go for nothing.

I desire you to come to the Conference, a conference while I live is 'The preachers whom *I invite* to confer with me.'

Many years ago one informed me at London, 'The stewards have discovered they are not *your* stewards, but the *people's*, and are to direct, not *be directed* by you.' The next Sunday I let them drop, and named seven other stewards.

No contentious persons shall for the future meet in any Conference. They may *dispute* elsewhere if they please.—I am, dear Tommy, Yours affectionately.

I never said a word of publishing that account.

## 'Disappoint those who wait for your halting.'

Wride was restored to the full duties and influence of a superintendent preacher by the Conference of this year, and appointed to Norwich. He had troubles there.

*Letter XXI.*

BRISTOL, *September* 5, 1785.

DEAR TOMMY,—When you do what you can you do enough. I trust you will now use every possible means of redeeming the time. I wish you would never neglect sleeping early and rising early. Beware of anything like lightness or trifling. Wherever you are, be obliging and be serious. Disappoint those who wait for your halting.—I am, with love to S[ister] Wride, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Those doggerel Verses.'

Wride wrote Wesley with particulars of a memorial inscription and its doggerel about a Mr. Turner in the Norwich chapel. Wesley hated 'vile panegyric' in epitaphs, and he disliked still more bad rhyme and weak verse. He gives peremptory instructions on the matter in this and the letter which follows it. The 'ticket' here referred to is of interest. It was the Methodist class-ticket, issued for all by Wesley every quarter.[1] It was given by him or the preacher in charge to every member of the Methodist societies as a token of membership. Each bore a passage of Scripture. The member's name was written on it, and initialled by the preacher. It secured admission for the member at the meetings of the society, and recognition by Methodists when he removed to another town.

*Letter XXII.*

KINGSWOOD, *September* 16, 1785.

DEAR TOMMY,—Your next will, I suppose, find me in London, where I hope to be in about a fortnight. We know not what stops our northern schoolmaster, and

[1] See *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. p. 286, and Plates xvii. and xxix. Tickets are still issued, and very largely, but not universally, used in the Methodist churches.

expect to see him every day. As soon as he comes, Mr. Jones will make the best of his way to Norwich. I leave it wholly to *you* whether and how far you should accept of Dr. Hunt's offer. With regard to Mr. Proud and your capital singer, you acted exactly right. But I expect you will hear of it at both ears.

Those doggerel verses must not remain in the chapel. I wish Zac. Houlton would spend two or three weeks with you. He is not eloquent, but he is useful.

You do well in insisting on every person shewing his ticket. I wonder Jon. Cousins did not. It is of importance to mind the select society; that, I apprehend, he never neglected. If the leaders and the bands are closely attended to, they will do well; otherwise not.

I am, with love to S[ister] Wride, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

'I hope to be preaching . . . everywhere at half-past six in the evening.'

What a programme Wesley here makes for this week of the autumn of 1785! He was then eighty-two. The sermons he refers to included one by Coke on the consecration of Bishop Asbury, in Baltimore, the year before that of this letter.

*Letter XXIII.*

LONDON, *October* 8, 1785.

DEAR TOMMY,—On Monday se'nnight (the 17th instant) I hope to be at Norwich (coming by the mail coach); on Tuesday at Yarmouth; on Wednesday and Thursday at Lowestoft, preaching everywhere at half-hour past six in the evening; on Friday noon at Beccles, or when you please; in the evening at Loddon and on Saturday evening at Norwich.

The verses must be effaced some way before I come down. Be as exact in discipline as you please. Zac. Houlton was on the road; but one met him and told him he was not wanted. I always lodge in our own houses. I think those sermons may stop bother.—I am, with love to S[ister] Wride, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Set him a Pattern in all Things.'

*Letter XXIV.*

LONDON, *November* 8, 1785.

DEAR TOMMY,—James M. Byron is an amiable young man; at present full of faith and love. If possible, guard him from those who will be inclined to love him too well. Then he will be as useful a fellow-labourer as you can desire. And set him a pattern in all things.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Preach in the Morning . . . none sing oftener than twice.'

But James M. Byron liked more hymns than Wesley permitted in the service. He declared that the Norwich Methodists 'sing very well and I could hear them sing ever so long.'[1] There was a good, if somewhat unmanageable, choir there. The young preacher there, John M'Kersey, had another reason for liking much singing according to Wride's report: 'his avowed reason is that it saves him labour and fills up the time!' Wesley quotes this. And neither of these young preachers liked the morning preaching service at 5 A.M. M'Kersey said he could rise soon enough, but could not preach without his breakfast. Wride told him with characteristic sarcasm to take his breakfast to bed with him, and eat it when the clock struck four! The Norwich

[1] 'The Correspondence of Thomas Wride,' Wesley Historical Society *Proceedings*, vol. i. p. 140; Tyerman, *Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 460.

Methodists had fallen from faith in this matter, as Wesley shows in a later letter. During the winter months he concedes that the service might be at 6 A.M.

*Letter XXV.*

LONDON, *November* 17, 1785.

DEAR TOMMY,—Deal plainly and yet tenderly with James Byron, and he will be a very useful labourer. But none can be a Methodist preacher unless he is both able and willing to preach in the morning, which is the most healthy exercise in the world. I desire that none of our preachers would sing oftener than twice at one service. We need nothing to fill up our time.

In every place where there is a sufficient number of believers, do all you can to prevail upon them to meet in band. Be mild, be serious, and you will conquer all things. —I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'If they do not come to their Senses . . .!'

*Letter XXVI.*

LONDON, *December* 14, 1785.

DEAR TOMMY,—Have patience with the young men, and they will mend upon your hands. But remember! safe and fair goes far.

For twenty years and upwards we had good morning congregations at Norwich, but they might begin at six till Lady Day. I desire J. M. Byron to try what he can do. Better days will come.

I pray let that doggerel hymn be no more sung in our chapel. If they do not soon come to their senses at Norwich, I will remove you to Colchester.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

Be mild!

Be serious!

'Sing twice . . . once before and once after Sermon.'

With the above letter to Wride, Wesley sent an ultimatum to the young preachers John M'Kersey and James M. Byron, and directions for the singers. Here is Wesley's letter, of which Wride took a copy. Although fond of singing himself, Wesley disliked much singing in the Methodist services, lest the time for prayer and sermon might be much curtailed, and the simplicity and spirituality of the service lessened for his people. Many of these had then little appreciation of choral singing and classic music. His command was 'Sing no anthems.' Organs in his chapels in his lifetime were very few. When he heard an efficient organist and a devoutly rendered musical service he was enraptured.

*To J. M'Kersey and J. M. Byron.*

If you do not choose to obey me, you need not; I will let you go when you please and send other preachers in your place. If you do choose to stay with me, never sing more than twice; once before, and once after sermon.

I have given Mr. Wride directions concerning the singers. Pray assist him in seeing these directions observed. You are young; I am in pain for you. Follow *his* advice. He is older and wiser than you. You would do well to meet the children and the Select Society, though it be a cross. I will thank you if you will do all you can to strengthen Mr. Wride's hands. Beware of strengthening any party against him. Let you three be one! Nothing will give greater satisfaction than this to, Your affectionate brother.

Wesley's command was obeyed; the young preachers still served him. But they and Wride were removed to other spheres at the next Conference. However the good Norwich folk felt about their preachers, Wride told Wesley that 'at this time a man is wanted for Norwich who has in him the

Lion, the Lamb, the Dove, the Serpent, and the Ox.' Wride was not that man.

## 'She was surly. . . . You have an Estate left you.'

*Letter XXVII.*

LONDON, *October* 29, 1786.

DEAR TOMMY,—I am entirely of your mind. If any man (to waive everything else) can make me sleep without touching me, he may call the matter what he pleases: I know it is not magnetism, but magic.

Mr. Mears did not tell me (that I know) anything about letters one, two, three. Women told me at Chatham, 'We called on Mrs. Wride, and offered her any service in our power, but she was so sullen and surly, we had not the heart to go again.'

But is it true, Tommy, that you have an estate left you? I fear it is not so large as the Duke of Bedford's! I should be glad to bring you all to a good agreement, if I knew how.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Lift up your Heart to God, or you will be angry with me.'

This letter, a tactful, tender, beautiful rebuke and correction closely characteristic of Wesley, is given in his *Works*[1] without a name. It so exactly fits Thomas Wride's errors and Wesley's patient pleadings with him, as seen in our earlier letters, that it is inserted here. The St. John of England is now eighty-three years. His tender, lovingly frank message recalls the epistles of the aged St. John the Divine, whose terse, clear style he so much admired.

[1] *Works*, vol. xiii. p. 115.

*Letter XXVIII.*

*To Mr. ——.*

*December* 1786.

DEAR ——,—You know I love you. Ever since I knew you I have neglected no way of showing it that was in my power. And you know I esteem you for your zeal and activity, for your love of discipline, and for your gifts which God has given you; particularly quickness of apprehension and readiness of utterance; especially in prayer.

Therefore I am jealous over you, lest you should lose any of the things you have gained, and not receive a full reward. And the more so because I fear you are wanting in other respects. And who will venture to tell you so? You will scarce know how to bear it from me, unless you lift up your heart to God. If you do this, I may venture to tell you what I fear without any further preface. I fear you think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Do not you think too highly of your understanding? of your gifts, particularly in preaching? as if you were the very best preacher in the Connexion? of your own importance? as if the work of God, here or there, depended wholly or mainly on you? and of your popularity? which I have found to my surprise far less, even in L——, than I expected.

May not this be much owing to the want of brotherly love? With what measure you mete, men will measure to you again. I fear there is something unloving in your spirit; something not only of roughness but of harshness, yea, of sourness! Are you not also extremely open to prejudice, and not easy to be cured of it? so that whenever you are prejudiced you commence bitter, implacable, unmerciful? If so, that people are prejudiced against you is both the natural and judicial consequence.

I am afraid lest your want of love to your neighbours should spring from want of love to God; from want of thankfulness. I have sometimes heard you speak in a manner that made me tremble; indeed, in terms that not only a weak Christian but even a serious Deist would scruple to use.

I fear you greatly want evenness of temper. Are you not generally too high or too low? Are not all your passions too lively, your anger in particular? Is it not too soon raised? And is it not too impetuous, causing you to be violent, boisterous, bearing down all before you?

Now, lift up your heart to God, or you will be angry at me. But I must go a little farther. I fear you are greatly wanting in the government of your tongue. You are not exact in relating facts. I have observed it myself. You are apt to amplify; to enlarge a little beyond the truth. You cannot imagine, if others observe this, how it will affect your reputation.

But I fear you are more wanting in another respect: that you give a loose to your tongue when you are angry; that your language then is not only sharp, but coarse and ill-bred. If this be so, the people will not bear it. They will not take it either from you or me.

## 'Let the Matter drop.'

### *Letter XXIX.*

DUBLIN, *April* 2, 1789.

DEAR TOMMY,—I am surprised that a man who really fears God should engage himself in so bad a cause, but undoubtedly you have the better of the argument. Yet I see no prospect of convincing a man of his rank. Therefore I think it is the wisest way to let the matter drop. The publishing of a thing of this kind was only tried to

stir up a nest of hornets.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Not one harsh or passionate Word.'

Wesley was on the last of his many preaching tours in Ireland, and writes in kindly, merry mood. William Darney was one of his preachers who suffered much at the hands of the mobs, and had published some verses and simple hymns. Wride wanted no more such. He was for Wesley's hymns. Once again the young preacher in the circuit is marked for gentle treatment, and tender, prayerful patience is urged on Wride. Atlay and Eels led some bodies of trustees who left Wesley, as they were determined that they and not he or the Conference should appoint the preachers to the Dewsbury and other chapels for which they were responsible. Wride, who was now again in charge at Whitehaven, had carefully kept hold for Wesley at Brompton.[1]

*Letter XXX.*

SIDARE, *May* 28, 1789.

Nay, Tommy, nay: you are more nice than wise. I have seen worse verses than these, even in print, in the very poems of William Darney. The rhymes are not bad. Why should you damp a rising genius? If he and [you] were to set your wits together you would surely produce something! Deal very gently with the young man. I am persuaded he will take advice.

You did exceeding well with regard to the house proposed to be built at Brompton. We have fresh warning. Good brother Coate and Todd have given our preaching-house at North Shields to John Atlay and William Eels. So you see what we have to trust to. But you must deal exceedingly tenderly with them. Not one harsh or passionate

[1] Tyerman, *Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 551.

word, or they will make their advantage of it. Above all, you should make it a matter of prayer.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Speak as plain and dull as one of us.'

This was Wesley's last counsel to Wride in this long series of letters, hitherto almost unknown. Wesley was within ten months of the end of his long life. He is on his last itinerary in the north of England and Scotland, and makes pathetic admission, at last, of the limitations enforced by his advanced age of eighty-seven years. He had to decline Wride's affectionate request that he would visit The Dales circuit. He did not carry out the proposals named below, although he visited many places during this tour.

### *Letter XXXI.*

DARLINGTON, *May* 5, 1790.

DEAR TOMMY,—It was a little thing to me, when I was able to ride on horseback, to strike a few miles out of my way. But that time is past. All I can do now is to visit the chief societies. I hope to see our friends in Weardale and Barnard Castle, and I believe that will be as much as I must attempt.

I hope you have *now* got quit of your queer, arch expressions in preaching, and that you speak as plain and dull as one of us.—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate friend and brother.

II

## To 'steady Joseph Taylor.'

These letters by Wesley to one of his preachers, Joseph Taylor, may be contrasted with those to Wride. Of the thirteen letters here given, eleven have not hitherto been

published, or, if so, only in fugitive form. Besides this fact, some features of interest emerge in them.

Joseph Taylor (died 1830) began the work in 1777, and continued it for forty-four years. He was eminently reliable and useful. Wesley appointed him one of his trustees. When he had been in the work only five years he was put in charge of the wide and prosperous Cornwall West circuit, with three other ministers. So inviting and exhausting was that field that his exertions permanently injured his constitution; but six hundred members were added in two years. Wesley's prophecy (Letter I.) was fulfilled. Chapels were enlarged and new ones built (Letters IV., V., VIII.). Taylor specially earned Wesley's favour by his attention to the sale and distribution of the works he issued. To this Wesley here refers again and again. This was one of Wesley's tests for his preachers. He had such faith in the ministry of the printed page that he insisted on every one of his preachers being a colporteur and book agent. The preacher's saddle-bags were filled with Wesley's publications, which he sold or distributed as he went to preach at the places in his circuit and elsewhere. He rose or fell in Wesley's esteem as he succeeded in this work. This helped to make the Methodists a reading people, and the financial profits aided their funds for aged and enfeebled preachers and their widows.

Wesley's changes as to the status of some of his distinguished preachers must have sorely tried Taylor; but he was obedient. Wesley ordained him in 1785 for the work in Scotland, but would not allow him to exercise ministerial functions when appointed to labour in England (Letter XII.). As Tyerman puts it, Wesley, 'who three years before had *frocked* his itinerant for the people across the Tweed, now *unfrocked* him for the people bordering on the Trent.' Thomas Hanby, the eldest of his colleagues there, who had also been ordained by Wesley, felt that locality did not decide his duty in these matters, and continued to minister as in Scotland, much to the benefit of Nottingham Methodists.

# TO WRIDE AND OTHERS

## 'Such a Work in Cornwall as never was yet.'

*Letter I.*

BRISTOL, *September* 9, 1782.

DEAR JOSEPH,—You will now have full scope for the exercise of every talent that God has given you. And you have fellow-labourers after your own heart. See that no strangeness creep in between you. If you continue instant in prayer, I trust there will be such a work in Cornwall as never was yet.

You remember the rule of Conference, that every assistant should take my books into his own hands, as having better opportunities of dispersing them than any private person can possibly have. I desire you would do this without delay.

The *Primitive Physic* should be in every family. So should the *Christian Pattern*[1] if possible. Of the *Magazines* I need say nothing. Herein I am persuaded you will tread in James Rogers's steps, and go beyond him as far as you can.

The children will require much attention, and the Bands too, or they will moulder away.—I am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'The Books . . . should be kept by the Assistant.'

*Letter II.*

BRISTOL, *September* 24, 1782.

DEAR JOSEPH,—Jos. Andrews writes to me about his keeping the books still. I answer, 'It was determined at the Conference that the books all over England should be kept by the assistant in each circuit.' I believe he has

[1] Wesley's edition of *De Imitatione Christi* by Thomas à Kempis.

discharged this office well; but I believe *you* will discharge it better. Yet do not expect to do your duty without giving offence! Recommend the *Magazines*, *Kempis*, and the *Primitive Physic* in earnest. And take care of the Bands and the children!—I am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Tracts and Magazines.'

*Letter III.*

LONDON, *October* 19, 1782.

DEAR JOSEPH,—Those tracts that are in any degree damaged you will do well to sell for half-price. And those of them that are greatly damaged you may give away, as you see proper. But I apprehend it would be best, when a proper occasion is, to send the *Magazines* by sea to Bristol or London.

When they have preaching only one night in a week, you may meet the Bands and the Society by turns.—I am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'We shall not build any more in haste.'

*Letter IV.*

LONDON, *January* 16, 1783.

DEAR JOSEPH,—I am glad to hear so good an account of Marazion. You must endeavour to hire a larger room at Truro. We shall not build any more in haste. I often preach abroad, in winter as well as summer.

In my *Journals*, in the *Magazines*, in every possible way, I have advised the Methodists to keep to the Church. They that do this most prosper best in their souls; I have observed it long.

If ever the Methodists in general were to leave the Church,

I must leave them.[1]—I am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Enlarge the House.... Remember, Light enough and Air enough.'

*Letter V.*

LONDON, *February* 25, 1783.

DEAR JOSEPH,—I make no doubt but you will be well able to collect enough in the circuit to enlarge the house[2] at St. Ives. And the sooner you begin the better. Only see that you have good workmen, and a good plan! Remember, light enough and air enough; and do not make a bungling, but a neat work.

When I have fixed my plan,[3] I will send you a copy of it. I set out for Bristol on Sunday evening.—I am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

*P.S.*—Pray tell Capt. Rd. Williams that I have his letter and will consider it.

## 'Do all you can during this precious Season.'

*Letter VI.*

DUBLIN, *April* 26, 1783.

DEAR JOSEPH,—By all means let James Hall[4] come to the Conference. If he would put forth all his strength, and be exact in every branch of his office, I would appoint him for the assistant next year. But I should be sorry if the work should decay. Do all you can during this precious season.

I shall have no objection to your being in Nottingham

[1] See above, p. 131.
[2] *I.e.* the preaching-house.
[3] Of his itinerary.
[4] The second preacher in Cornwall West circuit in which Taylor was superintendent.

circuit (unless you are in love). But if you go thither, you must take the books into your own hands; though I do not say you will receive many thanks from Matthew Bagshaw. I expect to be in England in about ten days.—I am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'According to the printed Minutes.'

*Letter VII.*

LONDON, *June* 5, 1783.

DEAR JOSEPH,—According to the printed *Minutes*, p. 8, S[ister] Rodda is to have her allowance[1] from Cornwall West, and S[ister] Day out of the Preachers' Fund. The fault therefore lay first in Joseph Harper, for Cornwall has nothing to do with S[ister] Day this year; and secondly, in John Atlay, who ought to have sent him and you the *Minutes* immediately after the Conference. Send no more money to S[ister] Day, but to R[ichar]d Rodda.—I am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Concerning the building of Preaching-houses.'

*Letter VIII.*

LONDON, *December* 24, 1783.

DEAR JOSEPH,—Look into the *Minutes* concerning the building of preaching-houses, and see that the 'Directions'[2] there laid down be observed.

[1] See above, p. 193. The *Minutes* of the annual Conferences in this period have the question, 'How many wives are to be provided for?' These are the wives of the preachers. Generally the circuit where the preacher laboured paid to him a small additional allowance for his wife quarterly. Others were provided for out of the general fund of the preachers.

[2] These were that each case must first be proposed in the Conference; that before moneys were gathered in circuits other than that concerned, the consent of the superintendent preacher should be obtained; and that the collection be made between Conference and March.—*Minutes* (octo. edit.), 1775, p. 121.

No one can object to your making a collection for the house in your circuit.—I am, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'The Books.'

*Letter IX.*

LONDON, *January* 12, 1784.

DEAR JOSEPH,—I am sorry that so useful a man as brother Lewly[1] was constrained to leave Worcester. But I am not sorry that the books are delivered into your hands, as I am clearly persuaded a far greater number of them will be disposed of.

Take care of the Select Societies as well as the Bands.—I am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'The Preachers going to America.'

At the Conference held in the previous month at Leeds Wesley made his first appointment of preachers for America. In the list of circuits and their preachers there is this item, vague and vast—'*America*, Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat, T. Vasey.'[2]

In view of this advance, of which such great things were expected and soon came, the request of a preacher's wife for the furnishing of a room in their modest home must stand aside.

*Letter X.*

BRISTOL, *August* 30, 1784.

DEAR JOSEPH,—On no account whatever can I excuse any preacher in the Connexion from using his utmost endeavours for the preachers going to America. What is the furnishing a room or two in comparison of this? Especially for one who is well able to do it for herself! I wonder she

[1] A letter from Wesley to a Mr. Edward Lewly, Birmingham, dated Jan. 12, 1791, appears in his *Works*, vol. xiv. p. 291.
[2] See chapter VII.

should desire it or indeed accept of it! However, if this be done, the other must not be left undone.—I am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'I would not employ an Apostle if he could not preach in the Morning.'

*Letter XI.*

LIVERPOOL, *April* 7, 1785.

DEAR JOSEPH,—I do not see that I can in conscience employ brother Thomas as a travelling preacher. Do not you know what I have often said? I would not employ an apostle as such if he could not preach in the morning.[1] And this he cannot do. Neither is he able, if he was willing, regularly to keep a circuit. Be faithful to God, and the people, and your own soul! And keep an active, zealous man, Mr. M'Geary, while you have him. Else there is want of a preacher in the Canterbury circuit. I thank you for the account of brother Tregellas, and am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'You should not wear the Surplice . . . any more.'

*Letter XII.*

LONDON, *November* 16, 1788.

DEAR JOSEPH,—I take knowledge of your spirit, and believe it is your desire to do all things right. Our friends at Newark seem to have forgotten that we have determined over and over 'not to leave the Church.' Before they had given you that foolish advice, they should have consulted *me.* I desire you should not wear the surplice nor administer the Lord's Supper any more.—I am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

[1] The Methodist service at 5 A.M. See p. 200.

# TO WRIDE AND OTHERS

## 'A Business of some Importance.'

*Letter XIII.*

LONDON, *February* 13, 1789.

DEAR JOSEPH,—I have a business of some importance for you to transact. Pray go to my old friend Matthew Bagshaw, and in my name desire of him—

1. To tell you how J. Wilson has wronged him.

2. To introduce you to Mr. Henshaw, of whom you are to inquire (and write me word directly) what had passed between J. Wilson and him! Desire him also—

3. To let you know whether he has wronged any one else in Nottingham! If he has, in what manner.

If I can come clearly to the bottom of his affair, it is possible I may be of some real service to him. But till then it is not possible.

For God will surely fight against him while he continues to cover his sin.—I am, Dear Joseph, Your affectionate friend and brother.

III

## To Thomas Taylor.

Wesley often wrote to Thomas Taylor. He became a preacher in 1761 and died in 1816. He was one of Wesley's strongest, most heroic helpers, and was twice President of Conference after Wesley's death. While Wesley believed himself to be a waiter upon Providence as to the development of Methodism (Letters I. and III.), Taylor was early convinced that Methodists should claim all the scriptural ordinances and rights of a New Testament church. He had a mind of his own, and alone and stoutly disapproved of the establishment by Wesley of the *Arminian Magazine.* He dared to go to Conference without Wesley's invitation, when younger preachers who were

his converts were invited, saying, 'If I am thrown overboard, I will swim as well as I can, believing the Lord will take me up.'[1]

Wesley's condemnation of liquor-distilling and bill-broking is notable (Letter II.).[2] He thought the former one of the chief causes of the high price of corn and bread, styled distilled liquors 'distilled damnation,' and declared that they were poisons which 'naturally destroyed not only the strength and life, but also the morals of our countrymen. In this view he was in advance of most clergymen and public leaders.'[3] He exercised sharp discipline on commercial and financial delinquents (Letter II.). His Rules[4] forbade his members to 'borrow without a probability of paying or to take up goods without a probability of paying for them.'

These three short characteristic letters are little known, and were in the hands of the Rev. Samuel Dunn, the friend of the Rev. James Everett.

## 'I go calmly and quietly on my Way.'

*Letter I.*

*February* 24, 1786.

DEAR TOMMY,—I believe if we had *then* left the Church, we should not have done a tenth part of the good we have done; but I do not trouble myself on this head. I go calmly and quietly on my way, doing what I conceive to be the will of God. I do not, will not, concern myself with what will be when I am dead. I take no thought about that. If I did, I should probably hide myself either at Kingswood or Newcastle, and leave you all to yourselves.—I remain, Your affectionate friend and brother.

[1] Tyerman, Wesley's *Life*, vol. iii. p. 284.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 496.
[3] *Works*, vol. xi. p. 55.
[4] *A New History of Methodism*, vol. ii. p. 564.

# TO WRIDE AND OTHERS

'Distilled Liquors . . . I would banish them out of the World.'

*Letter II.*

LONDON, *December* 11, 1787.

DEAR TOMMY,—Distilled liquors have their use, but are infinitely overbalanced by the abuse of them; therefore, were it in my power, I would banish them out of the world. . . .

It is no wonder that young man should be ruined who connected himself with that *execrable bill trade.* In London I expel every one out of our Society who has anything to do with it. Whoever endorses a bill, that is, promises to pay for more than he is worth, is either a fool or a knave.[1]—I am, Dear Tommy, Your affectionate brother.

'Kill your enemies? They'll die of themselves if you let them alone.'

*Letter III.*

LONDON, *February* 13, 1791.

DEAR TOMMY,—The doubt is whether the remedy would not propagate the disease by making many people anxious to understand it who never thought of it before. Remember the madman's words—

> 'Kill your enemies? Kill a fool's head of your own;
> They'll die of themselves if you let them alone.'

I take knowledge that you have been a Dissenter. Several clergymen at this day do much good both to the cause of God in general and to the Methodists in particular, and they that hurt us do it not as clergymen but as b[ad] clergymen. I will not blame any preacher for mildly warning

[1] Tyerman, Wesley's *Life*, vol. iii. p. 544, gives a letter from Wesley to Taylor dated June 7, 1788, in which the second paragraph of this letter is repeated word for word.

our people of them. Unstable Methodists will always be subject to the temptation of sermon-hunting. I do not advise our people to go to the Low Church. I shall write no plan till I know how my strength turns out; perhaps I may do it when I come to Bristol. Peace be with you and yours.—I am, Dear Tommy, Yours affectionately.

IV

## To James Oddie.

Three new letters from Wesley to James Oddie, one of his preachers, contribute items of interest. Oddie began his work in 1746 and retired to enter into business in 1771. Here is Wesley organising an effort to raise £12,000 for debts on his chapels. It was a large sum then for Methodists to contribute. Methodism had existed twenty-eight years. It had 41 circuits, 104 itinerant preachers, 26,000 members, and 100 chapels—84 in England, 1 in Wales, 2 in Scotland, and 13 in Ireland. The combined debts upon these was £11,383. By this scheme and appeal, which was supported by the fine Newcastle-on-Tyne circuit where Oddie was chief minister, £5000 was raised in the first year and £3700 in the two years following. This was not all that was needed, and new debts were created; but it was an early and stimulating proof of the advantage of the connexional system. Wesley thought this a commanding advantage of Methodism. By it the strong helped the weak. The 'Yearly Collection' here referred to was for the expenses of the connexional system and contingencies. Wesley regarded this as indispensable.

'Wherever this is dropped, you drop *me*.'

*Letter I.*

LONDON, *December* 15, 1767.

DEAR JAMES,—I have written myself to Miss Dales, T. Moses, C. Hewitson, Fenwick, Smith, Watson, Hosmer,

Morrison, Davison, Parker, Lipton, Bowmaker, Al. Patterson, T. Dobson, Rd. Parker, C. Bell, Joblin, W. Newton, R. Foster, Jon. Simpson, C. Coward, Gibson, Jos. and George Morrison, Capt. Robinson, Mark Middleton, Jo. Allen, and Mrs. Bate. Do all you can with the rest; think not that one of you will be poorer for this. I will send you printed letters, which you may seal and deliver in my name to as many as you please (except the above). Speak and spare not, trusting in God. But never let one thought come into your mind, of dropping the Yearly Collection; not if any one would give me £20,000 to-day. Wherever this is dropped, you drop *me*, for I cannot go on one year without it. I should think you had never been present at a Conference, nor ever read the *Minutes* of any, for these four years. Talk nothing *discouraging*, but encouraging. Prophesy good and not evil.—I am, Dear James, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Go on, go on, in God's Name!'

*Letter II.*

LONDON, *January* 12, 1768.

DEAR JAMES,—Desire an old tried Scot, William Darney by name, to take a turn or two in the Dunbar Circuit, and I will desire William Minethorp, now near York (a good man and a good preacher), to go down into your circuit and supply his place. Then Alnwick will have the preaching on Sunday, which is highly expedient.

If we pay the debt in one year (and there is a fair prospect) it is all along of your Newcastle people, for nobody else thought of it.

Go on, go on, in GOD'S name!—I am, Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Push on the Collection.'

*Letter III.*

LONDON, *February* 14, 1768.

DEAR JEMMY,—I require William Ellis to go into the doctor's (if he is not gone already) without delay. Otherwise I require you to forbid his preaching in any of our societies.

Push on the Collection in God's name. I think you will not easily stop short of seven hundred.

It is not right, Jemmy, it is not right. They envy the *rooms* of those poor girls, and want at all hazards to thrust them out. I wrote to Molly Dale on Saturday in haste, but to-day I have written her my cooler thoughts. Peace be with you and yours.—Dear Jemmy, adieu!

V

## To Various Preachers.

## 'All is best.'

A new letter, worth reading for the radiance which Wesley's spirit sheds over it notwithstanding his troubles. Queer, dilatory Michael Fenwick is here, whom Wesley's charity styled 'an excellent groom, *valet de chambre*, nurse, and, upon occasion, a tolerable preacher.' And much sickness afflicts the family in the Orphan House at Newcastle-on-Tyne, where preachers' wives, widows, and orphans found a kindly home. Here, too, Matthew Errington stored and sold Wesley's publications, and now sends an account of sales.

*To Matthew Errington.*

LONDON, *January* 8, 1757.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—You have done well in sending me a particular account. The bill came safe, and is accepted. But Michael's senseless delay has distressed me much. He ought to have been here the 28th of November, and to have

then brought with him all the money he could procure. For the time to come, if he should take another journey, I must punctually fix beforehand how many days he is to stay in every place.

I hope you all continue a family of love, and that the stewards and you are in harmony with each other. I should be glad to see poor Becky, especially if I found her all alive to God. We have a sickly family here—my wife, Jenny, Sally Clay, ill of paralytic; T. Walsh and Jeremy Morgan of consumptive disorders. But all is best.—I am, your affectionate brother.

## 'Let us deal openly with one another.'

This hitherto unpublished letter from the Colman Collection fills a gap, and is itself important. Wesley was in the midst of the Calvinistic controversy with Whitefield and his followers. Among these was Joseph Humphreys. Wesley styled him once his first lay preacher; but this was in 1738, and before the rise of the Methodist Societies.[1] He declared his love for Wesley, but also his intention openly to 'renounce your peculiar doctrines.' This is Wesley's reply. It may be compared with that to Whitefield.[2] Seward was another whom Whitefield had attracted. He was soon to become a martyr in the brutal persecution of the Methodists.

*To Joseph Humphreys.*

LONDON, *April* 27, 1741.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I do not understand you. What *Doctrines* do you mean? That 'Christ died for all'? or, that 'He that is born of God sinneth not'? These are not peculiar to me. The first is St. Paul's, the second is St. John's.

What grievous temptation do you mean? Let us deal

[1] See p. 73. [2] Page 104.

openly with one another. But if any doubt arise, O fly to Christ, and confer not with flesh and blood!

I least of all understand what you mean by 'loving and respecting me.' Ah, my brother, this will not hold for one month. You will in a very short time love and respect me just as poor Mr. Seward did. Yet 'Gracious art thou, O Lord, and true are Thy judgements.'—Adieu!

## 'A providential Connexion.'

A hitherto unpublished letter, from the original in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It was during this visit to Coolylough, Ireland, that Wesley, always curious and observant of natural phenomena, wrote in his *Journal*: 'I rode to Coolylough (where was the Quarterly Meeting), and preached at eleven, and in the evening. While we were singing, I was surprised to see the horses from all parts of the ground gathering round us. Is it true then that horses, as well as lions and tigers, have an ear for music?'

John Whitehead was Wesley's preacher in charge of the Bristol circuit; Whitwell was his colleague.

*To John Whitehead.*

COOLYLOUGH, *July* 4, 1769.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—One from every circuit must be at Conference; but it may be either bro[ther] Whitwell or you. I think the money need not be brought; only let us have exact accounts, and lists of the societies.

When you mentioned, first, your apprehension that you could manage the Kingswood School, and then your thoughts concerning Nancy Smith, it seemed to me that there might be a providential connexion between the one and the other —though not to the exclusion of James Hindemarsh:[1] that I never thought of.

Good will follow from the disagreement of C. Proctor and

[1] An English master at the school, 1765-1773.

—— Palmer. I should be apt to believe a dying woman. Be zealous! Be watchful!—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'I live from Hand to Mouth.'

A hitherto unpublished letter from the original in the British Museum. Richard Bourke, then labouring at Waterford, was one of Wesley's preachers from 1766 to 1778. Wesley was feeling the weight of heavy debts on his chapels and undertakings.[1] He continually made the venture of faith, and it was usually completely justified. In his lifetime, and since, Methodism was a magnificent and startling example of the wisdom of the voluntary principle in Church finance. The 'maintenance' allowed for a preacher about this period was £12 per annum, with £10 for his wife.[2]

*To Richard Bourke.*

EDINBURGH, *May* 12, 1770.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I doubt not your going into Waterford circuit was for good. It is well the house at Kilkenny is at length getting forward. But the general collection, out of which I propose to assist our brethren, is not brought in until the Conference. And I myself seldom have any money beforehand. I live as I may say from hand to mouth.

As to the preachers, I think it very hard, if Ireland cannot allow a maintenance to the preachers in Ireland. But indeed your case is peculiar. Exclusive of what they are to allow for your wife, I will allot her five pounds (English) for you.—I am, yours affectionately.

[Endorsed in another hand.] Received the contents from Miss Mary Holland, June 11th, 1771.

[1] See Letters to Hopper, p. 149.
[2] *A New History of Methodism*, i. 303.

# JOHN WESLEY'S LETTERS

*To Samuel Bardsley.*

This little known letter, from the original in the Library of Victoria Methodist College, Toronto, was the first of several sent to this Methodist preacher. It was addressed to him 'At Mr. James Walker's, in Sheffield.' He was then a preacher in the Cheshire circuit, and was moved by Wesley to Sheffield at his next Conference, August 1770.

The second letter, hitherto unpublished, is from the original in the possession of the Rev. T. Ferrier Hulme, M.A., Bristol. During a long ministry Bardsley was 'transparently sincere, profoundly zealous for the cause of God, and minutely attentive to every part of Christian discipline.'

## 'A Parent has in this case a Negative Voice.'

*Letter I.*

LONDON, *November* 24, 1770.

DEAR SAMMY,—According to your account, the very same difficulty subsists to this day. Your mother is not willing: and I told you before, this is, in my judgement, an insuperable bar. I am fully persuaded, that a parent has in this case a negative voice. Therefore while matters continue thus, I do not see that you can go any further.—I am, your affectionate brother.

## 'The Second Blessing, . . . receivable in a Moment.'

*Letter II.*

BOLTON, *April* 3, 1772.

DEAR SAMMY,—I am glad you are got into your Circuit again. Now put forth all your strength. Never be ashamed of the old Methodist Doctrine. Press all believers to go on to perfection. Insist everywhere on the Second Blessing, as

receivable in a moment, and receivable now, by simple faith. Read again the 'Plain Account of Xtian [Christian] Perfection.' And strive always to converse in a plain unaffected manner.—I am, dear Sammy, yours affectionately.

## 'Are you out of your Wits?'

This is the whole of this letter, surely the shortest that Wesley ever wrote. But it is alive. Six weeks earlier he had appointed Francis Wolfe second preacher in the Bristol circuit.

*To Francis Wolfe.*

BRISTOL, *September* 15, 1773.

FRANKY, are you out of your wits? Why are you not at Bristol?

## 'I have no Objection to your Speaking.'

Two hitherto unpublished or little known letters, kindly copied for me by the late Rev. William Boyden of Weston-super-Mare, from his originals. The second answers a question in Wesley's *Itinerary* as to his presence in Norwich on that day, and also shows that he still welcomed the help of clergy. Stonehouse was a Manchester Methodist, and the 'new chapel' was, the Rev. T. E. Brigden suggests, Oldham Street, which Wesley opened in 1781. Its modern successor is the Central Hall there. Dr. Cornelius Bayley was a master at Wesley's Kingswood School, 1773-1783. He became a clergyman, assisted Wesley at a service in Manchester a year before this letter. Later he was known as the 'Methodist' clergyman of St. James's Church in that city. 'Another person' was probably the Rev. Edward Smythe, an Irish clergyman. He had been a paid helper of Wesley in London, and was now probably curate of a Manchester church. He became a bitter opponent of Wesley.

The first letter was to a young man who wished to

be a Methodist preacher. Wesley sends him to Richard Henderson, the chief preacher in the Wiltshire circuit.

*To a young Preacher.*

REDRUTH, *September* 9, 1765.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I doubt very much whether either Jeremy Coombs or Sister Weyworth spoke any such thing.

I advise you to go to Mr. Henderson and relate to him what you mentioned to me. I have no objection to your speaking at those times and places which he shall think proper. On the 23rd and 24th of next month (Wednesday and Thursday) I expect, God willing, to be at Salisbury myself.—I am, your affectionate brother.

## 'It might be productive of much Good.'

*To Mr. Stonehouse.*

NORWICH, *October* 31, 1784.

MY DEAR BROTHER, —I had some doubt concerning another person; but I have none at all concerning Dr. Bailey [Bayley]. I believe his eye is single, and that he has no other view, than that of promoting the glory of God. If, therefore, the steward and trustees, and upon mature consideration, judge it expedient to invite Dr. Bailey [Bayley] to officiate every Sunday in the new chapel, I have no objection. It seems to me it might be productive of much good.—I am, your very affectionate brother.

## 'If he sells Bread on the Lord's Day.'

A little known letter[1] to Thomas Carlill, one of Wesley's preachers, 1760-1801. He was then superintendent of the wide Gainsborough circuit. 'When guarded from exu-

[1] From *Arminian* (Bible Christian) *Magazine*, 1827, p. 286, contributed to Wesley Historical Society's MSS. Journal. See *Proceedings*, vi. 92.

berant sallies of facetious wit, his discourses were judicious and profitable.'

Simon Kilham of Epworth, Wesley's home town, 'who must not be removed,' was the father of the famous Methodist evangelist and reformer, Alexander Kilham,[1] whom Wesley this year called out to preach. Christie was a young preacher then resting at Grimsby.

Wesley and the Methodists then and since[2] maintained the Puritan tradition in regard to Sunday. The 'pies' were those of the poor who used the baker's oven in common.

*To Thomas Carlill.*

CORK, *May 6th*, 1785.

DEAR TOMMY,—I desire you, and no other preacher out of the Gainsborough Circuit, to come to the Conference. I will pay the two guineas to Robert Armstrong. You may take brother Fish, in the place of Samuel Botts. Simon Kilham must in no wise be removed from Epworth. Encourage James Christie to read, and his gifts will increase.

We cannot allow a baker to remain in our society if he sells bread on the Lord's day. But if he only bakes pies, as they call it, we do not exclude him: although we are convinced that to abstain even from this is the more excellent way.—I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'You are called to marry.'

A new letter to one of Wesley's preachers, the original of which is in the Rylands Library, Manchester. As allowances and houses for married preachers were matters arranged for the preachers by Wesley at his annual Conference, he

[1] See p. 169.

[2] In 1803, when Napoleon threatened to invade England, they protested against Sunday drilling of soldiers, and secured exemption for those who objected.

needed to know early of these affairs. He took a close and practical interest in them. The letter is addressed to Stephens 'at the Preaching House in Cardiff.' He was then in charge of the Glamorganshire circuit.

*To William Stephens.*

LONDON, *October* 31, 1788.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—You do well to write without disguise. Otherwise I should not be able to judge. As you state the matter, I cannot but agree with you that you are called to marry. But 'tis pity that you had not told me these things plainly before the Conference. Then I could have made the way plain for you, which now will be attended with some difficulty.—I am, dear Billy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'A Little Difficulty on setting out is a Good Omen.'

Joseph Burgess, or Burges, to whom this hitherto unpublished letter was sent, was a young preacher called out by the aged Wesley at this year's Conference—the last which he lived to see. Brother Clarke is Adam Clarke, then at Dublin. Mr. Philip Gentle, Plymouth, has the original of this letter.

*To Joseph Burgess.*

BRISTOL, *August* 22, 1790.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—You are called to do all the good you can for the present in Ireland; by your staying there a little longer may be a blessing to many souls. I believe we can easily procure another preacher to supply your place at Liverpool a month or two. So you need be in no pain upon that account. A little difficulty on setting out is a good omen!

Wishing all happiness to you and yours.—I am, dear Joseph, your affectionate brother.

I hope Brother Clarke and his family are well.

## 'Whoever undertakes to baptize is excluded.'

Wesley still hesitated to allow his preachers to give the sacraments to his followers. He always insisted upon them duly receiving these symbols ordained by our Lord. In due time he made provision for the administration of them by ordaining some of his preachers, not only to preach, but for this duty, in America, Scotland, and England.[1] The two following letters to preachers show these points. The first is a little known letter; the next is from the original in Victoria Methodist College, Toronto. Thompson was in charge of Hull circuit; Gordon, of Bath.

*To Joseph Thompson.*

EPWORTH, *July* 18, 1772.

DEAR JOSEPH,—That Michael[2] is not overcharged with wisdom is certain. But I do not know that he is a mischief-maker. It is your part to insist upon his keeping his round: to press the yearly collection in every place, and to see that all our rules be observed, whoever praises or blames. You have only to commend yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

. . . . .

Whoever among us undertakes to baptize a child is *ipso facto* excluded from our Connexion.—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

[1] See *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. pp. 230, 372; Wes. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, vol. ix. p. 145.

[2] ? Michael Fenwick, see p. 220.

## 'That young man who neglects the Lord's Supper.'

*To David Gordon.*

BATH, *February* 29, 1788.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad to find matters are not so bad as they were represented. As to preaching in the morning and meeting the leaders, I hope there has been no blame: and I trust you have not willingly neglected your circuit.

It would be worth while to talk at large with that young man who neglects the Lord's Supper. But if he obstinately persists in that neglect, you can't give him any more tickets for our society. Be exact in all things!—I am, dear David, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Stewards are not to govern our Societies.'

A new letter to Robert Costerdine. He was a preacher for fifty years (1762-1812), and now was superintendent of the Sheffield circuit.

Wesley claims to open and shut the door to membership, and to hand the key to whom he wills. His example and instruction were often followed, sometimes with disastrous results. The first expulsion of members which he made twenty-eight years earlier than this were with 'the consent and approbation of the members of the band society.'[1]

*To Robert Costerdine.*

NORWICH, *February* 18, 1769.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—If Jer. Cocker *now* lives in any known sin, he must not be in our society. If he does not, you did not act wisely in putting him out of it. Stewards are not to govern our societies; it is no part of their office.

[1] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 430.

This belongs to the assistant only under *my* direction. I myself directed before that Jer. Cocker should have another trial. And you did not do well in running your head against *me* to please any man living.

I say again, unless he *now* lives in sin, give him another trial.—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

I am returning to London.

## 'I blame all when they speak the Truth other than in Love.'

This letter, little known, supplies an item in the gap in Wesley's *Journal*, September 1 to 27, in this year. A facsimile is in the possession of the Rev. J. G. Williams of Diss. Alexander Clark, of Chancery Lane, Dublin, was probably steward of the Methodist society in that city, as when Wesley wrote to him five years earlier.[1] 'My Lady' is Lady Huntingdon. Richard Boardman had returned from America, and was labouring in Cork.

*To Mr. Alexander Clark.*

BRADFORD, [WILTS], *September* 9, 1777.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—It is certain our preachers have a right to preach our doctrines, as my lady's have to preach theirs. None can blame them for this. But I blame all even that speak the truth otherwise than *in love*. Keenness of spirit and tartness of language are never to be commended. It is only in *meekness* that we are to instruct those that oppose themselves. But we are not allowed upon any account whatever to return evil for evil, or railing for railing.

I have desired Mr. Boardman to be in Dublin as soon as possible. I believe you know his spirit. He is a loving, peaceable man.

[1] Tyerman, *Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 127.

Meantime in your patience possess ye your souls.—I am, my dear brethren, your affectionate brother.

## 'Talk against the Church.'

This letter, believed to be a new one, from the original in the Library of Drew Methodist Episcopal Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey, confirms others as to Wesley's views at this time concerning the attitude of Methodists, in England, towards the Established Church. It also gives us Wesley's proposed journeys for ten days in March, 1784, when he was eighty-one years of age. His *Journal* shows that he carried out his plans. The days were crowded with his beloved toil, from five o'clock in the morning until late at night. To whom the letter was written has not been traced.

*To an unnamed Inquirer.*

BRISTOL, *March* 4, 1784.

DEAR BILLY,—I desire Mrs. Wright (?), if any of our lay preachers talk to her in public or private against the Church, or the clergy, or reading the Church prayers, or baptizing children, she require a promise from them to do it no more. It they will not promise it, then preach no more; and if they break their promise, let them be expelled the society.

From Macclesfield I expect to go to Chester, Monday, April 5th; on Wednesday, the 7th, to Liverpool; Good Friday, April 9th, Warrington; Saturday, 10th, Manchester; Tuesday, 13th, Bolton; Thursday, 15th, Wigan.

I am, dear Billy, your affectionate brother.

## 'He did no more than it was his Duty to do.'

A hitherto unpublished letter, from the original in the John Rylands Library, Manchester, concerning Richard

Cundy. He was one of Wesley's preachers, 1776-1803. He was now labouring at Waterford, Ireland, and Wesley stands by him as having done his duty there. Henry Moore, who thought with Wesley in this, was Wesley's devoted friend and biographer.

*To R. Tegworth, Waterford.*

LONDON, *February* 28, 1789.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Henry Moore and I, after reading and considering both your letter and one from Richard Cundy, are clearly of opinion, that he cannot and ought not to leave Waterford till another assistant comes to take his place. We do not consider him to be in any fault in the matter. We think he did no more than it was his duty to do.—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'I can trust *you*, even in so critical a Case.'

It is good to give as the last letter selected from those by Wesley to his preachers on their work, this which shows his characteristic treatment of an able young worker. Thomas Roberts began his lengthy ministry in 1786, and was now of four years' standing only. But Wesley, now eighty-seven, finding in him fitness and cause for confidence and friendship, honours him by responsibility and opportunity. From the post of third preacher in the large Bristol circuit he is lifted to the charge of 'assistant' to Wesley, as superintendent of 'the most important circuit in all Wales.'

Our letter, with corrections and additions to the text before published, is from the original in the Public Library, Copley Square, Boston, Mass. Curiously, Wesley wrote the year 1792 at the head of the letter. He died in 1791. Its year was 1790. This is shown by his itinerary, his references here to places and preachers, and by his *Minutes of Conference.*

*To Thomas Roberts.*

HAVERFORDWEST, *August* 13, 1790.

DEAR TOMMY,—Now I shall make a trial of you, whether I can fit you or no. Since I came hither I have been much concerned. This is the most important circuit in all Wales. But it has been vilely neglected by the late assistant, James Hall, whom therefore I can trust no more. I can trust *you*, even in so critical a case.

I desire, therefore, that (whoever opposes) you will set out immediately, and come hither as soon as ever you can. I wish you could meet me at Cardiff or Cowbridge. You see, by the printed plan, when I am to be at either of those places. If you have not notice soon enough to do this, try to meet me to-morrow se'nnight at the New Passage,[1] unless you can get a passage by the weekly boat to Swansea. If it be possible, do not fail.

It may be, this may be the beginning of a lasting friendship between you and, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother.

If you come, you are to act as assistant.

## 'Does Nobody care for this?'

These letters to some preachers of the rank and file may be closed by Wesley's appeal on behalf of one of them.

As here seen, Wesley directed, trained, and controlled his preachers with discrimination, firmness, and patience, and when it was deserved he administered sharp discipline. But he was not a martinet. He was considerate, and never cast any aside. As Napoleon said, 'We were at Toulon together,' as reason for response to frequent appeals, so Wesley felt and urged the claim of his helpers to grateful remembrance; even when, as in this case of William Shent, they had fallen into sin and, under its grim shadow, suffering. Shent was a

[1] *I.e.* over the River Severn, now called Redwick, near Bristol.

Leeds barber, who was for many years a 'half-itinerant' preacher. Happy man to have Wesley as advocate in such a brief as this letter! It is unequalled in its kind. Wesley also proposed to give as much help as any Leeds Methodist gave, and he found Shent a post at his London bookroom.

*To the Methodist Society in Keighley.*

LONDON, *January* 11, 1779.

I have a few questions, which I desire may be proposed to the society at Keighley.

Who was the occasion of the Methodist preachers first setting foot in Leeds? William Shent.

Who received John Nelson into his house at his first coming thither? William Shent.

Who was it that invited me, and received me when I came? William Shent.

Who was it that stood by me when I preached in the street, with stones flying on every side? William Shent.

Who was it that bore the storm of persecution for the whole town, and stemmed it at the peril of his own life? William Shent.

Whose word did God bless for many years in an eminent manner? William Shent's.

By whom were many children now in Paradise begotten in the Lord, and many now alive? William Shent.

Who is he that is ready now to be broken up and turned into the street? William Shent.

And does nobody care for this? William Shent fell into sin, and was publicly expelled the society; but must he be also starved? Must he with his grey hairs and all his children be without a place to lay his head? Can you suffer this? Oh, tell it not in Gath! Where is gratitude? Where is compassion? Where is Christianity? Where is humanity? Where is concern for the cause of God? Who

is a wise man among you? Who is concerned for the Gospel? Who has put on bowels of mercy? Let him arise and exert himself in this matter. You here all arise as one man, and roll away the reproach. Let us set him on his feet once more. It may save both him and his family. But what we do, let it be done quickly.

I am, dear brethren, your affectionate brother.

# CHAPTER VII

## TO AMERICAN AND CANADIAN METHODISTS AND CONCERNING THEM

'AMERICA has a peculiar proprietary claim on Wesley's memory,' said President Roosevelt on the bi-centenary of Wesley's birth (1903), 'for it is on our continent that the Methodist Church has received its greatest development.' The first Conference after Wesley's death (1791) recorded that in the United States there were 57,621 Methodist members, and 6,525 in Canada and the West Indies.[1]

The letters of this chapter were sent by Wesley to some of those who laid the lines for this vast, ever-growing work in the North American continent. They are here given in chronological order, and form an almost continuous series of Wesley's messages, with one significant interval, until his death. They have not before been gathered together. Some are new or little known.

Methodism began in America in 1766 by the work of Irish emigrants—Mrs. Barbara Heck and Philip Embury in New York, and Robert Strawbridge in Maryland. Rays before this sunrise came from the early work of Wesley himself in Georgia in 1735, and of Whitefield in 1739 and onwards. The latter said, 'The good John Wesley has done in America is inexpressible. His name is very precious among the people, and he has laid a foundation.' Nathanael Gilbert is sometimes styled 'the first Methodist in America.'

[1] *Minutes*, 1791, 1812 ed., vol. i. p. 244. Statistics for 1914 were: enrolled members in United States, 7,640,098; in Canada, 359,137. In Canada more than one-seventh of the entire population are Methodist adherents. 'Census of 1911, 14·99 per cent. of the population' (*Methodist Year-Book*, p. 201, New York, 1915).

He visited Wesley in England, and, returning to his home in Antigua, West Indies, in 1759, began the work there.

The earliest of Wesley's letters we trace to workers in this great western sphere is one to Lawrence Coughlan. It suitably stands first, for Coughlan was in Newfoundland, Canada, in 1765,[1] and probably began Methodist work there rather earlier than Embury did in New York (1766). One of Wesley's Irish preachers, and ordained by a Greek bishop, Coughlan was re-ordained by the Bishop of London, and resumed work in Newfoundland in 1767 as a missionary of the Church of England Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. However, he was always a Methodist in teaching and practice; as he wrote later to Wesley, 'I am and do confess myself a Methodist.'

## 'That Perfection which I have taught these Forty Years.'

In this beautiful and trenchant letter Wesley instructs Coughlan on the Methodist doctrine of Christian Perfection. This was to receive luminous exposition and exemplification among transatlantic Methodists.

*To the Rev. Lawrence Coughlan.*

*August*, 1768.

DEAR LAWRENCE,—By a various train of providences you have been led to the very place where God intended you should be. And you have reason to praise Him, that He has not suffered your labour there to be in vain. In a short time how little will it signify whether we had lived in the Summer Islands or beneath

'The rage of Arctos and eternal frost!'[2]

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[1] See Coughlan's *Work of God in Newfoundland*, Sutherland's *Methodism in Canada*, and Atmore's *Memorial*.

[2] Wesley is thinking of Coughlan's winter conditions, and quotes from Prior's *Solomon*, i. 266:

'If any suffer on the polar coast
The rage of Arctos and eternal frost.'

Samuel Wesley, Jun., and John and Charles Wesley were great admirers

How soon will this dream of life be at an end! And when we are once landed in eternity, it will be all one whether we spent our time on earth in a palace or had not where to lay our head.

You never learned, either from my conversation, or preaching, or writings, that 'holiness consisted in a flow of joy.' I constantly told you quite the contrary; I told you it was love; the love of God and of our neighbour; the image of God stamped on the heart; the life of God in the soul of man; the mind that was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ also walked. If Mr. Maxfield, or you, took it to be anything else, it was your own fault, not mine. And whenever you waked out of that dream you ought not to have laid the blame of it on me. It is true that joy is one part of 'the fruit of the Spirit,' of the kingdom of God within us. But this is first 'righteousness,' then 'peace,' and 'joy in the Holy Ghost.' It is true further, that if you love God 'with all your heart' you may 'rejoice evermore.' Nay, it is true still further, that many serious, humble, sober-minded believers who do feel the love of God sometimes, and do then rejoice in God their Saviour, cannot be content with this; but pray continually, that He would enable them to love, and 'rejoice in the Lord always.' And no fact under heaven is more undeniable, than that God does answer this prayer; that He does, for the sake of His Son, and through the power of His Spirit, enable one and another so to do. It is also a plain fact, that this power does commonly overshadow them in an instant; and that from that time they enjoy that inward and outward holiness to which they were utter strangers before. Possibly you might be mistaken in this; perhaps you thought you

of Prior, and wrought up many of his phrases into their poems and hymns. See many references in articles, 'Wesleyan Hymn-Book Illustrated,' by J. W. Thomas, in *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1871 *et seq.*; and Rev. Henry Bett's *Hymns of Methodism in their Literary Relations.*

had received what you had not. But pray do not measure all men by yourself; do not imagine you are the universal standard. If you deceived yourself (which yet I do not affirm), you should not infer that all others do. Many think they are justified and are not; but we cannot infer that none are justified. So neither, if many think they are 'perfected in love,' and are not, will it follow that none are, so. Blessed be God, though we set a hundred enthusiasts aside, we are still 'encompassed with a cloud of witnesses,' who have testified, and do testify, in life and death, that perfection which I have taught these forty years! This perfection cannot be a delusion unless the Bible be a delusion too; I mean, 'loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.' I pin down all its opposers to this definition of it. No evasion! No shifting the question! Where is the delusion of this? Either you received this love or you did not. If you did, dare you call it a delusion? You will not call it so for all the world. If you received anything else, it does not at all affect the question. Be it as much a delusion as you please, it is nothing to them who have received quite another thing, namely, that deep communion with the Father and the Son, whereby they are enabled to give Him their whole heart; to love every man as their own soul, and to walk as Christ also walked.

O Lawrence, if Sister Coughlan and you ever did enjoy this, humble yourselves before God for casting it away; if you did not, God grant you may!

## 'I may pay another Visit to the New World.'

At the next Methodist Conference (1769) Wesley said, 'We have a pressing call from our brethren at New York (who have built a preaching-house[1]) to come over and help

[1] Wesley sent money, books, and a clock—a characteristic gift.

them. Who is willing to go?' Two preachers, Joseph Pilmoor and Richard Boardman,[1] volunteered, were appointed and sent, and a collection was made to assist their work. On reaching Philadelphia, Captain Thomas Webb and a hundred Methodists welcomed them. Webb[2] was from Bristol, the western port and gate of England, by this and many events closely associated with the New World. Portland Chapel in that city keeps his memory green. There and in America he was a powerful Methodist preacher and pioneer. Professor J. A. Faulkner[3] declares that 'aside from the mere question of priority, this old soldier must be considered the principal founder of the American Methodist Church.'

Aggressive Christianity in the New World had now again the powerful aid of George Whitefield.[4] He was on his seventh and last preaching tour in America. Wesley's hopes here expressed were doomed to disappointment. Whitefield died at Newburyport, thirty-five miles from Boston, Mass., on September 30 following this letter, and was buried there.[5] The counsels here given by Wesley to his dear friend and old time leader in the transforming open-air work of early Methodism, concerning efforts for Christ's little ones and the ethics of philanthropic finance are weighty. Wesley wished strongly to visit his workers in America. He never did so. England needed him; and he knew that his friends, had he breathed his purpose, would have lovingly prevented him. 'If I go to America,' he said, 'I must do a thing which I hate as bad as I hate the devil.' 'What is that?' he was asked. 'I must keep a *secret*,' was his reply.

[1] See Lockwood's *Western Pioneers*—based on Pilmoor's Journals.

[2] See below, p. 244. Wesley's letter to Pitt on his behalf is given on p. 483.

[3] In *A New History of Methodism*, vol. ii. p. 59.

[4] See above, p. 102.

[5] In the Old South Presbyterian Church, Newburyport, Mass. 'I envy America the possession of the remains of dear George Whitefield; but perhaps it is appropriate that while England claims the dust of Wesley, the great republic should be the guardian of the dust of his holy brother.' An 'Englishman,' quoted by Rev. T. E. Brigden in Hurst's *History of Methodism*, p. 842.

*To Rev. George Whitefield.*

LEWISHAM, *February* 21, 1770.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Mr. Keen informed me some time since of your safe arrival in Carolina; of which, indeed, I could not doubt for a moment, notwithstanding the idle report of your having been cast away, which was so current in London. I trust our Lord has more work for you to do in Europe, as well as in America. And who knows but before your return to England, I may pay another visit to the New World? I have been strongly solicited by several of our friends in New York and Philadelphia. They urge many reasons, some of which appear to be of considerable weight; and my age is no objection at all; for I bless God my health is not barely as good, but abundantly better in several respects, than when I was five-and-twenty. But there are so many reasons on the other side, that, as yet, I can determine nothing; so I must wait for further light. Here I am; let the Lord do with me as seemeth Him good. For the present, I must beg of you to supply my lack of service by encouraging our preachers as you judge best (who are as yet comparatively young and inexperienced), by giving them such advices as you think proper; and, above all, by exhorting them not only to love one another, but, if possible, as much as lies in them, to live peaceably with all men.

Some time ago, since you went hence, I heard a circumstance which gave me a good deal of concern, namely, that the college or academy in Georgia had swallowed up the orphan house. Shall I give my judgement without being asked? Methinks, friendship requires that I should. Are there not then two points which come in view? a point of mercy and a point of justice? With respect to the former, may it not be inquired, Can anything on earth be a greater

charity than to bring up orphans? What is a college or an academy compared to this? unless you could have such a college as perhaps is not upon earth. I know the value of learning, and am more in danger of prizing it too much than too little; but still, I cannot place the giving it to five hundred students on a level with saving the bodies, if not the souls too, of five hundred orphans. But let us pass from the point of mercy to that of justice. You had land given, and collected money, for an orphan house. Are you at liberty to apply this to any other purpose? at least, while there are any orphans in Georgia left? I just touch upon this, though it is an important point, and leave it to your own consideration, whether part of it, at least, might not properly be applied to carry on the original design? In speaking thus freely, on so tender a subject, I have given you a fresh proof of the sincerity with which

I am,

Your ever affectionate friend and brother.

## 'I let you loose on the great Continent of America.'

To another loud call for help in America in 1771, Wesley sent Richard Wright and Francis Asbury. The former did little there; Asbury became the Wesley of America. From the tiny port of Pill, near Bristol, with a suit of clothes and £10 given by kindly Methodists of that city, he started for the far-spreading sphere where he would be in heroic journeyings, often long and perilous, and discharge the duties of overseer and wise, loving ruler with such devotion as won for him a place among the chiefest of the apostles.[1] Ripe experience and more than a little masterfulness in Thomas Rankin, and choice gifts and a gracious temper in George Shadford, were sent to this work in 1773. Dr. J. M. Buckley says, 'There is nothing in the

[1] See *The Heart of Asbury's Journal*, by President E. S. Tipple, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D.

records of early Methodism which exhibits the sublimity of the conceptions of Wesley concerning the work and his relation to it more dramatically than his letter to Shadford.'

*To George Shadford.*

[*March*], 1773.

DEAR GEORGE,—The time is arrived for you to embark for America. You must go down to Bristol, where you will meet with Thomas Rankin, Captain Webb and his wife.

I let you loose, George, on the great continent of America. Publish your message in the open face of the sun, and do all the good you can.

I am, dear George,

Yours affectionately.

## 'Go on hand in hand, . . . trusting in Him that loves you, to overturn America.'

Where is Captain Webb? Wesley asks. It was an anxious time for British soldiers. This was the month of the Tea Riots in Boston. The foolish insistence by Great Britain on taxation without representation led to riot and rebellion, and at length to the assertion of American Independence.

Moreover, many American Methodists were anticipating the liberty Wesley afterwards granted. They claimed the sacrament at the hands of their ministers, and were adapting their plans to the novel and clamant needs of their work. In this new letter, from the Everett Collection, Wesley counsels Rankin, resident at Philadelphia, and superintendent of the American work. He had presided at the first Conference of American Methodists held on the 14th July of this year. The second Conference Wesley refers to in his letter next to this.

Robert Williams[1] is distinguished as the first publisher of Methodist literature in America, where that arm of the

[1] *A New History of Methodism*, vol. ii. pp. 63, 74.

church was to become mighty indeed.[1] He began by issuing some of Wesley's *Sermons*; now he is to publish the famous *Notes on the New Testament.*

*To Thomas Rankin.*

LONDON, *December* 4, 1773.

DEAR TOMMY,—Captain Webb does not wilfully tell lies, but he speaks incautiously, so that we must make large allowance for this whenever he speaks, otherwise we shall be deceived. But where is he now, and what is he doing? I fear his wife will have need of patience.

If you suffer anyone to remain a leader who does not stay at the society, that will be *your* fault. Improper leaders are not to be suffered upon any account whatever. You must likewise deal honestly with the societies, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. Only do not tell them continually 'You are dead,' for that will surely make them so. Endeavour to quicken their hope, by speaking strongly, and at the same time cheerfully. Exhort them to look for better days, yea, such as they have never seen yet.

I judge George Shadford will do good at New York. So would Robert Williams for a little time.

You have hurt yourself by giving way to reasoning, and, if you don't take care, you will hurt others. There has been good, much good done in America, and would have been abundantly more had brothers Boardman and Pilmoor continued genuine Methodists, both in doctrine and discipline. It is *your* part to supply what was wanting in them. Therefore are you sent. Let brothers Shadford, Asbury, and you go on hand in hand, and who can stand against you? Why, you are enough, trusting in Him that loves you, to overturn America. Go on in His name and in

[1] *Militant Methodism*, p. 232 (New York: Methodist Book Concern), and my article, 'Impressions of Transatlantic Methodism,' *United Meth. Mag.*, 1915, p. 153.

the power of His might, and all your enemies shall be found liars.

Read David Brainerd again, and see your pattern! He was a good soldier of Jesus. Ah! but he first suffered, and then saw the fruit of his labour. Go and do likewise!

I have written to Robert Williams and given him leave to print the *Notes* on my account; nothing on *his own*. I never knew he did till afterward.

Be of good courage! Strengthen yourself in the Lord and you will see good days, and will send better news to, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Your little Conference in Philadelphia.'

*To Thomas Rankin.*

EPWORTH, *July* 21, 1774.

DEAR TOMMY,—In yours of May 30th, you give me an agreeable account of your little Conference in Philadelphia. I think G. Shadford and you desire no novelties, but love good old Methodist discipline and doctrine.

I have been lately thinking a good deal on one point wherein, perhaps, we have all been wanting. We have not made it a rule, as soon as ever persons were justified, to remind them of going on to perfection. Whereas, this is the very time preferable to all others. They have then the simplicity of little children; and they are fervent in spirit, ready to cut off the right hand, or pluck out the right eye. But, if we once suffer this fervour to subside, we shall find it hard enough to bring them again to this point.—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## Letters to Rankin and others in a critical Year.

The following seven letters to Thomas Rankin, two to James Dempster, one to John King, and one to

'All the Preachers' were all sent in that troublous year, 1775. In England, Chatham's pleadings and plans for conciliating the New England colonists were rejected. Americans, under George Washington, besieged Boston, and fought victoriously the battle of Bunker's Hill, Boston. In the next year they signed the Declaration of Independence. One of the noblest and most powerful of all Wesley's letters was sent by him at this crisis to the Premier, Lord North,[1] advising gentle measures and predicting the results of harsher ones, which, unfortunately, were adopted. But Wesley read a foolish pamphlet by Dr. Samuel Johnson, for once a martinet or worse, entitled *Taxation no Tyranny*. This changed Wesley's views. He issued it under the curious title, *A Calm Address to our American Colonies*. It had much influence,[2] and a large circulation. In the last of these letters to Rankin (page 255) he refers with annoyance to this popularity. His pamphlet and new attitude involved him in a rancorous controversy, and brought peril to his preachers and followers in America. He hoped to undo some of the mischief by 'an interview with a great man'—probably Lord North. Certainly the letter above referred to was sent to him during these historic events.

It was good that Asbury either did not know, or declined to obey Wesley's requests backed by Rankin's arrangements, that he should return to England at this crisis. Had he done so, American Methodism would have been very different, most probably sadly other than it is.

Who was 'poor T. R.'? His sad figure is drawn again and again in these letters. Wesley's love for human souls was that divine combination of undying interest in all and in each. He was in the midst of national and international turmoil, and writes for thousands of his followers in Rankin's charge; but Wesley is tenderly solicitous for one lost sheep, and with Christlike patience, never despairing, he sends the under shepherd after it and is sure it will yet be brought

[1] Given below, p. 473.

[2] The Government ordered copies to be given away at church doors in London, and a high officer of State proffered services to Wesley or his people, and left behind him £50 from the Privy Purse.—Tyerman's *Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 191.

home with rejoicing. A pearl is that word by Wesley (page 256): 'nothing but his despair of conquering can utterly destroy him.'

## 'I advise Brother Asbury to return to England.'

*To Thomas Rankin.*

LONDON, *March* 1, 1775.

DEAR TOMMY,—I think the March packet will do as well as the April packet; so I answer you without delay.

As soon as possible you must come to a clear and full explanation, both with brother Asbury (if he be recovered) and with Jemmy Dempster. But I advise brother Asbury to return to England the first opportunity.

There is now a probability that God will hear the prayer and turn the counsels of Ahithophel into foolishness. It is not unlikely that peace will be re-established between England and the colonies. But certainly the present doubtful situation of affairs may be improved to the benefit of many. They may be strongly incited now 'to break off their sins by repentance, if it may be a lengthening of their tranquillity.'—I am, my dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother.

*P.S.*—To-morrow I intend to set out for Ireland.

## 'In so critical a Situation . . . it is your Part to be Peacemakers.'

*To all the Preachers.*

LONDON, *March* 1, 1775.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—You were never in your lives in so critical a situation as you are at this time. It is your part to be peacemakers; to be loving and tender to all; but to

addict yourselves to no party. In spite of all solicitations, of rough or smooth words, say not one word against one or the other side. Keep yourselves pure; do all you can to help and soften all; but beware how you adopt another's jar.

See that you act in full union with each other: this is of the utmost consequence. Not only let there be no bitterness or anger, but no shyness or coldness, between you. Mark all those that would set one of you against the other. Some such will never be wanting. But give them no countenance; rather ferret them out, and drag them into open day.

The conduct of T. Rankin has been suitable to the Methodist plan; I hope all of you tread in his steps. Let your eye be single. Be in peace with each other, and the God of peace will be with you.—I am, my dear brethren, your affectionate brother.

## 'I am sorry for poor T. R.'

*To Thomas Rankin.*

PORTARLINGTON, *April* 21, 1775.

DEAR TOMMY,—I am glad there is so good an understanding between Jemmy Dempster and you. He is an upright man, and unless I am much mistaken, a friend both to the Methodist doctrine and discipline.

I am sorry for poor T. R. It is certain God did lift up his head; and I hoped that his besetting sin would no more gain dominion over him. However, you must in nowise give him up. And he has much more need of comfort than of reproof. His great danger is despair.

Brother Asbury has sent me a few lines, and I thank him for them. But I do not advise him to go to Antigua. Let him come home without delay. If one or two stout, healthy young men would willingly offer themselves to that service

I should have no objection; but none should go unless he was fully persuaded in his own mind.

You are a bold man, Tommy, to commence author in these critical times. I wish the success may answer your expectation; there is a call for every help. I am afraid you will soon find a day of trial; the clouds are black both over England and America, and if the storm once begins in America, it will soon spread to Great Britain.

I have a friendly letter from ——, who writes warmly against the ——. Pray remember my love to him and his wife. I am glad to find he is still walking in the good old way. He sends me word that one or two men of fortune are gone out to preach the gospel. If they are, I expect little from them. God hath chosen the weak to confound the strong.—I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Wherever War breaks out, God is forgotten.'

*To Thomas Rankin.*

BALLINROBE, *May* 19, 1775.

DEAR TOMMY,—That letters travel very slow from us to America is a great inconvenience. But it is a still greater, that they travel so uncertainly; sometimes reaching you too late, sometimes not at all.

I doubt not but brother Asbury and you will part friends: I shall hope to see him at the Conference. He is quite an upright man. I apprehend, he will go through his work more cheerfully when he is within a little distance from me.

We must speak the plain truth, wherever we are, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. And among our societies we must enforce our Rules, with all mildness and steadiness. At first, this must appear strange to those who are as bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke. But after a

time, all that desire to be real Christians see the advantage of it.

I am afraid Mr. B—— is a weak brother, a little enlightened in his understanding, and having a kind of faith. But I would rather (of the two) be in the case of poor T. R. than of him. I think there is more probability of his being a real Christian, than of the other's.

Never was there a time when it was more necessary for all that fear God, both in England and America, to stir up the gift of God that is in them, and wrestle with God in mighty prayer. In all the other judgements of God, the inhabitants of the earth learn righteousness. When a land is visited with famine, or plague, or earthquake, the people commonly see and acknowledge the hand of God. But wherever war breaks out, God is forgotten, if He be not set at open defiance. What a glorious work of God was at Cambuslang and Kilsythe, from 1740 to 1744! But the war that followed tore it all up by the roots, and left scarce any trace of it behind; insomuch that when I diligently enquired a few years after, I could not find one that retained the life of God!—I am, my dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'By every possible means, oppose a Party Spirit.'

Two letters to James Dempster, a preacher whom Wesley called out in 1765 and who was now in America, give counsel like that urged upon Rankin and all the preachers. Dempster, like Asbury, found Rankin's rule somewhat irksome, as Wesley's letters to the latter show.

As in the letters of August 13 and October 20, Wesley here makes striking reference to his all but fatal attack of fever in June of this year. For three days he was very near death; indeed his decease was announced. It was one of many illnesses he suffered.[1]

[1] See above, p. 7.

*To James Dempster.*

BALLINROBE, *May* 19, 1775.

DEAR JEMMY,—That one point, I earnestly recommend, both to brother Rankin and you and all our preachers—by prayer, by exhortation, and by every possible means, to oppose a party spirit. This has always, so far as it has prevailed, been the bane of all true religion; more especially when a country was in such a situation as America is now. None but the God of almighty love can extricate the people out of the snare. O what need have you to besiege His throne with all the power of prayer.—I am, dear Jemmy, yours affectionately.

## 'I was at the Gates of Death.'

*To James Dempster.*

*Near* LEEDS, *July* 28, 1775.

DEAR JEMMY,—Last month I was at the gates of death. But it pleased God just then to rebuke the fever, so that my pulse began to beat again, after it had totally ceased. Since that time I have gradually been recovering strength, and am now nearly as well as ever. Let us use the short residue of life to the glory of Him that gave it!—I am, yours affectionately.

## 'Scream no more, at the Peril of your Soul!'

From general dangers which threatened the work in America, Wesley turns in this famous racy letter to those which affected John King, one of the eleven preachers appointed to labour under Rankin there.[1] Wesley was a less emotional preacher than his brother Charles, less

[1] Curiously, Asbury is not named at all in the *Minutes* of Wesley's Conference at Leeds this year: 1812 edit., i.

vehement than Whitefield, and had proved the power of controlled, burning zeal.

*To Mr. John King.*

*Near* LEEDS, *July* 28, 1775.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Always take advice or reproof as a favour: it is the surest mark of love.

I advised you once, and you took it as an affront: nevertheless I will do it once more.

Scream no more, at the peril of your soul. God now warns you by me, whom He has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream. Speak with all your heart; but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord, 'He shall not *cry*': the word properly means, He shall not *scream*. Herein be a follower of me, as I am of Christ. I often speak loud; often vehemently; but I never scream; I never strain myself; I dare not; I know it would be a sin against God and my own soul. Perhaps one reason why that good man, Thomas Walsh, yea and John Manners too, were in such grievous darkness before they died, was because they shortened their own lives.

O John, pray for an advisable and teachable temper! By nature you are very far from it: you are stubborn and headstrong. Your last letter was written in a very wrong spirit. If you cannot take advice from others, surely you might take it from your affectionate brother.

## 'It will be seen what God will do with North America.'

*To Thomas Rankin.*

LONDON, *August* 13, 1775.

DEAR TOMMY,—I do not give up T. R. yet; he is not out of God's reach.

I am not sorry that brother Asbury stays with you another year. In that time it will be seen what God will do with North America; and you will easily judge whether our preachers are called to remain any longer therein. If they are, God will make their way plain, and give them favour even with the men that delight in war. In the civil wars of Rome, Atticus stood fair in the esteem of both the contending parties. And so did the Archbishop of Cambray, during the war in the Netherlands; not only the officers, but the common soldiers, when they went by, treating him with love and regard. The clouds do indeed gather more and more; and it seems a heavy storm will follow; certainly it will, unless the prayers of the faithful obtain a longer reprieve.

A few weeks ago, I was at the gates of death, in the north of Ireland. But

'The fever felt His touch, and fled';

and I am now just as I was before it came.

You did well to remove the books into a place of safety; if any such can be found in America. It is no wonder that the spirits of the men who know not God are sharpened into madness, that human creatures become lions and bears. This is the genuine fruit of war!

Certainly, if they persecute you in one city, you should flee to another. Peace be with your spirit!—I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'A little Tract. . . . Many would willingly burn me and it together.'

*To Thomas Rankin.*

LONDON, *October* 20, 1775.

DEAR TOMMY,—The account given in our newspapers of my death was not wholly without foundation; for I was only

not dead, my pulse being quite gone, and 'the wheel at the cistern without motion.' But then our Lord stepped in, and

'The fever owned His touch, and fled.'

My strength returned by swift degrees; and I am now at least as well as before my illness.

In the country places I believe you will have the largest harvest, where they know little and talk little about politics. Their hearts are engaged with something better, and they let the dead bury their dead. I am glad you are going into North Carolina; and why not into South Carolina too? I apprehend those provinces would bear much fruit, as most parts of them are fresh, unbroken ground. And as the people are farther removed from the din of war, they may be more susceptible of the gospel of peace.

A paper was sent to me lately, occasioned by the troubles in America; but it would not do good. It is abundantly too tart; and nothing of that kind will be of service now. All parties are already too much sharpened against each other. We must pour water, not oil, into the flame. I had written a little tract upon the subject before I knew the American ports were shut up. I think there is not one sharp word therein; I did not design there should be. However, many are excessively angry; and would willingly burn me and it together. Indeed it is provoking; I suppose above forty thousand of them have been printed in three weeks, and still the demand for them is as great as ever.

I was glad to receive yours by Captain Crawford. I am entirely of your mind. I am persuaded love and tender measures will do far more than violence. And if I should have an interview with a great man (which seems to be not unlikely) I will, by the grace of God, tell him so, without any circumlocution. Our time is in God's hands: let us

stand ready for all things!—I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'The Sword is drawn . . . appoint in America Days of Fasting and Prayer.'

Two days later Wesley suggested something like this in his letter to the British Premier.

*To Thomas Rankin.*

CLANMAIN, *near* ARMAGH,
*June* 13, 1775.

DEAR TOMMY,—I am afraid our correspondence for the time to come will be more uncertain than ever; since the sword is drawn. And it is well if they have not on both sides thrown away the scabbard. What will the end of these things be, either in Europe or America? It seems huge confusion and distress, such as neither we nor our fathers had known! But it is enough, if all issues in glory to God, and peace and good-will among men.

I am sorry for poor T. R. I well hoped God had thoroughly healed his backsliding, and so lifted up his head that he would have fallen no more. But the case is not desperate yet. You must in nowise give him up. I have scarcely ever known an habitual drunkard finally reclaimed before he had relapsed more than once or twice. Your point is, first, save him from the occasions of sin; then incite him not to cast away hope. Nothing but his despair of conquering can totally destroy him. As long as he keeps up the faintest hope, he will strive against sin.

My brother wrote me word that he had received a copy of the tract that you have written. Something of the kind may be very seasonable. Never had America such a call to repentance. For unless general reformation prevent general destruction, what a scene will soon be opened! Ruin and

desolation must soon overspread the land, and fair houses be turned into ruinous heaps. But what are those strange phenomena which you speak of? Send me an account of just so much as you can depend upon.

Should not you appoint in America (as we do in England and Ireland) one or more general days of fasting and prayer?—I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'The Temple is built even in troublous Times.'

Wesley's fears that God might be utterly forgotten in war time were not all fulfilled; but the gains were mainly in districts not much affected by the war. In England, Wesley was busy as ever at his proper work, but he was often drawn into the vortex of public affairs during the next few years. As in 1756,[1] he offered to raise some soldiers to aid the king. Writing to Joseph Benson in 1782, he told him that he did this 'two or three years ago.' This was probably in 1779, when France, Spain, and America were all in arms against Britain. It was proposed that the militia should be doubled. By the king's order the Secretary of State for War replied to Wesley that it was not necessary for him to do as he offers in this letter; if ever it should be necessary, the king would inform Wesley.[2]

*To Thomas Rankin.*

*Near* Leeds, *July* 28, 1775.

Dear Tommy,—I rejoice to hear that the work of our Lord still prospers in your hands. If the temple is built even in troublous times, it is not by the power of man. I rejoice too over honest Francis Asbury, and hope he will no more enter into temptation. Do not despair of poor

[1] See below, p. 470.
[2] The Methodists did raise a company of soldiers in Bristol early in the next century.—*Journal*, note, vol. iv. p. 151.

T. R. He is not out of God's reach yet. I know no reason why we should not print the names of the American preachers. You may print an edition of the *Christian's Pattern*,[1] and apply the profits of it to the payment of the debt. The societies should pay the passage of the preachers. But you must not imagine that any more of them will come to America until these troubles are at an end.

Certainly this is the point which we should insist upon, in season and out of season. The universal corruption of all orders and degrees of men loudly calls for the vengeance of God: Inasmuch as all other nations are equally corrupt, it seems God will punish us by one another. What can prevent this but a universal, or, at least, a general repentance? Otherwise we have great reason to fear God will soon say, 'Sword, go through that land, and destroy it.'

Those clergymen should be lovingly advised not to hurt our preachers. I will pay your arrears. We have only to live to-day! God will take care of to-morrow.—I am, dear Tommy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'I have great Hopes we shall then be able to send you Assistance.'

These letters here suffer interruption, as did the work of Wesley's followers in America, in consequence of the revolutionary war. Wesley made no appointments of preachers to this field from 1776, the year of the Declaration of Independence, until 1784, when they read thus in the *Minutes* of his Conference: '*America*—Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat, T. Vasey.' As the war proceeded, the clergy of the church, and Rankin, and the Methodist preachers fled back to England—all except Asbury. He, sometimes in hiding, was waiting his chance to rebuild and extend Methodism,

[1] Or *A Treatise of the Imitation of Christ*, Wesley's version of *De Imitatione Christi*, by Thomas à Kempis; Wesley's third publication, first issued in 1735, and always very freely circulated by him.

and to serve the young struggling nation. His supremacy in the work was declared by the American Methodist Conference of 1779.

Meanwhile, in parts of the field remote from the war, Methodism grew rapidly. In Nova Scotia, a young Yorkshireman, William Black,[1] had gathered a goodly Methodist fellowship, and was anxious that Wesley would send other preachers to his aid. We give ten letters which Wesley sent to him. Later he became Methodist superintendent of the maritime provinces—Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland. The vigorous letter written by Wesley in this connection to Bishop Lowth is given above (page 127). The 'pious man' whom he refused to ordain was John Hoskins, a schoolmaster, whose ordination the people of Old Perlican, Newfoundland, requested through Wesley in 1778-79.[2] Wesley cannot be accused of rashness. Gradually he was forced towards the decisive act of ordaining some of his preachers. The first of those so set apart were for this else neglected and pitifully needy American work. A minor difficulty, which Wesley frequently notes in his own administration of it, was the uncertainty of the postal service.

*To William Black.*

LONDON, *February* 26, 1783.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I did indeed very strongly expostulate with the Bishop of London concerning his refusing to ordain a pious man, without learning, while he ordained others that, to my knowledge, had no piety, and but a moderate share of learning.

Our next Conference will begin in July; and I have great hopes we shall then be able to send you assistance. One of our preachers informs me he is willing to go to any part of Africa or America. He does not regard danger or toil,

[1] His first letter to Wesley, a fine record of Christian effort by a youth of nineteen in his father's home at Amherst, Nova Scotia, is given by Wesley, *Journal*, April 15, 1782.

[2] Sutherland's *Methodism in Canada*, p. 106.

nor, indeed, does he count his life dear unto himself, so that he may testify the gospel of the grace of God, and win sinners to Christ. But I cannot advise any person to go alone. Our Lord sent his disciples two and two. And I do not despair of finding another young man, as much devoted to God as he.

Of Calvinism, mysticism, and antinomianism, have a care, for they are the bane of true religion; and one or other of them has been the grand hindrance of the work of God, wherever it has broken out.—I am, my dear brother, yours affectionately.

## 'Swift Increase is generally followed by Decrease equally swift.'

*To William Black.*

LONDON, *July* 13, 1783.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is a rule with me to answer all letters which I receive. If, therefore, you have not received an answer to every letter which you have written, it must be either that your letter or my answer has been intercepted.

I do not wonder at all that, after that great and extraordinary work of God, there should be a remarkable decay. So we have found it in almost all places. A swift increase is generally followed by a decrease equally swift. All we can do to prevent it is continually to exhort all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious to remember our Lord's words, 'Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.'

The school at Kingswood is exceeding full; nevertheless there shall be room for you. And it is very probable, if you should live to return to Halifax, you may carry one or more preachers with you. I hope you will live as brethren,

and have a free and open intercourse with each other.—I am, my dear brother, affectionately yours.

## 'See that ye fall not out by the Way.'

*To William Black.*

INVERNESS, *May* 11, 1784.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad you have given a little assistance to our brethren at Halifax, and along the coast. There is no charity under heaven to be compared to this,—the bringing light to the poor heathens that are called Christians, but, nevertheless, still sit in darkness and the shadow of death. I am in great hopes that some of the emigrants from New York are really alive to God. And, if so, they will every way be a valuable acquisition to the province where their lot is now cast.

There is no part of Calvinism or antinomianism which is not fully answered in some part of our writings; particularly in the '*Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion.*'[1] I have no more to do with answering books. It will be sufficient if you recommend to Mr. Alline's friends some of the tracts that are already written. As to himself, I fear he is wiser in his own eyes than seven men that can render a reason.

The work of God goes on with a steady pace in various parts of England. But, still, the love of many will wax cold, while many others are continually added to supply their place. In the west of England, in Lancashire, and in Yorkshire, God still mightily makes bare His arm. He convinces many, justifies many, and many are perfected in love.

My great advice to those who are united together, is, Let brotherly love continue! See that ye fall not out by

[1] A volume of 246 pages, published by Wesley in 1758.

the way! Hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace! Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ!—I am, your affectionate brother.

## 'My Scruples are at an End. . . . I violate no Order by appointing and sending Labourers into the Harvest.'

Here is perhaps the most important and significant of all Wesley's many letters. It is at once a letter, a manifesto, and an authority. It records decisive acts which, with others of which Wesley was author, constituted his followers a church. Every word of this letter is significant, and has been so regarded by Wesley's friends and critics. It is the constitutional foundation of the great Methodist Churches of America. Wesley took the grave steps referred to in paragraph 4 of his letter quietly;[1] then he published this record and justification of them in the *Minutes* of his Conference (1785). He added this note, 'If anyone is minded to dispute concerning Diocesan Episcopacy, he may dispute. But I have better work.' It was time for action. Asbury's letter to Wesley pictured the spiritual destitution of North America, and asked that ministers and preachers should be sent. Coke co-operated with Wesley in carrying out the aged leader's proposal and decision to ordain the preachers here named for this work. Already an ordained clergyman, Coke accepted ordination[2] as a superintendent of it, with Asbury. The historic Conference of American Methodist preachers held in Baltimore at Christmas 1784, with this letter as authority and guide, constituted and organised the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.[3] Coke and others duly ordained Asbury as deacon, elder, and superintendent. This followed upon the

[1] The ordinations took place in his room at Dr. Castleman's, 6 Dighton Street, Bristol, very early on the morning of Sept. 1, 1784.

[2] For the text and a *facsimile* of the certificate of ordination see *A New History of Methodism*, vol. ii. p. 84.

[3] The name is said to have been suggested by one of the preachers, John Dickens, a member of the Conference, formerly an Eton boy.

unanimous election of Coke and Asbury to the latter office, without which Asbury declined to accept appointment to it by Wesley.

*To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America.*

BRISTOL, *September* 10, 1784.

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

2. Lord King's 'Account of the Primitive Church' convinced me many years ago,[1] that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same rights to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belonged.

3. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction: in America there are none, neither any parish

[1] He read it on his way to Bristol on Monday, January 20, 1746. See his *Journal, in loc.* The change in his views, which this book largely contributed to, can be seen by comparing the above with those in his letter to Hall, three weeks before reading it (see Wesley's *Journal*, vol. iii. p. 229).

ministers. So that for some hundred miles together, there is none either to baptize, or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

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

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

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

Primitive Church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty, wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

'Is it not advisable that you act by united Counsels?'

Here Wesley seeks to knit up the work in the north-east provinces of Canada with that in the United States, for which Coke was carrying the constitution just given. As here counselled, Black met Coke, attended the decisive Conference at Baltimore at Christmas 1784, and received financial and ministerial help for his heroic work in Nova Scotia.

To John Stretton, an Irish Methodist, who has taken up the work in Newfoundland, now that Coughlan has left it, Wesley sends similar counsel and encouragement.

*To William Black.*

LONDON, *October* 15, 1784.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—A letter of yours, some years ago, gave me hopes of meeting you in England; as you seemed desirous of spending some time here, to improve yourself in learning. But, as you have now entered into a different state, I do not expect we shall meet in this world. But you have a large field of action where you are, without wandering into Europe. Your present parish is wide enough, namely, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. I do not advise you to go any farther. In the United States, there are abundance of preachers. They can spare four preachers to you, better than you can spare one to them. If I am rightly informed, they have already sent you one or two; and they may afford you one or two more, if it please God to give a prosperous voyage to Dr. Coke and his fellow-labourers.

Does there not want a closer and more direct connection between you of the North, and the societies under

Francis Asbury? Is it not more advisable that you should have a constant correspondence with each other, and act by united counsels? Perhaps it is for want of this that so many have drawn back. I want a more particular account of the societies in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. I am not at all glad of Mr. Scurr's intention to remove from Nova Scotia to the South. That is going from a place where he is much wanted, to a place where he is not wanted. I think, if he got £10,000 thereby, it would be but a poor bargain; that is, upon the supposition, which you and I make, that *souls* are of more value than *gold*. Peace be with all your spirits!—I am, your affectionate brother.

## 'Go on. . . . You shall want no Assistance.'

*To Mr. John Stretton.*

LONDON, *February* 25, 1785.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—You did well in breaking through that needless diffidence. If you had written sooner, you would have heard from me sooner. Although I have not been at Limerick for some years, yet I remember your father and mother well. They truly feared God when I conversed with them. Be a follower of them, as they were of Christ.

The last time I saw Mr. Coughlan he was ill in body, but in a blessed state of mind. He was utterly broken in pieces, full of tears and contrition for his past unfaithfulness. Not long after I went out of town God removed him to a better place.

If that deadly enemy of true religion, Popery, is breaking in upon you, there is indeed no time to be lost; for it is far easier to prevent the plague than to stop it. Last autumn Dr. Coke sailed from England, and is now visiting the flock

in the midland provinces of America, and settling them on the New Testament plan, to which they all willingly and joyfully conform, being all united, as by one Spirit, so in one body. I trust they will no more want such pastors as are after God's own heart. After he has gone through these parts, he intends, if God permit, to see the brethren in Nova Scotia, probably attended with one or two able preachers, who will be willing to abide there. A day or two ago, I wrote and desired him before he returns to England, to call upon our brethren also in Newfoundland, and, perhaps, leave a preacher there likewise.

About food and raiment, we take no thought. Our heavenly Father knoweth that we need these things, and He will provide. Only let us be faithful and diligent in feeding His flock. Your preacher will be ordained. Go on, in the name of the Lord, and in the power of His might! You shall want no assistance that is in the power of your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'The English Methodists do not roll in Money like many of the American Methodists.'

Freeborn Garrettson, now visiting William Black and assisting his work in Nova Scotia, was worthy the characteristic counsels and encouragements of this and six other letters to him which we give. The history of this American gentleman, quondam slave owner, an ordained Methodist preacher, often without fee or reward, second only to Asbury in devotion, is romantic. His character and work were heroic. The list of his sufferings in it recalls that Iliad of woes given by St. Paul to the Corinthians.[1] In the account of him which Coke gave to Wesley an item most grateful to both of them was that on the day following his conversion Garrettson had voluntarily set free all his slaves. How eager Wesley is to lay hands upon Garrettson's and

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 23; Garrettson's *Life*, by Bangs, chap. xi.

Black's journals. He had the instincts of a bookman and a publisher. In a later letter (July 16, 1787) he tells some prices for printing and paper. By Garrettson he gives repeated warnings to rich Methodists. These were increasing among his followers, and were greatly to aid his work, profusely in America. Sharp rebukes of the love of money were more than ever a feature of the closing decade of his life.

*To Freeborn Garrettson.*

DUBLIN, *June* 16, 1785.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Dr. Coke gives some account of you in his Journal; so that, although I have not seen you, I am not a stranger to your character. By all means send me, when you have an opportunity, a more particular account of your experience and travels. It is no way improbable that God may find out a way for you to visit England; and it may be the means of your receiving more strength, as well as more light. It is a very desirable thing that the children of God should communicate their experience to each other; and it is generally most profitable when they can do it face to face. Till Providence opens a way for you to see Europe, do all you can for a good Master in America.

I am glad Brother Cromwell and you have undertaken that 'labour of love' of visiting Nova Scotia; and doubt not but you act in full concert with the little handful who were almost alone till you came. . . . It will be the wisest way to make all those who desire to join together, thoroughly acquainted with the whole Methodist plan; and to accustom them, from the very beginning, to the accurate observance of all our rules. Let none of them rest in being half-Christians. Whatever they do, let them do it with all their might; and it will be well, as soon as any of them find peace with God, to exhort them to 'go on to perfection.' The more explicitly and strongly you press all believers to

aspire after full sanctification, as attainable now by simple faith, the more the whole work of God will prosper.

I do not expect any great matters from the Bishop. I doubt his eye is not single; and if it be not, he will do little good to you, or any one else. It may be a comfort to you that you have no need of him. You want nothing which he can give.

It is a noble proposal of Brother Marchington; but I doubt it will not take place. You do not know the state of the English Methodists. They do not roll in money, like many of the American Methodists. It is with the utmost difficulty that we can raise five or six hundred pounds a year to supply our contingent expenses; so that it is entirely impracticable to raise five hundred pounds among them to build houses in America. It is true they might do much; but it is a sad observation, they that have most money have usually least grace.

The peace of God be with all your spirits!—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'The Poor are the Christians.'

*To Freeborn Garrettson.*

LONDON, *September* 30, 1786.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I trust before this comes to hand you and Dr. Coke will have met, and refreshed each other's bowels in the Lord. I can exceedingly ill spare him from England, as I have no clergyman capable of supplying his lack of service; but I was convinced he was more wanted in America than in Europe. For it is impossible but offences will come; and 'of yourselves will men arise speaking perverse things,' and striving 'to draw away disciples after them.' It is a wonderful blessing, they are restrained so long, till the poor people are a little grounded in the faith.

You have need to watch over them with your might. Let those that have set their hands to the plough continually 'pray to the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth more labourers into His harvest.'

It is far better to send your Journals as they are than not to send them at all. I am afraid it is too late in the season to send books this year; but I hope Dr. Coke has brought some with him to serve you for the present. I was far off from London when he set sail.

Most of those in England who have riches love money, even the Methodists; at least those who are called so. The poor are the Christians. I am quite out of conceit with almost all those who have this world's goods. Let us take care to lay up our treasure in heaven. Peace be with your spirit!—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'The Work of God continually increasing . . . you will now see in America.'

Fasting, which is self-sacrifice; prayer, without intermission; expectancy and hopefulness, which never faint, are Wesley's conditions for continuous prosperity in Church work. Wesley looks back to that great year of Methodist origins, 1739, and across the wonderful years since then.

*To William Black.*

LONDON, *November* 26, 1786.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is indeed a matter of joy that our Lord is still carrying on His work throughout Great Britain and Ireland. In the time of Dr. Jonathan Edwards, there were several gracious showers in New England; but there were large intermissions between one and another: whereas, with us there has been no intermission at all for seven-and-forty years, but the work of God has been continually increasing.

The same thing, I am in hopes, you will now see in America likewise. See that you expect it, and that you seek it in His appointed ways, namely, with fasting and unintermitted prayer. And take care that you be not at all discouraged, though you should not always have an immediate answer. You know

'His manner and His times are best.'

Therefore pray always! Pray, and faint not. I commend you all to our Great Shepherd; and am, your affectionate brother.

## 'You do well to join them together immediately.'

In the New World as in the Old, Wesley will have his followers drawn into fellowship and built up in societies or churches. 'You cannot go to heaven alone,' was an early counsel which he received and never forgot. Much of Whitefield's fine work had failed of its best possibilities because organisation had been neglected. Wesley's inquiry about good ink is characteristic. That which he used has lasted well upon many thousands of pages, some of it for almost two centuries.

*To Freeborn Garrettson.*

[Lowestoft], *November* 30, 1786.

My dear Brother,—You have great reason to be thankful to God that He lets you see the fruit of your labours. Whenever any are awakened, you do well to join them together immediately. But I do not advise you to go on too fast. It is not expedient to break up more ground than you can keep; to preach at any more places than you or your brethren can constantly attend. To preach once in a place, and no more, very seldom does any good; it only alarms the devil and his children, and makes them more upon their guard against a first assault.

Wherever there is any Church service, I do not approve of any appointment the same hour; because I love the Church of England, and would assist, not oppose, it all I can. How do the inhabitants of Shelburn, Halifax, and other parts of the province, go on as to temporal things? Have they trade? Have they sufficiency of food, and the other necessaries of life? And do they increase or decrease in numbers? It seems there is a scarcity of some things,—of good ink, for yours is so pale that many of your words are not legible.

As I take it for granted that you have had several conversations with Dr. Coke, I doubt not you proposed all your difficulties to him, and received full satisfaction concerning them. Commending you to Him who is able to guide and strengthen you in all things.—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

*P.S.*—Probably we shall send a little help for your building, if we live till Conference. Observe the rules for building laid down in the *Minutes*. I see nothing of your Journal yet. I am afraid of another American Revolution. I do not know how to get the enclosed to Dr. Coke: probably you know. On second thoughts I think it best not to write to him at present.

## 'I hear very different Accounts of your Provinces.'

Wesley etches in a picture of difficulties and privations by sea and land encountered by his followers. Coke's second voyage to America was remarkable every way.[1] Storms of exceptional fierceness fell upon the crazy boat. In the worst of them the superstitious captain paraded the deck muttering 'We have a Jonah on board,' rushed to Coke's cabin, flung his books and papers into the sea, and threatened him with the like fate. The ship could not

[1] *Life* by Drew, p. 160.

make Halifax, Nova Scotia, where William Black waited Coke and three English preachers appointed to help him. Changing her course completely, she reached Antigua, West Indies, on Christmas Day, 1786. Coke's arrival was regarded as a crowning mercy by Nathaniel Gilbert[1] and the two thousand Methodists there, colonists and negroes.

John M'Geary, an Irish Methodist preacher, had succeeded Stretton in Newfoundland. He was partly to blame for the treatment he received. Although a good preacher, he seems to have been 'flighty and unstable to a degree.' Wesley sums him up in a later letter (p. 276). But, as we have seen,[2] Wesley could not bear that his preachers should be treated with one whit less kindness than circumstances permitted.

*To William Black.*

LONDON, *February* 20, 1787.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—After various unfortunate hindrances and delays, Dr. Coke embarked on board a small brig in the middle of October, and was, by furious winds, twice beat back into the harbour. They set sail a third time with a crazy, shattered vessel, on the 18th of October. We have not heard anything either from him or of him since. I hope you have heard of him in America.

You have great reason to be thankful to God for the progress of His work in Nova Scotia. This is far from being the case in Newfoundland, where poor John M'Geary appears to be utterly discouraged; not only through want of success, but through want of the conveniences, yea, necessaries of life. Truly, if I could have supposed that those who made me fair promises would have suffered a preacher to want bread, I should have sent him into other parts, where he would have wanted nothing.

I hear very different accounts of the state of your pro-

[1] See above, p. 237. [2] See his letter concerning Shent on p. 235.

vinces. Is there plenty or scarcity in Nova Scotia and New England? How does it fare with Halifax and Shelburn in particular? Do the buildings and people increase or decrease? Public accounts I cannot at all depend on, but upon *your* word I can depend. Peace be with all your spirits!—I am, dear Billy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'You do not send me your Journal yet.'

*To Freeborn Garrettson.*

MACCLESFIELD, *July* 16, 1787.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have your letter of March 15, and that of May 20. In the former you give me a pleasing account of the work of God in Halifax and other towns in Nova Scotia, and indeed everywhere except poor Shelburn, from which I had an excellent account a few years ago. Shall the first be last? What could have occasioned the decrease of the work there?

St. Paul's advice is certainly good for all Methodist preachers,—that 'it is good for a man not to touch a woman'; and 'if thou mayest be free, use it rather.' And yet I dare not exclude those who marry out of our Connexion, or forbid to marry; but happy are those who, having no necessity laid upon them, stand fast in the glorious liberty. I commend you for laying as little burden upon the poor people as possible.

Before I had printing presses of my own,[1] I used to pay two-and-thirty shillings for printing two-and-twenty pages duodecimo. The paper was from twelve to sixteen shillings a ream. I do not blame you for printing those tracts.

But you do not send me your Journal yet. Surely you

[1] He severed his connection with William Pine of Bristol, who had been his chief printer, in 1775.

had time enough to write it over. Dr. Coke seems to think you are irresolute, yet not willing to take advice. I hope better things of you; and that your heart says to God and man, 'What I know not, teach thou me.'—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Guard your Flock.'

Wesley gives wise counsel on the treatment of heresy and its teachers.

*To William Black.*

*Near* Bath, *September* 26, 1787.

My dear Brother,—You have great reason to praise God for the great things that He hath done, and to expect still greater things than these.

Your grand difficulty, now, will be to guard your flock against that accomplished seducer. When you mentioned a person came from Scotland, I took it for granted that he was a Calvinist. But I find it is not so well; for I take a Socinian to be far worse than even a Predestinarian. Nevertheless, I advise you and all our preachers, never oppose him openly. Doing thus would only give the unawakened world an advantage against you all. I advise you farther, never speak severely, much less contemptuously, of him in any mixed company. You must use no weapons in opposing him, but only those of truth and love. Your wisdom is—

(1) Strongly to inculcate the doctrines which he denied, but without taking any notice of him, or seeming to know that any one does deny them;

(2) To advise all our brethren (but not in public) never to hear him, at the peril of their souls; and

(3) Narrowly to inquire whether any one is staggered, and to set such an one right as soon as possible.

Thus, by the blessing of God, even those that are lame will not be turned out of the way.

Peace be with your spirit!—I am, dear Billy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'The Case of those poor Demoniacs.'

The physical phenomena, faintings, convulsions, fits, etc., which accompanied Wesley's early preaching, and, as here, often appeared in the early stages of revivals, he often ascribed to Satanic agency. The work in America was marked, sometimes hindered, by such occurrences, exceptional even in their own strange kind.[1]

*To William Black.*

GLOUCESTER, *March* 19, 1788.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am glad to find you are still going on in the glorious work to which you are called. We have need to make haste therein; to use all diligence. For the work is great; the day is short; and lonely is the night wherein no man can work.

It is well that Satan is constrained to show himself so plainly in the case of those poor demoniacs. Thereby, he weakens his own kingdom, and excites us to assault him more zealously. In the beginning of the work in England and Ireland we had many cases of the kind. But he now chooses to assault us by subtlety more than by strength.

I wish you would do all you possibly can to keep our brethren in peace with each other. Your pains will not be lost on poor John M'Geary. There is much good in him. Indeed, he is naturally of a bold, forward temper; but I hope his zeal is now according to knowledge.

Praying that you may increase with all the increase of God,—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

[1] See references under 'Physical Phenomena' in *A New History of Methodism*, vol. ii. p. 643.

# TO AMERICAN METHODISTS

## 'The Work . . . seems to lie nearer my Heart.'

This letter of a good shepherd who would carry the lambs in his arms and gently lead the flock is to John Mann, a missionary in Nova Scotia. It closes with counsels to all the workers there. James Wray, an English preacher whom Wesley trusted, was not happy as superintendent of the work. Some objected to him because he was an Englishman; but so was William Black. Soon after the next letter to Black (see page 284) he was appointed to the post of superintendent, though only thirty years of age. Wesley thought the people who raised such an objection as the above were ungrateful, and exclaimed, 'O American gratitude! Lord, I appeal to Thee.'

*To John Mann.*

LONDON, *June* 30, 1788.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am greatly concerned for the prosperity of the work of God in Nova Scotia. It seems some way to lie nearer my heart than even that in the United States. Many of our brethren there are, we may hope, strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might; but I look upon those in the northern provinces to be younger, and tender children, and consequently to stand in need of our most anxious care. I hope all of you that watch over them are all of one mind and of one judgement; that you take care always to speak the same things, and to watch over one another in love.

Mr. Wray is a workman that need not be ashamed. I am glad to hear of his safe arrival. Although he has not much learning, he has, which is far better, uprightness of heart, and devotedness to God. I doubt not but he and you will be one, and go on your way hand in hand.

Whatever opposers you meet with, Calvinists, Papists, Antinomians, and any other, have a particular care that they do not take up too much either of your time or

thoughts. You have better work: keep to your one point, Christ dying for us, and living in us. So will you fulfil the joy of, my dear brethren, your affectionate friend and brother.

'You are the Elder Brother of the American Methodists: I am, under God, the Father of the Whole Family.'

An engaging letter this, with its friendly name for Francis Asbury and its warm assurances of affection and confidence. Solemn shadows cover the closing words of the aged leader. It is good to have his definition of his own and Asbury's position and relation to the work. Like St. Paul, Wesley dares to become a fool in glorying concerning it.

One wonders if Wesley is quite serious in his second and third paragraphs here, on the names and terms used by Asbury and Coke. He shudders at a name, 'bishop' for an office overseer or 'superintendent,' which he had himself created. Asbury would recall Wesley's letter to him of three years earlier, which contained a church constitution and appointment of bishops or superintendents. Perhaps Wesley had also forgotten his letter to his former Kingswood schoolmaster, now a clergyman of the English Church, the Rev. Walter Sellon. He feared Wesley was going to America to turn bishop. Wesley wrote him thus:

'I am going to America to turn Bishop.'

*To the Rev. Walter Sellon.*

[SOUTHWARK, LONDON], *February* 1, 1772.

DEAR WALTER,—You do not understand your information right. Observe, 'I am going to America to turn bishop.' You are to understand it *in sensu composito.*[1] I am not to be bishop until I am in America. Whilst I am in Europe, therefore, you have nothing to fear. But as

[1] In its composite or compound sense.

soon as ever you hear of my being landed in Philadelphia, it will be time for your apprehensions to revive. It is true, some of our preachers would not have me stay so long; but I keep my old rule, *Festina lente.*[1]—I am, dear Walter, your affectionate brother.

Here Wesley denies neither the work nor the name of bishop as appropriate to himself if he went to America. Asbury's practical shrewd mind was not greatly disturbed by this letter.[2]

*To the Rev. Francis Asbury.*

LONDON, *September* 20, 1788.

DEAR FRANKY,—There is indeed a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans and the relation wherein I stand to all the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists: I am, under God, the father of the whole family. Therefore, I naturally care for you all in a manner no other person can do. Therefore I, in a measure, provide for you all; for the supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you he could not provide were it not for me—were it not that I not only permit him to collect, but also support him in so doing.

But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid both the doctor [Coke] and you differ from me. I study to be little; you study to be great. I creep; you strut along. I found a school; you a college! nay, and call it after your own names! O, beware! Do not seek to be something! Let me be nothing, and 'Christ all in all.'

One instance of this, of your greatness, has given me great

[1] Make haste slowly.

[2] He stated his claims thus: 'I will tell the world on what I depend—(1) Divine authority; (2) seniority in America; (3) the election of the Conference; (4) my ordination by Thomas Coke, William Philip Otterbein, German Presbyterian minister, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey; (5) the signs of an apostle which have been seen in me.'—*Life*, by Briggs, p. 146.

concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called Bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me *Bishop*! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better.

Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart. And let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'I wish to be in every point, great and small, a scriptural, natural Christian.'

Here, and again on page 284, Wesley deals with that deep mystery, divine guidance on human life. He makes pathetic reference to his handwriting. His picturesque description of the approach of old age, 'Time has shaken me by the hand,' occurs often in his letters now. Death was to lead him away two years hence.

*To Freeborn Garrettson.*

LONDON, *January* 24, 1789.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—It signifies but little where we are, so we are but fully employed for our good Master. Whether you went, therefore, to the East, it is all one, so you were labouring to promote His work. You are following the order of His providence wherever it appeared, as a holy man strongly expressed it, in a kind of holy disordered order.

But there is one expression that occurs twice or thrice in yours, which gives me some concern: you speak of finding *freedom to* do this or that. This is a word much liable to be abused. If I have plain Scripture, or plain reason, for doing a thing, well. These are my rules, and my only rules. I regard not whether I had freedom or no. This is an un-

scriptural expression, and a very fallacious rule. I wish to be, in every point, great and small, a scriptural, rational Christian.

In one instance, formerly, you promised to send me your Journal. Will you break your word because you do not find freedom to keep it? Is not this enthusiasm? O be not of this way of thinking! You do not know whither it may lead you. You are called to

> 'Square your useful life below
> By reason and by grace.'

But whatever you do with regard to me you must do quickly, or you will do no more in this world.—Your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'You were able and willing, and did, in fact, teach.'

A hitherto unpublished letter,[1] from the original, the property of the Rev. Principal E. S. Tipple, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D., of Drew Methodist Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey, U.S.A., throws light upon Wesley, his *Journal*, and a little known helper, the Rev. Mr. Heath, in the early days of American Methodism. The letter is in part obliterated and indecipherable. Wesley was now eighty-six.

Wesley met Heath at Stourport, near Kidderminster, on March 23, 1787, and wrote thus of him and his family: 'I had seen Mr. Heath before, a middle-aged clergyman who is going over to Cokesbury College, and is, I believe, throughly qualified to preside there. I met his wife and two daughters here, who are quite willingly to bear him company; and I think their tempers and manners, so 'winning soft, so amiably mild,' will do him honour whenever they come.' One of Wesley's London clerical helpers,

[1] A note on the letter says that the postage was 7d. and 2d. = 9d.; that it was 'missent to Southampton,' and 'returned to Rev. Mr. Wesley, Moorfields, for 1s. postage.'

the Rev. Peard Dickenson, assisted Heath while in that city preparing to sail for America; and Wesley's book steward there, John Atlay, gave Heath £30, by Wesley's instructions, to add to £20 which the latter had already given him, probably for his passage money. 'If he mistook me,' says Wesley, 'and gave him £50 instead of £30, it will not ruin me.' On 6th August 1787, in Birmingham, Wesley 'took a tender leave' of the family, then about to embark. On arrival, Heath at once took up work as Principal of Cokesbury College, Abingdon, Maryland, opened in December 1787. The history of this first American Methodist educational institution was strangely unfortunate.[1] The original building, and another adopted in its stead, was burnt to ashes. The early staff caused anxiety also. In the first year of the college, Asbury wrote (10th August 1788), 'I received heavy tidings from the college. Both our teachers have left—one for incompetency, and the other to pursue riches and honours.'[2] If Heath was the teacher who left 'to pursue riches' his efforts were unsuccessful. This letter shows that he had turned to Wesley, his former helper, who never forsook his friends. He now promises generous help towards the passage of Heath and his family, probably back to England. Wesley's tender pretty message towards the young girls is very characteristic.

*To the Rev. Mr. Heath, Burlington, New Jersey.*

ROSANNA, *near* WICKLOW, *June* 26, 1789.

DEAR SIR,—I exceedingly wanted to hear from you. I thought Mrs. Heath and you had forgotten me, although it would not be strange if you had as (in youth especially) '—— thought.' [Five lines scratched out here.] If that

[1] Such institutions there have since become very numerous; many are exceptionally successful in every way. Eighteen universities, with many colleges, twenty-five university colleges, and hundreds of secondary schools have been promoted by and are under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church. See *Year Book*, 1915, p. 137; and my article, 'Impressions of Transatlantic Methodism,' *United Meth. Mag.*, June, 1915.

[2] Quoted in Briggs's *Bishop Asbury*, p. 192.

had been the case, and you had taken no care to fulfil the engagement, I should have judged the engagement between you and Dr. Coke would have stood good. But if (as I suppose) you were willing and able to teach, and did in fact teach the children, then I should judge the engagement . . . and you would be at fault on both sides, to which (I will take upon me to say) Dr. Coke will very willingly consent.

I would go a good way to take you and your dear family by the hand; but the price of travelling by sea is now . . .; formerly, a cabin passenger paid five pounds for his passage. Now they have swelled it to about twice as much. I would willingly give fifty pounds toward your passage: And

> 'Eternal Providence, exceeding thought,
> Where none appears, can make itself a way.'

I am glad of the information you gave me concerning the state of things in America. I shall be better able to understand the account which Dr. Coke will probably give me. O what a comfort it is to think, that the Lord reigneth, and will order all things well!

I commit you and dear Mrs. Heath (how I love her!) to His keeping and arm.—Dear sir, your affectionate friend and brother.

My dear Annie and Maria, I love to see your names, and I kiss the paper. Perhaps I may live to see those that wrote them. If not, I shall see you in a better place, my dear children. Adieu!

## 'There is a three-fold leading of the Spirit.'

*To Freeborn Garrettson.*

CHESTER, *July* 15, 1789.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—You are entirely in the right. There can be no manner of doubt, that it was the enemy of

souls that hindered your sending me your experience. Many parts both of your inward and outward experience ought by no means to be suppressed. But if you are minded to send anything to me, you have no time to lose. Whatever you do for me you must do quickly, lest death have quicker wings than love.

A great man observes that there is a three-fold leading of the Spirit. Some He leads by giving them, on every occasion, apposite texts of Scripture; some by suggesting reasons for every step they take—the way by which He chiefly leads me; and some by impressions; but He judges the last to be the least desirable way, as it is often impossible to distinguish dark impressions from divine or even diabolical.

I hope you will not long delay to write more particularly to your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Take an equal Share in the common Labour.'

*To William Black.*

LONDON, *November* 21, 1789.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your letter has given me great satisfaction. My fears are vanished away. I am persuaded brother Wray, Stretton, and you will go on hand in hand, and that each of you will take an equal share in the common labour. I do so myself. I labour now just as I did twenty or forty years ago.

By all means proceed by common consent, and think not of *separating* from the Church of England. I am more and more confirmed in the judgement which our whole Conference passed on that head in the year 1758.—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

# TO AMERICAN METHODISTS

## 'Time has shaken me by the Hand.'

*To Freeborn Garrettson.*

LONDON, *February* 3, 1790.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Two or three days ago I had the pleasure of a letter from you, dated August 23rd, 1789, giving me a comfortable account of the swift and extensive progress of the work of God in America. You likewise informed me that you had written an account of your life, and directed it should be sent to me; and I have been expecting it from day to day ever since, but have now almost given up my expectation; for, unless it comes soon, it will hardly overtake me in the present world. You see Time has shaken me by the hand, and Death is not far behind. While we live, let us work our Lord's work betimes, and in His time He will give us our full reward.—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Whoever gets Money, do you win Souls.'

*To William Black.*

SUNDERLAND, *June* 14, 1790.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—You did well to send me an account of your little societies. Here is a good beginning, though it is as yet, in many places, a day of small things; and although it does not please God to carry on His work so rapidly with you as in the United States. But one soul is worth all the merchandise in the world; and, whoever gets money, do you win souls.

Never was there, throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland, so great a thirst for the pure word of God as there is at this day. The same we find in the little islands of Man, Wight, Jersey, Guernsey, and Alderney in the Western

Ocean. In the Isle of Man alone (thirty miles long) the societies contain about four-and-twenty hundred members. I have just now finished my route through Scotland, where I never had such congregations before. So it pleases God to give me a little more to do before He calls me hence.

What has become of brother Scurr, Dodson, and our other Yorkshire friends? Some of them doubtless are gone into a farther country, but some I suppose remain. I doubt you do not keep up a constant intercourse with each other. Love as brethren!—I am, dear William, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Declaring to all Men that the Methodists are one People in all the World.'

This letter, written only a month before his death, appropriately closes Wesley's messages to transatlantic Methodists. Cooper was a Methodist preacher at Annapolis, Maryland. The son of an officer in the Revolutionary army, he was a man of strong character, rich in knowledge and in the wisdom which is profitable to direct. His brethren styled him 'Lycurgus,' and 'a living encyclopædia.' As book steward he helped to enforce and circulate Wesley's imperial dictum on the fundamental oneness of the Methodists everywhere and always.

*To Ezekiel Cooper.*

*Near* London, *February* 1, 1791.

My dear Brother,—Those that desire to write, or to say anything to me, have no time to lose, for Time has shaken me by the hand, and Death is not far behind. But I have reason to be thankful for the time that is past. I felt few of the infirmities of old age for fourscore and six years. It was not till a year and a half ago that my strength and my sight failed. And still I am enabled to scrawl a little,

and to creep, though I cannot run. Probably I should not be able to do so much, did not many of you assist me by your prayers.

I have given a distinct account of the work of God, which has been wrought in Britain and in Ireland, for more than half a century. We want some of you to give us a connected relation of what our Lord has been doing in America, since the time that Richard Boardman accepted the invitation, and left his country to serve you.

See that you never give place to one thought of separating from your brethren in Europe. Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men, that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue—

> 'Though mountains rise, and oceans roll
> To sever us in vain.'

To the care of our common Lord I commit you, and am, your affectionate friend and brother.

# CHAPTER VIII

## TO HIS MOST INTIMATE LAY FRIEND, EBENEZER BLACKWELL

WESLEY's correspondence with his lay friends is of special interest. His relations to them were altogether different from those which he held towards his clerical friends or helpers or his preachers. Here is another view of him. In these, as in those relations, he inspired the highest admiration, respect rising to veneration, and regard which deepened into intense affection; and all these throughout long periods. If an exception must be made, it is in regard to some incidents of his married life. His friends, especially his lay friends, were aware of his foibles, as, for instance, his credulity, and his excessive frankness with all. Their appreciation was discriminating. Notwithstanding this, the records of his time show that he excited confidence and love such as few men have enjoyed. His enemies said that his friends and followers worshipped him; and, indeed, for several generations after his death his portrait was the frontispiece in millions of copies of Methodist hymn-books used in divine worship. If the propriety of this usage is questioned, it will be allowed that it was a striking testimony, almost unique among Protestants, of the place held by this human leader in the hearts of multitudes.

An aptitude for friendship was one of Wesley's most attractive qualities, and he heeded Dr. Johnson's counsel—that a man should keep his friendships in repair. He sustained them by studied kindnesses, visits, and letters. These last were very numerous. George Wolff of Balham, his executor; Robert Carr Brackenbury[1] of Raithby Hall,

[1] See p. 167.

Lincolnshire, who was also an itinerant preacher, and Ebenezer Blackwell were his chief lay friends. The last named was the most intimate. We are able to give more of Wesley's many letters to him than have hitherto been published. Others are given more completely. Except those to his brother Charles, so many of Wesley's letters to one individual have not been brought together before as are here given.

Ebenezer Blackwell has been strangely neglected by many Methodist biographers and historians. It may have been his own wish and act which explain this comparative neglect by his contemporaries. He was singularly modest, a private gentleman who did good by stealth, where possible, and avoided praise and fame. However, he was Wesley's closest friend for forty-three years (1739-1782). His liberal soul devised and sustained liberal things, especially for the poor. He supplied money for Wesley's work and schemes, and shrewd counsel upon them :—

> 'And still, the more his wealth increased,
> More treasure he laid up in heaven.'

To him Wesley turned for sympathy and guidance in the bitter misunderstandings with his wife, and the terrible annoyances caused by her strange behaviour. Quivering letters are here, which refer to these things. Blackwell proved his friendship by word and deed in these, as in all Wesley's affairs. He also assisted Charles Wesley materially. Blackwell's beautiful country seat [1] at Lewisham was the ever-open and delightful resting-place of the brothers, especially of John. During forty years he found there what his aristocratic cultured nature appreciated keenly, although he cheerfully dispensed with them for his work's sake—quiet, ample comfort, refinement, congenial friends, and the charms of a wealthy English home amid beautiful surroundings. Much of his best literary work was done there.

Blackwell was a banker for fifty years, chief partner in Martin's Bank, Change Alley, Lombard Street, London. He retired in 1780, two years before his death. He was

[1] The 'Limes.'

twice married. In succession, these two Christian ladies and devoted Methodists added attractiveness and the gentler graces to his character and home. Other Methodist ladies, Mrs. Sparrow and Mrs. Dewal, were frequent visitors there, and are often named in these letters. Blackwell was called the rough diamond. A strong, somewhat abrupt, cheerful man, well aware of his limitations in verbal expression, and not easily moved, he was decided and persistent when his choice was made. Under his quiet exterior there burned a steady fire of religious conviction and generous feeling, which Methodist teaching and fellowship cleared and intensified. He owed and owned a great debt to Wesley in the highest things. Wesley appointed him a trustee of City Road Chapel, London. As these letters show, he was not so pronounced a Methodist on some points as Wesley desired, and he dared not claim that he had received spiritual renewal. But he earnestly wished to know his faults, and 'that I may never rest until I am born again and have the image of God stamped on my soul.' When this Cornelius could no longer hinder the just tribute, Charles Wesley wrote thus of him:

> 'Through life inviolably just
> He his integrity maintain'd,
> Most strictly faithful to his trust,
> An upright man of truth unfeign'd:
> His roughly honest soul abhorr'd
> The polish smooth, the courtier's art,
> While, free from guile, in every word
> He spoke the language of his heart.'[1]

In these letters, as in those to Lady Maxwell and all his friends, Wesley shows himself the lover of the soul, affectionate, candid, direct, and eager with the anxiety of one who must give an account for every life which he was permitted to serve. His eyes were not blinded nor his message weakened by Blackwell's wealth and kindness. These letters show that Wesley never allowed himself such intimacy with him, or incurred such obligations to him as

[1] 'On the death of Mr. Ebenezer Blackwell,' in the *Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, vol. vi. p. 353.

prevented him from giving Blackwell encouragement as from a spiritual superior, or administering to him reproof, rebuke, and exhortation with all long-suffering and doctrine. Wesley narrated of him, with evident pleasure, that when one asked Blackwell, 'Are you going to hear Mr. Wesley?' he replied, 'No, I am going to hear God; I listen to Him, whoever preaches; otherwise I lose all my labour.' When as a man of like passions Wesley asked his advice, Blackwell's sagacity and strength come out finely.[1] Wesley received the counsel and plain-dealing with all humility. One ventures to think that he might wisely have acted upon it more fully.

## A Letter from Blackwell to Wesley.

This deeply interesting series of Wesley's letters to Blackwell may well be prefaced by a letter from him to Wesley. It is here given exactly from the original in the Colman Collection. It belongs to the early formative months of Methodist history, and the work in London. Wesley is in Bristol. Funds are being gathered for the erection of the schoolroom for the colliers at Kingswood, near that city. The simple building is still standing. One is impressed with the earnest solicitude of this professional gentleman as to the highest concerns. He has not yet seen Wesley, but he knows his handwriting, which he was to see so often, and is aware of his extraordinary gifts and success.

*Ebenezer Blackwell to Wesley.*

LONDON, *August* 14, 1739.

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Seward,[2] when I supped with him and Mr. Whitfield,[3] etc., last Sunday night, said he would send me the money they collected that evening on Blackheath

[1] See p. 388. [2] See p. 221.

[3] Captain Whitefield—so referred to later in this letter and by Wesley in his diary entry of the next day, when Captain Whitefield called on him, and probably gave him this letter and the Shop Note. The name Whitefield was often spelt Whitfield. His brother, the Rev. George Whitefield, was visiting America.

for Kingswood school. By the newspaper of this day it mentions that there was collected £16, 1s. 6d., but I had sent me only £15, 11s., so that there is half a guinea difference. What is the reason I don't know till I hear from Mr. Seward; but, however, for the £15, 11s. I have sent our Shop Note, which Mr. Burrows or any other gentleman that remits money to London, will give you cash for. I thought it was the best way to send it, because as I have seen your handwriting (though I have not had the pleasure of your acquaintance), before I pay it I should know that it got safe to you.

It would be needless for me to pretend to give an account of all our friends, because I suppose the Captain and Mr. Mitchell, before this, has acquainted you of everything, as they and I parted from Mr. Whitfield and Mr. Seward at the same time. This I can say, that there is a great number of our friends who earnestly wish for somebody to supply the place of our dear Brother Whitfield. For my part, I desire to trust to the Lord, who is not only able but certainly will in His due time send us more of His true ministers; but at present, for all-wise ends, He may suffer us to grapple a little by ourselves, and have after this great plenty; as it were, a dearth of religion in order to purge us and try us, that we know how to prize and value them that preach the truth as it is in Jesus. O that we had more thankful hearts for the mercies we daily receive, and made a more conscientious use of our closets, to look up to the Almighty for directions in all affairs—thus not in the least resting or relying on anything that we can do, but solely trusting in the merits, death, and suffering of our dear Lord Jesus for life and salvation. Then might we expect the blessing of God in this world, and our souls' everlasting salvation in the next. I should be glad, when you have a leisure minute, to have a line or two, and beg you will present my kind

love and service to Mrs. Grevil, and tell her that I thought I should have heard from her before now.

I am, dear Sir (with earnest prayers to the Almighty for continued success in your labours, and that all who name the name of Jesus may depart from evil), your weak but affectionate servant in Christ,

EBENEZER BLACKWELL.

*P.S.*—Pray give my kind respects to the Captain, Mr. Mitchell, etc.

## To Ebenezer Blackwell: a Series of forty-five Letters.

The original of the letter from Blackwell just given bears Wesley's usual business-like endorsement, thus:

Mr. Blackwell,
Aug. 14, 1739.
A[nswere]d 22.

Here is that answer by Wesley.

## 'God is greatly with this People.'

It gives us a glimpse of the persecution of the early Methodists in Bristol. The Mayor, Henry Coombe, suppressed the mobs which, notably in the next year, beset the Methodists there. Said he, 'What Mr. Wesley is, is nothing to you. I will keep the peace. I will have no rioting in this city.' The persecution by parents and employers, referred to in this letter, long continued in the capital of western England, as elsewhere. The miracle of the Israelites in Egypt was there and everywhere repeated —'the more their taskmasters afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.'

# JOHN WESLEY'S LETTERS

*Letter I.*

BRISTOL, *August* 23, 1739.

DEAR SIR,—I have not had half an hour's leisure to write since I received yours of the fourteenth instant, in which the note for £15, 11s. was enclosed.

The Captain's journey to London, as he owns it was the happiest, so I believe it was the most useful one he ever had. His resolution was a little shaken here; but he now appears more settled than before. Satan hath indeed desired to have us, that he may sift us as wheat; but our Lord hath prayed for us; so that the faith of few has failed. Far the greater part of those who have been tempted has come as gold out of the fire.

It seems to me a plain proof that the power of God is greatly with this people, because they are tempted in a manner scarce common to men. No sooner do any of them begin to taste of true liberty, but they are buffeted both within and without. The messengers of Satan close them in on every side. Many are already turned out of doors by their parents or masters; many more expect it every day. But they count all these things dung and dross, that they may win Christ. O let us, if His name be called upon us, be thus minded!—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and servant in Christ.

## 'You have suffered Loss for want of frank Acknowledgement of the Truth.'

In the years which elapsed between the last letter and this, Wesley extended his medical and dispensary work in Bristol and elsewhere among the sick poor. In June of this year he will publish the first of twenty-one large editions published in his lifetime of his famous *Primitive Physick; or an Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases.*

But Wesley is more concerned that Blackwell should avow and show himself a Christian. This, and the culture of the spiritual life, is the burden of the next three letters, as of many others to him.

*Letter II.*

BRISTOL, *January* 26, 1746-7.

DEAR SIR,—Our number of patients increases here daily. We have now upwards of two hundred. Many have already desired to return thanks, having found a considerable change for the better already. But we are at a great loss for medicines, several of those we would choose being not to be had at any price in Bristol.

I have been sometimes afraid you have suffered loss for want of a frank acknowledgement of the truth: I mean with regard to the gay world. If we openly avow what we approve, the fear or shame generally lights on them; but if we are ashamed or afraid, then they pursue, and will be apt to rally us both out of our reason and religion.—I am, dear Sir, your very affectionate servant.

My best respects attend Mrs. Blackwell and Mrs. Dewal. I hope you strengthen each other's hands.

## 'All this is Poison to your Soul.'

*Letter III.*

SHEFFIELD, *May* 14, 1747.

DEAR SIR,—Are you not yet weary and faint in your mind? Do you continue to strive for the mastery? Is it a good, though painful, fight? I am sometimes afraid of your turning back before you conquer. Your enemies are many, and your strength is small. What an amazing thing it will be, if you endure to the end.

I doubt you will sometimes be in danger by a snare you are not aware of. You will often meet with persons who labour till they are delivered of all they know, and who (perhaps, 'with very good intent, but little wit') will tell you abundance of things, good or bad, of the society, or any member of it. Now, all this is poison to your soul. You have only to give an account of yourself to God. O may you do it with joy, and not with grief.—I am, dear Sir, your very affectionate servant.

## 'Now there is not a Dog to wag his Tongue.'

The quaint and romantic Cornish town from which Wesley sends this cheerful letter had been the scene of some of the sharpest privation and hottest persecution of himself and his followers. 'In Cornwall,'[1] says Wesley, 'the war against the Methodists was carried on with far more vigour than against the Spaniards. . . . The Methodists went with their lives in their hands.' Charles Wesley preached surrounded by men with uplifted clubs, who had sworn he should not preach again. Opposition to Methodist teaching was peculiarly violent there. John Daniel, whose descendants still lead Methodism, was arraigned and then thrust out of the court-house there, because it was claimed that he had profited by hearing the Methodists; while at St. Just Edward Greenfield was adjudged worthy of banishment or death because he declared that he knew that his sins were forgiven! It was particularly annoying to such loyalists as the Wesleys that here, as in many places, they were charged, without the slightest foundation in fact, with being in league with the Pretender to the throne. But in Cornwall all this was rapidly disappearing.

[1] There he and his brave gifted helper, John Nelson, were compelled to feed on blackberries and to sleep on the bare floor. After three weeks of such neglect of them by those he sought to save, Wesley awoke one night, clapped Nelson on the side and said bravely, 'Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer: I have one whole side yet—the skin is off but on one side.'

# TO EBENEZER BLACKWELL

*Letter IV.*

St. Ives, *July* 18, 1747.

Dear Sir,—Are you not yet weary and faint in your mind? weary of striving to enter in at the strait gate? I trust that you are not, and that you never will, till you enter into the kingdom. Many thoughts of that kind will probably arise in your heart; but you will have power to trample them under your feet. You have nothing to do with the things that are behind. The prize and the crown are before you. So run, that you may obtain, desiring only to apprehend that for which you are apprehended in Christ Jesus.

A great door and effectual is opened now, almost in every corner of this country. Here is such a change within these two years as has hardly been seen in any other part of England. Wherever we went, we used to carry our lives in our hands, and now there is not a dog to wag his tongue. Several ministers are clearly convinced of the truth, few are bitter, most seem to stand neuter. Some of the gentlemen (so-called) are almost the only opposers now; drinking, revelling, cursing, swearing gentlemen, who neither will enter into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffer any others, if they can prevent it. The most violent Jacobites among these are continually crying out, that we are bringing the Pretender; and some of these worthy men bear His Majesty's commission, as Justices of the Peace!

My best wishes attend Mrs. Blackwell, who, I hope, measures step by step with you in the way to the kingdom. —I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

I set out for Bristol on Thursday.

## 'For natural Sweetness . . . I have never seen any People like the Irish.'

In his incessant journeyings Wesley keeps in touch with his London friend. Blackwell would be interested to learn that Wesley's home in Ireland was with the family of his friend William Lunell, a banker, like himself. He was a Moravian, and for a time helped Methodism. Wesley was captivated by the Irish, while he saw the defects of their qualities.[1] One possible danger among them leads Wesley to utter a tender rebuke to Blackwell.

This was the first of Wesley's forty-two preaching tours in Ireland, which occupied, Tyerman computed, not less than six years of his life. Directly and indirectly they were among the most fruitful.[2] In Ireland he claimed and inspired Thomas Walsh, a great Biblical scholar, of whom Southey wrote that his piety also 'might well convince even a Catholic that saints are to be found in other communions as well as the Church of Rome.' Later, Wesley enlisted Gideon Ouseley, like himself of a noble and an eminent family. He had the same tact and enthusiasm. By the Irish Methodist emigrants and preachers Wesley sowed the seed of the vast Methodism of the United States and Canada.

### *Letter V.*

DUBLIN, *August* 13, 1747.

DEAR SIR,—I have found a home in this strange land. I am at Mr. Lunell's just as at the Foundery, only that I have not such attendance here, for I meet the people at another part of the town. For natural sweetness of temper, for courtesy and hospitality, I have never seen any people like the Irish. Indeed, all I converse with are only English transplanted into another soil, and they are much mended by the removal, having left all their roughness and surliness behind them.

[1] These were very evident later, as told in Letter XIV.
[2] *A New History of Methodism*, vol. ii. chap. i.

They receive the Word of God with all gladness and readiness of mind. The danger is, that it should not take deep root, that it should be as seed falling on stony ground. But is there not the same danger in England also? Do you not find it in London? You have received the Word with joy, and it begins to spring up; but how soon may it wither away! It does not properly take root till we are convinced of inward sin, till we begin to feel the entire corruption of our nature. I believe sometimes you have found a little of this. But you are in the hands of a good Physician, who, if you give yourself up to His guidance, will not only wound, but also make whole.

Mr. Lunell and his family desire their best respects to Mrs. Blackwell and you. His daughter can rejoice in God her Saviour. They propose to spend the winter in England. —I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

I cannot forget Mrs. Dewal, whether I see her or not.

## 'Shall you have no Part in the general Blessing?'

Whatever Wesley's news, now of trial, then of triumph, as here, he comes back to the matter of Blackwell's spiritual progress. Leeds was beginning its victories as one of the mighty strongholds of Methodism. The work in Bristol had outgrown its first home. This 'second bill of exchange' was Blackwell's gift or loan for a larger building there. In this year Wesley rebuilt and enlarged his 'New Room in the Horsefair' there. It is pleasant to think that their dear friend Blackwell was thus interested in the building which was more closely and continuously associated with the Wesleys and their work than any other building which Wesley erected, or that they used.[1] The chapel, which still stands, is about sixty feet by forty feet. It contains the pulpit from which John and Charles Wesley delivered

[1] See my *Wesley and Kingswood*, 'Some Sacred Spots,' pp. 31, 127-138, and above, p. 103.

many of their wonderful messages in sermon and hymn; the table from which he often addressed the Society; the clock which regulated his busy days and short nights; and the backless, uncomfortable seats for the congregation. The building also contains Wesley's very little bedroom. At the other end of the building is the room used by Mrs. Wesley during her generally tempestuous visits to Bristol. Here also is Wesley's little study, where he wrote and edited many of his works, and instructed, heartened, and chastened his preachers when they lodged for a while in the rooms attached. The debt upon the earlier 'New Room' on this site was happily liquidated by the result of Captain Foy's famous proposal that the Methodists should contribute one penny per week. Out of this grew the characteristic finance and class meeting system of Methodism. But that building became insecure and too small. The north end of it was retained in the present building, which Blackwell's money helped to erect. In this way at least he did have 'part in the general blessings' now falling on Methodism, as Wesley desires that he should.

### *Letter VI.*

BRISTOL, *February* 2, 1747-8.

DEAR SIR,—I have received the second bill of exchange, which you was so kind as to send by Saturday's post. As we do not intend to build immediately, the money will be payable before we want it.

I do not question but Mrs. Dewal and you will be serviceable to each other. God has given her an advisable spirit, and where that is, there will be every good and perfect gift.

Poor Mr. Hall,[1] when I was at Salisbury, furnished me with a sufficient answer to those who speak of the connexion between him and us. He could not have set the matter in a clearer light, than by turning both me and my sister out of doors.

[1] The Rev. Westley Hall, see p. 75.

Both in Ireland, and in many parts of England, the work of our Lord increases daily. At Leeds only, the society, from an hundred and fourscore, is increased to above five hundred persons. And shall you have no part in the general blessing? I believe better things. You will fight and conquer; take up the cross till you receive the crown. You have both been enabled to set your faces heavenward, and you shall never look back. You are to strengthen each other's hands in God till you come to Mount Zion, and to the general Church of the Firstborn.—I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate friend and servant.

## Even the Accounts between God and your own Soul.

During his second visit to Ireland Wesley finds that chapel-building and business affairs endanger the clearness and life of his soul. What then but the mighty power of God can keep alive that of his dear friend, immersed in duties at the bank and elsewhere? In all his balancings, does the banker 'even,' *i.e.* balance, 'the accounts between God and his own soul?'

A month later than this letter, losses and sorrows fell upon Blackwell and his wife. They would recall these counsels of Wesley. Then he sends a beautifully tender and wise letter to them.

*Letter VII.*

DUBLIN, *March* 15, 1747-8.

DEAR SIR,—I have inquired of several, but cannot yet hear of any such merchant as Mr. John Warr in Dublin. A gentleman informed me this morning, that there was one of that name, but he has been dead for many years. I suppose this cannot be the same person to whom Mr. Belchier's letter is directed.

We have not found a place yet that will suit us for

building. Several we have heard of, and seen some; but they are all leasehold land, and I am determined to have freehold, if it is to be had in Dublin; otherwise we must lie at the mercy of our landlord whenever the lease is to be renewed.

I find the engaging, though but a little, in these temporal affairs, is apt to damp and deaden the soul, and there is no remedy but continual prayer. What, then, but the mighty power of God can keep your soul alive, who are engaged all the day long with such a multiplicity of them? It is well that His grace is sufficient for you. But do you not find need to pray always? And if you cannot always say—

> 'My hands are but employ'd below,
> My heart is still with Thee,'

is there not the more occasion for some season of solemn retirement (if it were possible, every day), wherein you may withdraw your mind from earth, and even the accounts between God and your own soul? I commend you and yours to His continual protection; and am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

I suppose my brother will be with you almost as soon as this.

## 'Perhaps God was jealous over you.'

*Letter VIII.*

DUBLIN, *April* 20, 1748.

DEAR SIR,—I am persuaded God has taught both Mrs. Blackwell and you to say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Shall not all these things work together for good? Perhaps God was jealous over you, lest your heart should lean to any of the things of the earth. He will have you to be all His

own, to desire nothing but Him, to seek Him and love Him with your whole heart. And He knows what are the hindrances, and what means will be most effectual toward it. Then let Him work according to the counsel of His own will. It is the Lord! let Him do what seemeth Him good.

O what a pearl, of how great a price, is the very lowest degree of the peace of God! A little measure of it, I doubt not, you will find in the most trying circumstances. May God increase it a thousand-fold in both your hearts!—I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate servant.

## 'A complete Library for those that fear God.'

How skilfully and sympathetically Wesley thinks himself into the situation and dangers of his friend! And then he invites him to enter with him the troublous waters of publishing. Here is Wesley's first proposal of his 'Christian Library,' the pioneer of many such series of works by which literary enterprise has since enriched the world. This was limited to Practical Divinity, and consisted of extracts from and abridgments of the choicest pieces published in the English language. He issued the first volume next year from Kingswood School, and, in 1755, the last nine of fifty volumes. This made up the 'Library.' The necessary extraction and condensation must have involved for Wesley the miserly use of his moments amidst his incessant travelling and preaching in these years. He lost £200 by this venture, and used the familiar consolation of publishers and others in like case: 'Perhaps the next generation may know the value of it.' The Library was reprinted, 1819-1827.

### *Letter IX.*

NEWCASTLE, *August* 14, 1748.

DEAR SIR,—I trust you do not grow weary or faint in your mind, although you cannot but find a thousand temptations. Business itself, when it comes in such a flood upon you, must needs be one of the greatest temptations, since it

naturally tends to hinder your waiting upon God (as you would desire always to do) without distraction. And when our mind is hurried, it is hardly possible to retain either the spirit of prayer or of thankfulness. But still, with God no word shall be impossible. He has called you by His providence to this way of life, and He is able to preserve you in the midst of the world as well as in a desert. And I cannot doubt but He will, because you appear to be sensible of your danger. Walk then through the fire: you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you. Come unto Jesus, upon the waves of the sea, the floods shall not run over you.

I have had some thoughts of printing, on a finer paper, and with a larger letter, not only all that we have published already, but, it may be, all that is most valuable in the English tongue, in threescore or fourscore volumes, in order to provide a complete library for those that fear God. I should print only a hundred copies of each. Brother Downes would give himself up to the work, so that whenever I can procure a printing-press, types, and some quantity of paper, I can begin immediately. I am inclined to think several would be glad to forward such a design; and, if so, the sooner the better, because my life is far spent, and I know not how soon the night cometh wherein no man can work.

I commend you, and dear Mrs. Blackwell, and Mrs. Dewal, to the grace of God, and am, dear Sir, your affectionate brother and servant.

I leave this place on Tuesday, and propose to spend ten or twelve days about Leeds.

## 'A Letter from my Brother.'

Probably the letter which Wesley says he received from his brother Charles said much more about his forthcoming

marriage to Miss Sarah Gwynne, of Garth, Brecon, than about Meriton. He was a Manx clergyman, who accompanied the Wesleys on some of their journeyings, and assisted their chapel-building schemes. Charles Wesley was married at Garth on April 28, eleven days after this letter. Wesley officiated. The banker and his wife sent their congratulations. They would be represented in some practical way also on the great day. Charles Wesley had reason to style Blackwell 'my particular favourite.' He had been willing to subscribe towards the sum necessary to secure an income of £100 a year for the evangelist and poet, that being a condition insisted upon by Miss Gwynne's mother, who was a lady of fortune. For this plan Wesley substituted a charge for that amount upon the profits of his and his brother's literary works. At one time he feared that Mrs. Gwynne might insist upon conditions of marriage which would hinder his brother's usefulness in extending Methodism—'perhaps settle him in a parish for life'; but this did not occur.

*Letter X.*

KINGSWOOD, *March* 28, 1749.

DEAR SIR,—Last week I received a letter from my brother, which lays me under some difficulty. He gives me a short account of what had passed between Mr. Meriton and you, and then desires that I would write concerning him. But what can I say? Not much of what is good, because I can say no more than I think. I am greatly at a loss what judgement to form concerning him. What I hope is this: That he is an honest, though weak man, one that has the fear of God, but with a small measure of understanding. His behaviour with us has, in general, been good. What was otherwise, I impute to folly, not malicious wickedness.

I trust Mrs. Blackwell and you are still panting after God, if not walking in the light of His countenance. May He enable you to turn your faces against the world, being

ashamed of nothing but sin, and to preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

## 'You have been much upon my Mind.'

Wesley here writes of his many thoughts of his dear friends, his counsels on his and their needs, and a vivid account of the progress of the work in which they are all interested. He anticipated Marianne Farningham's suggestive lines—

> 'I cannot tell why there should come to me
> A thought of some one, miles and miles away,
> In swift insistence on the memory,
> Unless a need there be that I should pray.'

### *Letter XI.*

WHITEHAVEN, *October* 2, 1749.

DEAR SIR,—Mrs. Blackwell and you have been much upon my mind to-day, and I trust you do not wholly forget me. Are we not running the same race? pressing on to the same prize of our high calling? Abundance of hindrances indeed lie in the way, yet He that calls us shall make straight paths for our feet. In the mean time, we have need of patience, that, when we have done and suffered the will of God, we may attain the promises.

My coming hither was utterly unexpected. I thought of nothing less, till I received some letters from hence, giving an account of such a work as we have not seen before in England for several years, and it increases daily. Open wickedness is not seen, nor have I heard one oath since I came to Whitehaven. I preach in the market-place morning and evening. Most of the grown persons in the town attend, and none makes any noise, none laughs, or behaves indecently.

One evening, when Mr. Perronet[1] preached in my absence, a crew of sailors procured a fiddle, and made an attempt to interrupt, but they met with small encouragement. A company of colliers turned upon them, broke their fiddle in pieces, and used those of them they could overtake so roughly that they have not made their appearance since. Sir James Lowther, likewise, sent and took down the names of the chief rioters.

To-morrow we are to leave this place. But we have a long round to go, so that I am afraid we shall not move much southward till toward the end of this month. I commend you, and those that are with you, to Him who has hitherto helped you, and am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

## 'A Proper Object of Charity.'

This letter recommends a special case for Blackwell's charity, and the next letter shows how carefully Wesley expended the money his friend gave him for similar purposes. The 'Lending Stock,' which there takes the largest sum, was an excellent fund started by Wesley four years earlier, and managed by stewards, for making little loans for three months to small tradesmen in London. He collected £50 for it, and this grew to £120. As many as two hundred and fifty honest, struggling people were helped by it in one year.[2]

*Letter XII.*

LONDON, *December* 18, 1749.

DEAR SIR,—I have known Eliz. Miller for many years. She has been always remarkably honest and industrious. I

[1] Mr. Edward Perronet, son of Rev. Vincent Perronet, who sometimes travelled with Wesley.

[2] The case of Lackington, the bookseller, was remarkable. He sold a hundred thousand volumes in eighteen years, and his income was £5000 a year: but he was penniless at one time and glad of Wesley's help by this 'Stock.'

do not know in all London a more proper object of charity; for she now, through age and weakness, is very ill able to procure for herself the necessaries of life.—I am, your affectionate servant.

## 'Money you left in my Hands.'

*Letter XIII.*

*February* 4, 1750-1.

Dear Sir,—The money you left in my hands was disposed of as follows:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| To the Lending Stock, . . . | £2 | 2 | 0 |
| To Eliz. Brooks, expecting daily to have her goods seized for rent, . . . | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| To Eliz. Room (a poor widow) for rent, . | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Toward clothing Mary Middleton and another poor woman almost naked, . . | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| To John Edgar, a poor weaver, out of work, . | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| To Lucy Jones, a poor orphan, . . | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| To a poor family, for food and fuel, . . | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| To Christopher Brown, out of business, . | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| To an ancient woman in great distress, . | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Distributed among several sick families, . | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| | £5 | 5 | 0 |

—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

## 'Huge Applause and huge Opposition.'

Wesley is again in Ireland. This lively letter, here given much more completely than by Wesley's biographer Tyerman, should be read with Letter v. This anxious time in Ireland gave to Wesley his famous helper, Thomas Walsh.

# TO EBENEZER BLACKWELL

*Letter XIV.*

DUBLIN, *July* 21, 1750.

DEAR SIR,—Although I expect very shortly to leave this kingdom, yet I cannot help writing a few lines; and the rather, because I may possibly find it needful to visit Cornwall before I can see London. I have had so hurrying a time for two or three months, as I scarce ever had before; such a mixture of storms and clear sunshine, of huge applause and huge opposition. Indeed, the Irish, in general, keep no bounds. I think there is not such another nation in Europe, so

'Impetuous in their love and in their hate.'

That any of the Methodist preachers are alive, is a clear proof of an over-ruling Providence. For we know not where we are safe. A week or two ago, in a time of perfect peace, twenty people assaulted one of our preachers, and a few that were riding with him, near Limerick. He asked their Captain what they intended to do; who calmly answered, 'To murder you': and, accordingly, presented a pistol which snapped twice or thrice. Mr. Fenwick then rode away. The other pursued, and fired after him, but could not overtake him. Three of his companions they left for dead. But some neighbouring Justices of Peace did not take it well: so they procured the cut-throats to be apprehended; and it is supposed they will be in danger of transportation, though murder is a venial sin in Ireland.

How soon poor brother Hogg was snatched away! Why was it not you, rather than he? Because you have more grace to receive, more battles to fight, more victories to gain, first. O let Mrs. Blackwell and you live in earnest! Look through the veil which is between time and eternity!—I am, dear Sir.

'Advise and comfort her who is now likely to stand in Need of every Help.'

The requests in this and Letters XVI. and XVII. refer to the affairs of Wesley's wife—'her that is as my own soul.' The banker could assist her in settling money matters after her marriage with Wesley seven weeks earlier than this letter.

The lady was Mrs. Anthony Vazeille of Threadneedle Street, London, the widow of a merchant there, with a country residence at Wandsworth. The Wesleys became acquainted with Mrs. Vazeille through their friends, the Perronets of Shoreham. She had a jointure of £10,000, which was secured to herself and her four children before her marriage with Wesley. He was now forty-eight. She was seven years his junior.

Wesley's love affairs, which doubtless Blackwell knew, can be referred to here in brief terms only. All but the first of them were singularly unsuccessful, and painful in their results for Wesley. He had four affairs of the heart. When he was twenty-two he was much attracted to Miss Betty Kirkham,[1] 'Varenese,' the younger daughter of the Rev. Lionel Kirkham of Stanton; but she was given to another. Dr. Fitchett sums up the other episodes, and their occasion. Wesley 'had a simple-minded but quixotic faith in the goodness of all women, and seemed always ready to propose to the particular face that at the moment bent over him in his sickness. He was thrice sick: at Georgia, in 1737, where Miss Hopkey nursed him; at Newcastle, in 1748, where Grace Murray nursed him; and in London, in 1761,[2] where Mrs. Vazeille nursed him. And as a matter of fact, Wesley wanted to marry each of his nurses in turn!' Sophia Christiana Hopkey[3] married a Mr. Williamson of Georgia; Grace Murray,[4] a sea captain's

1751

[1] *Journal*, vol. i. p. 13 *et seq.*
[2] This is an obvious error. It was 1751.
[3] *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 280 *et seq.*
[4] *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 417 *et seq.*

widow, who was in charge of the Orphan House in Wesley's centre at Newcastle-on-Tyne, married John Bennet, one of his preachers. When Wesley's foot slipped on London Bridge, involving injuries to his ankle, he rested a week in the house of Mrs. Vazeille, who resided in Threadneedle Street, and there rendered him kindly care. On February 18, 1751, eight days after the accident, they were married.[1] This haste was followed by repentance at leisure in the many years of misery involved for Wesley. This began to be acute about five years after their marriage. Mrs. Wesley died in 1781, at the age of seventy-one, ten years before Wesley died. His marriage was the one calamitous blunder of his life. He writes happily and fondly about and to his wife in the letters of this period. Later a terrible change is seen.[2]

Charles Wesley was greatly disturbed by his brother's marriage. He and his wife had visited at Mrs. Vazeille's. He feared its effects in lessening his brother's work and influence. He knew himself to be incapable of directing or governing the rapidly increasing host of Methodists. Hence the hint in this letter that he would not attend Wesley's annual Conference with his preachers, to be held a week later in Bristol. He was not present. Wesley's fears of it were realised: the grave question of separating Methodism from the Church of England was then first raised. Charles Wesley proved himself completely loyal to his brother in all the troubles with his wife. By sympathy and advice Blackwell shared in them also, as we shall see.

[1] On June 1, consequent upon his marriage, Wesley resigned his fellowship of Lincoln College, Oxford. Hence the legend so often used under his name, 'Sometime Fellow,' etc.

[2] The important letters XXXIV. and XXXV. are now first given completely; and XXXVI., with Blackwell's excellent reply, is now first published, all from the Colman Collection. The three Wesley letters are from copies made by the late Mr. Thomas Marriott, who contributed many such to *Wes. Meth. Mag.*, 1845, *et seq.*

See next chapter. For other letters and facts, see Wesley's *Journal*, *in loc.*; Coke and Moore's *Life of Wesley* (1792); Jackson's *Charles Wesley*, vol. i. pp. 560, 568-571; Tyerman's *Wesley*, vol. ii. pp. 101-115; 'Wesley's wife' in *Wesley Studies*; *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. vi. p. 852.

*Letter XV.*

BRISTOL, *March* 5, 1751.

DEAR SIR,—After an extremely troublesome day I reached Chippenham last night, twenty miles short of Bristol, and came hither between ten and eleven this morning, at least as well as when I left London.

The note delivered to me on Sunday night, which ran in these words: 'I am not determined when I shall leave London,' convinces me that I must not expect to see the writer of it at our approaching Conference. This is indeed deserting me at my utmost need, just when the Philistines are upon me. But I am content, for I am well assured the Lord is not departed from me. Is it not best to let all these things sleep? to let him do just what he will do, and to say nothing myself, good or bad, concerning it, till his mind is more cool and able to bear it?

I persuade myself, neither Mrs. Blackwell, nor Mr. Lloyd or you, will be wanting in your good office. And will you not likewise advise and comfort her who is now likely to stand in need of every help? You see how bold a beggar I am. I cannot be satisfied yet, without asking you to do more for, dear Sir, your most affectionate servant.

## 'Her that is as my own Soul.'

*Letter XVI.*

MANCHESTER, *April* 7, 1751.

DEAR SIR,—You must blame yourself, if your never denying me anything makes me ask for more and more. But I am not assured whether it is proper to comply with what I am going to mention now. If it is, I know you will do it, although it will not be a pleasing task.

Mr. Lloyd thinks it absolutely needful that a friend or two of my wife should meet Mr. Blisson and a friend or two of his, in order to persuade him, if it can be done, to come to an account as to what remains in his hands. If Mr. Lloyd and you would take this trouble on yourselves, I do not doubt but the affair would end well.

We have hitherto had a very rough, but a very prosperous journey. I only want more time, there being so many calls to various parts that I cannot possibly answer them all between this and Whitsuntide. O what reason have we to put forth all our strength! For, what a Master do we serve! I trust we shall never be weary of His service. And why should we ever be ashamed of it?

I am persuaded Mrs. Blackwell and you do not forget me, nor her that is as my own soul.—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

## 'My Wife she has many Trials.'

*Letter XVII.*

LEEDS, *May* 14, 1751.

DEAR SIR,—I am inclined to think Mr. Lloyd has hit upon the expedient which, if anything can, will induce Mr. Blisson to come to an amicable conclusion. I have wrote such a state of the case as he advised, and hope God will give a blessing on it.

I am much obliged both to Mrs. Blackwell and you on my own and on my wife's account. She has many trials, but not one more than God knows, and knows to be profitable to her. I believe you have been, and will be, a means of removing some. If these outward incumbrances were removed, it might be a means of her spending more time with me, which would probably be useful as well as agreeable to her.

As the providence of God has called you to be continually engaged in outward things, I trust you will find Him continually present with you, that you may look through all, and

> 'Serve with careful Martha's hands,
> And loving Mary's heart.'

I am glad Mrs. Dewal has not forgotten me. I hope you all remember, at the throne of grace, dear Sir, your most affectionate servant.

## 'There is a fair Prospect on every Side.'

Mrs. Wesley has joined her husband, and they are journeying together on his long tiresome tour of three or four hundred miles. His wife travelled on horseback, with him, accompanied by her daughter.[1] Wesley is surprised and pleased. Charles Wesley, now reconciled to the marriage, begs them to freely use his house in Bristol in addition to the accommodation they had in the New Room in the Horsefair there. Charles's house was No. 4 Charles Street, Stokes Croft. The poet and his family occupied it for twenty-two years (1749-1771). There he wrote many of his incomparable hymns.

John Jones was worth Blackwell's good offices, which Wesley here requests, and which were successful. Dr. Jones was a graduate in arts and medicine, and itinerated for some years as a Methodist preacher. With the consent of Wesley he received ordination at the hands of Erasmus, a Greek Bishop, that he might give the sacrament to the Methodists. He became headmaster of Harwich Free School, and curate and vicar of that town.

### *Letter XVIII.*

BRISTOL, *July* 3, 1751.

DEAR SIR,—Before I left London I wrote to Mr. Butterfield, informing him of two families which are in great dis-

[1] Probably 'Jenny,' referred to in these letters.

tress. As I have heard nothing since, I suppose the letter miscarried, unless my ominous name prevented its meeting with success. However, I have done my part, and it is only a little labour lost. Nay, in one sense it is not lost, for if we only desire to help one another, the willing mind cannot lose its reward.

My brother left us on Saturday. He designed to be at Worcester to-day, and then proceed slowly towards Scotland. His mind seemed to be altogether changed before he went. He was quite free and open to us, and pressed us much to make use of his house in his absence, just as if it were our own. There is a fair prospect on every side. The people of Bristol, in general, are much alive to God, and they are so united together that the men of false tongues can make no impression upon them.

Do you know what is the matter with John Jones? I suppose he will speak freely to you. He seems to be much troubled at something, and, I doubt, offended. I know if you can remove that trouble it will be a pleasure to you to do it.

We join in good wishes both to Mrs. Blackwell and you. —I am, dear Sir, your very affectionate servant.

## 'Have we any Time to lose in this Span of Life?'

Every letter gives Blackwell counsel and seeks his help. Now it is the case of Richard Ellison. That farmer is a coarse, ignorant, wicked fellow; but he is clearly in sore need, and he is Wesley's brother-in-law.

Moreover, the trouble is at Epworth, Wesley's birthplace, and 'where he had been brought up.' He is now there, and proved the wretched condition of the badly drained fenland. Attempting a short cut across land near the town, he was embogged; 'but my mare being lively and strong, she made a shift to get out.' He preached three times every day, and so answers his question with which he closes this letter.

*Letter XIX.*

EPWORTH, *April* 16, 1752.

DEAR SIR,—After taking a careful round of between three and four hundred miles, we came hither yesterday in the afternoon. My wife is at least as well as when we left London, the more she travels, the better she bears it. It gives us yet another proof, that whatever God calls us to, He will fit us for, so that we have no need to take thought for the morrow. Let the morrow take thought for the things of itself. I was at first a little afraid she would not so well understand the behaviour of a Yorkshire mob; but there has been no trial. Even the Methodists are now at peace throughout the kingdom. It is well if they bear this so well as they did war. I have seen more make shipwreck of the faith in a calm than in a storm. We are apt in sunshiny weather to lie down and sleep, and who can tell what may be done before we awake.

You was so kind as to say (if I did not misunderstand you) that you had placed the name of Richard Ellison among those who were to have a share of the money disposed of by Mr. Butterfield. Last night he called upon me. I find all his cows are dead, and all his horses but one, and all his meadow-land has been under water these two years (which is occasioned by the neglect of the Commissioners of the Sewers, who ought to keep the drains open); so that he has very little left to subsist on. Therefore the smallest relief could never be more seasonable than at this time.

I hope my brother puts forth all his strength among you, and that you have many happy opportunities together. Our best service attends both Mrs. Blackwell and you. We are now going round Lincolnshire, and hope to be at York in less than ten days. Have we any time to lose in this span of life?—I am, dear Sir, your very affectionate servant.

# TO EBENEZER BLACKWELL

## The Sale of Books . . . which of these ways should you judge most proper?

Wesley's management of his publishing business and the book room in London is not answering. The profits, devoted to helping his work and his preachers, are small. What does the London banker and leading Methodist layman advise? As a business man, he would see the impossibility of its successful conduct by Wesley, who was continually ranging the country. Instead of any of the ways Wesley proposed, Butts, the soul of honesty, and William Briggs, equally upright, seem to have prepared a scheme for relieving Wesley and undertaking this important department. Probably Blackwell counselled them. He laid it before Wesley, as Letter XXI. shows. Next year, Butts and Briggs became the first book stewards of Methodism.

Newcastle was the northern point of that isosceles triangle —Bristol and London being the other points—along the lines of which Wesley made many of his great preaching tours. He was delighted with Newcastle and its Methodism. The appreciation there was in sharp contrast with the mobbing he and his wife had in Hull a month before. Mrs. Wesley felt there 'the behaviour of a Yorkshire mob,' only a week later than the last letter, when there was 'no trial.' Clods and stones flew about them on every side, and were poured into the coach, wherein a lady packed them with herself and six others—nine in all. Wesley quaintly says, 'A large lady who sat in my lap screened me, so that nothing came near me'; nor was his wife hurt. Mrs. Wesley suffered badly at sea on their journey to Ireland (Letter XXI.).

### *Letter XX.*

NEWCASTLE, *May* 23, 1752.

DEAR SIR,—I want your advice. T. Butts sends me word, that after our printers' bills are paid, the money remaining, received by the sale of books, does not amount to a hundred

pounds a year. It seems therefore absolutely necessary to determine one of these three things:—Either to lessen the expense of printing (which I see no way of doing, unless by printing myself); to increase the income arising from the books (and how this can be done I know not); or to give up those eighty-six copies, which are specified in my brother's deed, to himself to manage them as he pleases. Now which of these ways, all things considered, should you judge most proper to be taken?

I receive several agreeable accounts of the manner wherein God is carrying on his work in London, and am in hopes both Mrs. Blackwell and you partake of the common blessings. My wife set out for Bristol last week. I hope her fears will prove groundless, and that all her children will live to glorify God. Anthony I hear is recovered already.

The people in these parts are much alive to God, being generally plain, artless, and simple of heart. Here I should spend the greatest part of my life, if I were to follow my own inclinations. But I am not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me. I trust it is your continual desire and care to know, and love, and serve Him. May He strengthen you both therein more and more!—I am, dear Sir, your ever affectionate servant.

## 'If you had faithful Friends you would swiftly advance.'

Closely and tenderly in this and the two following letters (XXI.-XXIII.) Wesley deals with Blackwell's spiritual ailments like a good physician. He needs faithful friends, different from 'one who was in town lately'; 'to be, not almost only, but altogether a Christian'; a firm resolve that, please or offend, he will be 'bold for God,' before 'the flattering, frowning world.'

# TO EBENEZER BLACKWELL

*Letter XXI.*

DUBLIN, *July* 20, 1752.

DEAR SIR,—Finding no ship ready to sail, either at Bristol or Chester, we at length came back to Whitehaven, and embarked on Monday last. It is generally a passage of four-and-twenty hours; but the wind continuing contrary all the way, we did not reach this place till Friday evening. My wife and Jenny were extremely sick, particularly when we had a rolling sea; but a few days, I trust, will restore their strength. They are already much better than when they landed.

Last month a large mob assaulted the new house here, and did considerable damage. Several of the rioters were committed to Newgate. The bills were found against them all, and they were tried ten days since; but, in spite of the clearest evidence, a packed jury brought them in, 'Not Guilty.' I believe, however, the very apprehension and trial of them has struck a terror into their companions. We now enjoy great quietness, and can even walk unmolested through the principal streets in Dublin.

I apprehend my brother is not at all desirous of having those copies transferred to him. I cannot easily determine till I have full information concerning the several particulars you touch upon, whether it be expedient to make such an alteration (though it would ease me much), or let all things remain just as they are. Therefore, I believe it will be best to take no further step till I return to London.

I am fully persuaded, if you had always one or two faithful friends near you, who would speak the very truth from their heart, and watch over you in love, you would swiftly advance in running the race which is set before you. I am afraid you was not forwarded by one who was in town lately, neither was that journey of any service to his own soul.

He has not brought back less indolence and gentle inactivity than he carried to London. O how far from the spirit of a good soldier of Jesus Christ, who desires only 'to be freed alive and to conquer!' Our best wishes attend both Mrs. Blackwell, Mrs. Dewal, and yourself.—I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate servant.

## 'I often tremble for you.'

*Letter XXII.*

YORK, *May* 16, 1753.

DEAR SIR,—For some time I have had a desire to send you a few lines. I have often observed, with a sensible pleasure, your strong desire to be, not almost only, but altogether, a Christian. And what should hinder it? What is it that prevents those good desires from being brought into good effect? Is it the carrying a right principle too far? I mean, a desire to please all men for their good. Or is it a kind of shame—the being ashamed, not of sin, but of holiness, or of what conduces thereto? I have often been afraid lest this should hurt you. I have been afraid that you do not gain ground in this respect; nay, that you rather go backward, by yielding to this, than forward by conquering it. I have feared that you are not so bold for God now as you were four or five years ago. If so, you are certainly in great danger. For in this case, who knows where he shall stop? The giving way in one point naturally leads us to give way in another and another, till we give up all. O Sir, let us beware of this! Whereunto we have attained, let us hold fast! But this can only be, by pressing on. Otherwise we must go back. You have need of courage and steady resolution, for you have a thousand enemies: the flattering, frowning world; the rulers of the darkness of this world; and the grand

enemy within. What need have you to put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day! I often tremble for you. And how few will honestly and plainly tell you of your danger! O may God warn you continually by His inward voice, and with every temptation make a way for you to escape! My wife joins me in wishing all blessing both to Mrs. Blackwell and you.—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

If you favour me with a line, you will please to direct to Leeds.

## 'Natural Cheerfulness of Temper may easily slide into an Extreme.'

Blackwell welcomed the wounds of this faithful friend. So Wesley here probes more deeply, and again in Letter xxv. From experience, he knew the dangers of a natural cheerfulness of temper. Alternate levity and moroseness were among Wesley's early besetting sins.[1] By the Holy Spirit's help, self-conquest freed him, and gave him that serenity and even gladness which were among his excellences and charms.

'Our friend' was Charles Wesley; but Blackwell did not persuade him to resume his itinerations. His labours were now almost confined to Bristol and London.

### *Letter XXIII.*

BIRSTAL, *May* 28, 1753.

DEAR SIR,—Your speaking so freely encourages me to write once more. Ever since I had the pleasure of knowing you, I have observed in you a real desire to please God, and to have a conscience void of offence. But, at the same time, I have observed you had many enemies. Perhaps one was,

[1] See p. 7, and *Journal*, vol. i. p. 53.

a natural cheerfulness of temper, which, though in itself it be highly desirable, yet may easily slide into an extreme. And in this case, we know too well it may hurt us extremely. It may be another hindrance in your way has sometimes been a kind of shame, which prevented your executing good and commendable designs. Was it not owing to this, that you who had received such blessings by means of field-preaching, grew unwilling to attend it? But is there any end of giving way to this enemy? Will it not encroach upon us more and more? I have sometimes been afraid that you have not gained ground in this respect for these two or three years. But the comfort is, that in a moment God can repair whatever is decayed in our souls, and supply whatever is wanting. What is too hard for Him? Nothing, but our own will. Let us give up this, and He will not withhold from us any manner of thing that is good.

I believe the harvest has not been so plenteous for many years as it is now in all the north of England; but the labourers are few. I wish you could persuade our friend to share the labour with me. One of us should in any wise visit both the North and Ireland every year. But I cannot do both; the time will not suffice; otherwise I should not spare myself. I hope my life rather than my tongue, says, I desire only to spend and to be spent in the work. Our love and service always attend Mrs. Blackwell and you.—I am, dear Sir, your very affectionate servant.

## 'The greatest Instruments of my Recovery.'

Wesley had been at death's door with consumption. On November 26, six weeks before this letter, he went to Blackwell's beautiful home grievously ill. All expected his death. On the night of his arrival there he wrote his famous epitaph, in order, he said, 'to prevent vile panegyric'—a characteristic touch. It was never used, except that he published it later

in his *Journal*.[1] At this crisis the Blackwells did him and Methodism great service. They were friends indeed. He contrasts his comfort with them with conditions in the cold house in the Colonnade by the Hot Well, Clifton, Bristol. He went there on January 2, 1754, accompanied by his wife, to drink the medicinal waters. The district was lovely and did well for him; but for a moment, though only for a moment, we hear the petulance of the invalid. The next day to that of this letter he was able to begin his work of translation and exposition, *Notes on the New Testament*.[2] This illness was the occasion of this important work. Wesley left the Hot Well next month, and preached on March 26, after four months' interval. After this remarkable recovery he was to live thirty-seven years.

### *Letter XXIV.*

BRISTOL, *January 5*, 1754.

DEAR SIR,—If I write to my best friends first, I must not delay writing to you, who have been the greatest instruments in God's hands, of my recovery so far. The journey hither did not weary me at all. But now I find the want of Lewisham air. We are (quite contrary to my judgement, but our friends would have it so) in a cold, bleak place, and in a very cold house. If the Hot Well water make amends for this, it is well. Nor have I any place to ride, but either by the river side, or over the Downs, where the wind is ready to carry me away. However, one thing we know, that whatsoever is, is best! O let us look to Him that

[1] It reads, 'Here lieth the Body of JOHN WESLEY, a brand [not once only] plucked out of the burning: who died of a consumption in the fifty-first year of his age, not leaving, after his debts are paid, ten pounds behind him: praying, God be merciful to me, an unprofitable servant!' The words in brackets were omitted when he published the epitaph. Charles Wesley copied it complete at the sad time of its writing, and so preserved Wesley's allusion to his rescue, when a child, from the burning Epworth rectory.

[2] It was completed in the September of next year. The *Notes* owe much to Bengel's *Gnomon*. With four volumes of Wesley's sermons, they make a standard body of Methodist teaching.

orders all things well! What have we to do, but to employ all the time He allots us, be it more or less, in doing and suffering His will? My wife joins in tender love both to Mrs. Blackwell, Mrs. Dewal, and yourself, with, dear Sir, your obliged and affectionate servant.

## 'These Hints are not a Mark of Disesteem, but of Sincerity.'

*Letter XXV.*

BRISTOL, *September* 24, 1754.

DEAR SIR,—Although I hope to see you in about a fortnight, yet I could not be satisfied without sending you a few lines first. Since I left London, I have had many thoughts concerning you, and sometimes uneasy ones. I have been jealous over you, lest you should not duly improve the numerous talents with which God has entrusted you; nay, I have been afraid lest your very desire of improving them should grow weaker, rather than stronger. If so, by what means is it to be accounted for? What has occasioned this feebleness of mind? May it not partly be occasioned by your conversing more than is necessary (for so far as it is necessary it does not hurt us) with men that are without God in the world: that love, think, talk of earthly things only? partly by your giving way to a false shame (and that in several instances), which the more you indulge, it increases the more? and partly by allowing too large a place in your thoughts and affections even to so innocent an enjoyment as that of a garden?[1] If this leaves you fewer opportunities of hearing the word which is able to save your soul, may not you even hereby grieve the Holy Spirit, and be more a loser than you are sensible of? I know both Mrs. Black-

[1] Wesley loved a garden. See *Wesley and Kingswood*, p. 122.

well and you desire to please God in all things. You will therefore, I know, receive these hints as they are intended; not as a mark of disesteem, but rather of the sincerity with which I am, dear Sir, your ever affectionate servant.

## 'When one is willing then the other flies off.'

Two letters follow, sad but for the radiant cheerfulness of Wesley, on misunderstandings which have arisen between his wife and his brother Charles. Letter XXVI. is from the original in Victoria Methodist College Library, Toronto, and has not been published before, except the last two paragraphs. It is endorsed in Blackwell's handwriting, 'Rev. Mr. John Wesley, Manchester, 9 April 1755.' Letter XXVII., now first published, from a copy in the Colman Collection, opens like Letter XXVI.; but its date, place, and contents are different from that.[1]

Wesley's wife and his brother Charles were antipathetic to each other. Charles tried to accept agreeably the fact of his brother's union, and was himself the reconciler between them in a difference of their early married life. When Wesley was thought to be dying,[2] he used the occasion to reconcile his wife and Charles. Once the latter wrote to his own wife, 'I called, two minutes before preaching, on Mrs. Wesley at the Foundery; and, in all that time, had not one quarrel.' He referred to her in his letters as 'My Best Friend,' as she told him 'plain and home' the faults she saw in him. Blackwell's efforts, which Wesley here invites, did not lead to a lasting peace.

### *Letter XXVI.*

MANCHESTER, *April* 9, 1755.

DEAR SIR,—Being very fully persuaded that my brother would gladly embrace any overture of peace, I told him

[1] Only its last short paragraph appeared in Wesley's *Works*.
[2] See pp. 322, 355.

almost as soon as we met what my wife had agreed to. He answered not one word. After a day or two I spoke to him again. It had the same success. The Sunday before he left Bristol I desired to speak to him, but he did not come. Just as I was going out of town the next morning, he sent to me to call at his house. But I could not then; and before I came back he was set out for London, only leaving a note that he had left his answer with Lady Hunt[ingdon]. It may be so; but I saw her twice afterwards, and she said nothing of it to me. Neither am I (any more than my wife) willing to refer the matter to her arbitration. From the whole I learn that there is no prospect of peace. When one is willing then the other flies off. I shall profit by both, but I am sorry to do it at the expense of others.

I have another favour to beg of you: to procure Mr. Belchier's leave for me to inclose my proof-sheets to him. Mr. C. Perronet sends them down to me in franks.[1] Then I correct and send them back to him. The next week I am to spend at Liverpool. Toward the end of the week following I hope to be at Haworth, near Keighley, in Yorkshire.

God has blest me with a prosperous journey hither, though the roads and the weather were rough. I hope both Mrs. Blackwell and you are making the best use of all things, rough or smooth. That is the part of a good soldier of Jesus Christ:

> 'To trace His example,
> The world to disdain,
> And cheerfully trample
> On pleasure and pain.'

—I am, dear Sir, your very affectionate servant.

[1] Probably of the *Notes on the New Testament*, now printing.

# TO EBENEZER BLACKWELL

## 'You love both the contending Parties.'

*Letter XXVII.*

KEIGHLEY, *near* LEEDS, *April* 29, 1755.

DEAR SIR,—Being very fully persuaded that my brother would very gladly embrace any overture of peace, I told him almost as soon as we met, what my wife had agreed to. He answered not a word. I am exceedingly puzzled.—I do not know what his judgement is, or what are his intentions.—I can only conjecture that his design is never to speak to her at all. And I suppose this is Lady H[untingdon]'s advice; because he referred me to her for an answer. But I cannot submit to her arbitration. I do not think she is a competent judge. You love both the contending parties, but I am afraid she does not. Another difficulty is rising from the opposite quarter. From her last letter I learn that my poor wife has just found out, that 'my carrying her to Bristol was all a trick, concerted between my brother and me, in order to prevent her coming to Leeds.' And where she is I cannot tell; for she says not a word, whether she intends staying in London or coming forward. If she was willing to come I should much desire it, were it only on poor Jenny's account; for if anything in the world recovers her, it would be exercise and change of air. But I must not press her to it: for if I did I should hear of it another day.

What a blessing it is to have these little crosses, that we may try what spirit we are of; we could not live in continual sunshine. It would dry up all the grace of God that is in us. I doubt not but Mrs. Blackwell and Mrs. Dewal find advantage both from bodily weakness and every other trial. Let us fight the good fight of faith together, and more resolutely lay hold on eternal life.—Yours affectionately.

## 'In my present Journey I leap as broken from Chains.'

The utter incompatibility of temperament, training, and way of life between Wesley and his wife now appears. She is finding the strain of travelling with her husband on his preaching tours intolerable. Still more is her suspicious nature agitated by the freedom with which he writes to his friends, ladies and others. We shall see sadly much more of this, until they separate. Sir William Robertson Nicoll says[1] that the greatest letters are written by the wounded. Wesley's letters on this subject are tense and intense indeed. A survey of all the facts confirms the judgement given by Blackwell,[2] that some of Wesley's correspondence was not wise; but there is not in all of it from him, to him, and concerning him, where only truth is written, one line which leaves a spot or stain upon his character.

Blackwell would be affected by the picture Wesley here gives of himself. He is leaping forward in his mighty journeyings. For the sake of Christ and His work he is content with anything and everything, like St. Paul. And Blackwell and all knew that Wesley thus wrote truly of himself.

### *Letter XXVIII.*

REDRUTH, *Aug.* 31, 1755.

DEAR SIR,—In my last journey to the North, all my patience was put to the proof again and again; and all my endeavour to please, yet without success. In my present journey I leap as broken from chains. I am content with whatever entertainment I meet with, and my companions are always in good humour, 'because they are with me.' This must be the spirit of all who take journeys with me. If a dinner ill dressed, or a hard bed, a poor room, a shower of rain, or a dusty road, will put them out of humour,

[1] *A Bookman's Letters*, p. 97. [2] See p. 339.

it lays a burthen upon me greater than all the rest put together. By the grace of God I never fret; I repine at nothing, I am discontented with nothing. And to hear persons at my ear fretting and murmuring at every thing is like tearing the flesh off my bones. I see God sitting upon His throne and ruling all things well. Although therefore I can bear this also, to hear His government of the world continually found fault with (for in blaming the things which He alone can alter, we in effect blame Him), yet it is such a burden to me as I cannot bear without pain; and I bless God when it is removed. The doctrine of a particular providence is what exceeding few persons understand, at least not practically, so as to apply it to any circumstance of life. This I want: to see God acting in every thing and disposing all for His own glory and creatures' good. I hope it is your continual prayer that you may see Him and love Him more, and glorify Him with all you are and all you have. Peace be with you all.—I am, dear sir, your affectionate servant.

I shall be in or near St. Ives till the 13th of September.

## 'This has raised a violent Storm.'

### *Letter XXIX.*

St. Ives, *September* 12, 1755.

Dear Sir,—It seems there was a remarkable providence in this, that Michael Fenwick [1] was so often hindered from settling in business, because God had other work for him to do. He is just made to travel with me, being an excellent groom, *valet de chambre*, nurse, and upon occasion a tolerable preacher. We have hitherto had an extremely prosperous journey; almost everything has been just as we desired, and I have no care upon my mind, but what properly belongs to me—to feed and guide the flock of Christ.

[1] See p. 183.

Charles Perronet[1] being out of town last Saturday, my *paquet* [packet] directed to him fell into other hands. This has raised a violent storm, for it contained a few lines which I writ to Mrs. Lefevre, in answer to a letter she sent me the week before concerning Mr. Farley. So now, 'all the intrigue is discovered, and the reason why I direct my letters to Mr. Perronet.' 'Tis a pity! I should be glad if I had to do with reasonable people. But this likewise is for good.

A wonderful odd circumstance has fallen out here. A young gentleman,[2] nephew to the present mayor, began some time since to attend our preaching, and last week fell raving mad. This incident (so deep is the wisdom of God) has opened me a way into the mayor's family, brought me much acquainted with his wife, who is not easy if I do not call once or twice a day, and alarmed the whole town with such a concern for their souls as was never known here before. The particulars I hope to send to Mr. Perronet in my next journal. Who is so wise a God as our God? I trust you will have Him more and more in your thoughts and in your affections.—I am, dear Sir, your ever affectionate servant.

In about ten days I hope to be in Bristol.

## 'I will do what a good Subject ought.'

The Seven Years' War (1755-1762) began with success for the French in Canada. Despondency fell upon English statesmen. Chesterfield cried, 'We are no longer a nation.' Ireland seemed on the eve of a rebellion, and England was threatened with invasion by a Franco-Papal force. At Blackwell's suggestion Wesley prepared 'the enclosed'[3]—an offer to raise a regiment of soldiers for the king

[1] See p. 76.
[2] This seems to have been John Knill, then twenty-two.—*Journal*, vol. iv. p. 134.
[3] Given on p. 469.

(George II.). As the letter next this one shows, he also tried to secure the election at Bristol of a Parliamentary candidate who stood for the King. The fears concerning Ireland passed. In Letter XXXII. Wesley writes from there, 'all is in absolute peace and safety.'

*Letter XXX.*

MARLBOROUGH, *March* 1, 1756.

DEAR SIR,—I hope the enclosed will do, for I have not leisure to alter it any more.

To make professions does not belong to me; it is quite foreign to my character. Let those who mean nothing, *talk* like Goneril and Regan in *King Lear*. By God's help, I will *do* what a good subject ought. Wishing Mrs. Blackwell and you all health of soul and body, I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

## 'Some way of managing Elections without embittering Englishmen.'

*Letter XXXI.*

BRISTOL, *March* 4, 1756.

DEAR SIR,—If the election of Mr. Spenser be a thing of any consequence, then it was extremely ill-judged to prevent his coming down. He ought to have been here at all hazards, if he were not very dangerously ill. His absence will probably turn the scale; and if the Jacobites gain one member now, they will have two the next time. Whereas there is reason to believe, had Mr. Spenser appeared, there would have been no opposition.

Last night I desired all the freemen of our society to meet me after preaching, and enlarged a little upon His Majesty's character, and the reasons we had to spare no pains in his service. I believe all who had been wavering were fully

convinced. But some had absolutely promised to vote for Mr. Smith, it having been confidently reported that both the candidates were equally acceptable to His Majesty.

The whole city is in confusion. O what a pity there could not be some way of managing elections of every sort, without this embittering Englishmen against Englishmen, and kindling fires which cannot be quenched in many years!

Wishing Mrs. Blackwell and you the peace which the world cannot give, I remain, dear Sir, yours most affectionately.

## 'All here are as safe as if they were already in Paradise.'

*Letter XXXII.*

DUBLIN, *April* 19, 1756.

DEAR SIR,—While you in England are under I know not what apprehensions, all here are as safe as if they were already in Paradise. We have no fortifying of seaports, no military preparations, but all is in absolute peace and safety. Both high and low seem fully persuaded that the whole talk of an invasion is only a trick to get money.

I dined at Mrs. Moreland's last week, and promised to drink tea with her this evening. She has been at the preaching several times, and desires much to be remembered to Mrs. Blackwell and you. She seems to have a liking to the Gospel. It may sink deeper. There is nothing too hard for God.

I hope Mrs. Blackwell and you are improving to the utmost these days of tranquillity. I purpose going to Cork directly, and after two or three weeks turning back to the north of Ireland. If it please God that troublous times come between the design and the execution, I shall go as far as I can go, and no farther. But I take no thought for

the morrow. To-day I am determined, by His grace, to do the work of Him that sent me. I find encouragement so to do, for all the people here are athirst for the word of life.—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

Do you at London believe that the danger of an invasion is over?

## 'Business that will endure.'

*Letter XXXIII.*

WHITEHAVEN, *May* 28, 1757.

DEAR SIR,—Does the rule still hold good, 'Out of sight, out of mind'? I am afraid it does with poor Miss Freeman,[1] as she does not give me one line in answer to the long letter I wrote from Liverpool. I was in hopes we might have interchanged several letters in less than six weeks' time. As for you, I presume you are full of business, and yet not so full of temporal business as to exclude the thoughts of higher concerns—business that will endure when earth and the works of it are burned up. Were anything temporal even to damp or lessen (though not destroy) our care and zeal for things eternal, what could countervail the less? What could make us amends for the damage thereby sustained? Sometimes, indeed, we may go through abundance of business, and yet have God in all our thoughts. But is this the case always? Are not even lawful, nay, necessary, things at other times a grievous hindrance, especially when we undertake them without any suspicion of danger, and, consequently, without any prayer against that danger? In this respect, as in many others, I have lately had peculiar reason to be thankful. In every place people flock about me for direction, in secular as well as spiritual affairs; and I dare not throw even this burden off my

[1] 'Whom I had known almost from a child.'—*Journal*, May 25, 1783.

shoulders, though I have employment enough without it. But it is a burden, and no burden: it is no incumbrance, no weight upon my mind. If we see God in all things, and do all for Him, then all things are easy.

I think it is fourteen or fifteen days since my wife wrote to me. I am afraid she is not well. If any letters for me come enclosed to Mr. Belchier, I will be obliged to you if you will (not send them to *her* but) direct them to me at Newcastle, where I hope to be in a few days. Wishing all grace and peace to you and yours.—I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate servant.

I breakfasted at Keswick last Tuesday.

## 'The Letters I received were open.'

Wesley is in Ireland, where the fields are white unto harvest. Would that Charles were itinerating in England, and so left John free to gather the sheaves!

Mrs. Wesley is not with her husband. The rift within the lute already noticed has widened. There is no music, but now silence, and soon the horrid clang of bitter words and the clash of opposing wills.[1] Wesley holds firmly to his right to journey when and where he will, and to correspond and converse with any one. All this angered his wife, who was a masterful, suspicious, jealous woman, of meagre education. She intercepts, opens, reads, misreads, and interpolates his letters, steals his papers, and misreports his messages. Mrs. Sarah Ryan[2] here referred to, one of Wesley's workers, was her pet aversion; and small wonder. However useful and earnest she became, her past course disqualified her for some positions. Blackwell is 'more than once puzzled' at Wesley's ways, and cannot help thinking him 'a little in the wrong.' Who will differ from the wise, judicious banker? His kindly, grave, and shrewd reply is given after Letter XXXVI. Wesley would feel the weight of its last two paragraphs.

[1] See notes on p. 311. [2] Tyerman's *Wesley*, vol. ii. p. 286.

# TO EBENEZER BLACKWELL

*Letter XXXIV.*

CASTLEBAR, *June 5*, 1758.

DEAR SIR,—I suppose my wife is now in London, as the letters I received thrice in the last frank were open. For she still insists on her right of reading all the letters which are sent to me. And I have no friend or servant where she is, who has honesty and courage to prevent it. I find since I left England all my domestics have changed their sentiments, and are convinced she is a poor, quiet creature, that is barbarously used. I should not at all wonder if my brother and you were brought over to the same opinion. Since I came into this kingdom I have written several times, but I have not received one line in answer. So I sit still. I have learned, by the grace of God, in every state to be content. I have in this respect done what *I ought* and what *I* could. Now let God do what seemeth Him good. What a peace do we find in all circumstances when we can say, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

I have now gone through the greatest part of this kingdom, Leinster, Ulster, and the greater half of Connaught. Time only is wanting. If my brother could take care of England, and give me but one year for Ireland, I think every corner of this nation would receive the truth as it is in Jesus. They want only to hear it; and they will hear me, high and low, rich and poor. What a mystery of Providence is this? In England they may hear, but will not; in Ireland they fain would hear, but cannot. So in both, thousands perish for lack of knowledge. So much the more blessed are your ears, for they hear; if you not only hear the word of God, but keep it.

I hope you find public affairs changing for the better. In this corner of the world we hear little about them, only

we are told that the great little King in Moravia is not swallowed up yet.

Till near the middle of next month I expect to be at Mr. Beauchamp's in Limerick. I hope to have a fruitful season in every respect.

My best wishes attend you.—Yours affectionately.

## 'So eloquent *a Person* at your Elbow.'

*Letter XXXV.*

BANDON, *July* 12, 1758.

Really Sir, when you have so eloquent *a person* at your elbow, and I am two or three hundred miles off, I have little to say; it may be time enough when I return to London. At present I would only make two or three cursory remarks. 1. That letter was not *left on a chair*, but *taken out of my pocket*. 2. It was not *letters* but *a letter* of mine (and one which did not signify a straw) which S[arah] C[rosby] some time since showed to three or four persons, and of which she will hear these ten years. I write to her when I judge it my duty so to do. But I have not written these ten or twelve weeks. 3. If you softened or salved over anything I wrote in the letter from Bedford, you did her an irreparable damage. What *I* am, is not the question there, but what *she* is; of which I must needs be a better judge than you, for I wear the shoe: as you must needs be a better judge of Mrs. B[lackwell]'s temper than I. 4. 'She is now full of anger!' Heigh day! Anger! For what? Why, because when Captain Dancey called upon me in Dublin (on the 7th of April) and asked, 'Sir, have you any commands? I am just sailing for Bristol,' I said 'Yes; here is a letter. Will you deliver it with your own hands.' He promised he would; and that was our whole conversation. 5. But suppose he delivered this about the 12th of

April, why did she not write for a month before? What excuse or pretence for this? 6. I certainly will, as long as I can hold a pen, assert my right of conversing with whom I please. Reconciliation or none, let *her* look to that. If the unbeliever will depart, let her depart. That right I will exert, just when I judge proper, giving an account only to God and my own conscience; though, as it happens, the last letter I wrote to S[arah] R[yan] was in the beginning of May. 7. My conscience bears me witness before God, that I have been as 'cautious as I ought to have been.' For I have rigorously kept my rule. 'To *do* everything and *omit* everything which I could *with a safe conscience* for peace' sake.'

But there is no fence against a flail; against one that could tell T. Walsh, calmly and deliberately, 'His (Mr. W[esley]'s) parting words to me were, "I hope I shall see your wicked face no more!"' Can you ever be safe against being deceived by such an one, but by not believing a word you hear?

In a week or two I shall be looking out for a ship. You people in England are bad correspondents. Both Mr. Downing, Mr. Venn, and Mr. Madan are a letter in my debt. And yet I think they have not more business than I have. How unequally are things distributed here? Some want time, and some want work! But all will be straight hereafter. There is no disorder on that shore.

Wishing all happiness to you and all that are with you, I remain, dear Sir, yours most affectionately.

## 'I do not speak, it would be lost Labour.'

### *Letter XXXVI.*

EVERTON, *March* 2, 1759.

DEAR SIR,—When it is probable I may alter my judgement or practice, I am very willing to speak upon that

head. But when I am clearly and fully fixed, then I do not speak, for it would be lost labour. For this reason I did not speak the other night, because I was fully fixed. My wife picks my lock and steals my papers.[1] Afterwards she says, 'You cannot trust me.' I answer, 'I cannot, until you restore what you stole, and promise to steal no more.' She replies, 'I will burn them or lodge them with another, on such terms.' I answer nothing. Do you ask, 'Why so?' I answer to *you*. 1. I will not *consent* my goods shall be *burnt*; much less accept it as a favour. I require her to *restore* them. 2. I will not thank her for lodging them with another: I require that they be restored to *me*. 3. I will not so much as consider *the terms*: I require the restitution of my own goods, without *any terms*. And I know you would do so, were it your case. And so would any man of common sense. 'But she will not restore them.' Then she must keep them. But let her not blame *me*, because I cannot trust her.

Permit me to add one word to you. You think yourself a match for her; but you are not. By her exquisite art she has already made you to think ill of two very deserving women. And you have been more than once puzzled, what to think of me. Nor could you help thinking me *a little* in the wrong. I am almost afraid she likewise entertains you with the faults of many in the society; the knowing of which (be they real or feigned) does you no good at all. O Sir, let us look inward; let us *live at home*! The more we know of our own faults, and the less of other people's, the more will the work of God prosper in our hearts. Wishing all happiness to you and yours, I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

*From Blackwell to Wesley.*

Dear Sir,—I this day received your favour of the 2nd inst. I am sensible of my incapacity either to speak or to write in

[1] See p. 335; also 356.

that lively, concise manner which you do; but as well as I can I will paragraph by paragraph give a direct answer to your letter. And first, I desire never to interfere between you and Mrs. Wesley without there is at least a probability of my being of service to one, or what I would much rather wish, to both of you; and I declare I have seldom if ever spoke of one to the other, without being first desired either by yourself or Mrs. Wesley. Therefore you may be assured, I will not in the least hinder your maintaining the authority of the husband in the greatest latitude that either myself or any man of common sense would wish.

I likewise say that I do not think myself a match for Mrs. Wesley, or any one that studies to deceive me; but I deny that by any exquisite art, she has made me think ill of two *very deserving* women. I suppose you mean Mrs. Ryan and Mrs. Crosby. The first I know nothing of, having never seen her in my life, and hardly ever (for I won't say never) spoken of her to anybody, but yourself. The latter I only know from the letter wrote by yourself, which she owned to me was her handwriting, and which I think will plainly prove to everyone of common sense, that she is not that *very deserving* woman you think her; and, permit me to add, I am afraid she has too much art for my dear *friend*. I think my behaviour must fully convince you what my thoughts have been of yourself. When I have spoken to you it has been without reserve; and if at any time I have expressed myself a little more fully than many others would dare to do, do not think the harder of me; for indeed it has constantly been with a view, if possible, to have established peace between yourself and Mrs. W[esley]. And I seldom, if ever, see Mrs. Wesley from the time you leave London until you return, and would even then be glad to be excused that honour if it were not out of civility to yourself. Therefore she has no opportunity, or if she had I dare not

from whom I would desire it, lest it should hurt themselves without profiting me. But I do desire it of *you*, and do not doubt but it will profit me, as it has done in time past.

I know not, if in all my life, I have had so critical a work on my hands, as that wherein I am now engaged. I am endeavouring to gather up those who were once gathered together, and afterwards scattered by James Wheatley.[1] I have re-united about seventy of them, and hope this evening to make up an hundred. But many of them have wonderful spirits, having been always accustomed to teach their teachers. So that how they will bear any kind of discipline, I cannot tell.

At Colchester the case is far otherwise. About 160 simple, upright people are there united together, who are as little children, minding nothing but the salvation of their souls. Only they are greatly distressed for a larger house. What we could have done last Sunday I know not, but that the day being mild, I took the field, and preached on St. John's Green. I see but one way; to build a commodious house. And I desired them to look out for a piece of ground. It is true they are poor enough; but if it be God's work, He will provide the means.

Wishing an increase in all grace, both to Mrs. Blackwell, Mrs. Dewal, and you.—I remain, dear Sir, your very affectionate servant.

## 'A Line in behalf of a worthy Man.'

*Letter XXXVIII.*

MANCHESTER, *March* 17, 1760.

SIR,—The humanity which you showed, during the short time I had the pleasure of conversing with you at Lewisham,

[1] One of Wesley's preachers, of some ability and influence, who became immoral. He was the first to be expelled by Wesley.

emboldens me to trouble you with a line, in behalf of a worthy man.

I apprehend, the collector at Northwich, in Cheshire, has informed the Honourable Board, that 'Mr. James Vine is a preacher at Northwich, and makes disturbances in the town.' That he attends the preaching of the Methodists is true; but it is not true that he is a preacher. It is likewise true, that the rabble of Northwich have sometimes disturbed our congregations; but herein Mr. Vine was only concerned as a sufferer, not an actor. I know him to be a careful, diligent officer, and a zealous lover of King George.

Wishing you all temporal and spiritual blessings.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant.

## 'In every Trial observe the Hand of God.'

Blackwell would welcome Wesley's sympathy, and eagerly await his account of the French invasion of Ireland. This is given in Letter XLII.

### *Letter XXXIX.*

NEWRY, *April* 26, 1760.

DEAR SIR,—I hope your lameness is now at an end; but not the benefit you have reaped from it. May we not in every trial, great and small, observe the hand of God? And does He send any sooner than we want it, or longer than we want it? I found the inflammation which I had in my eyes last month came just in the right time. The danger is, that anything of this kind should pass over before the design of it is answered.

Whether Miss Freeman should make use of Lough Neagh, or Lough Leighs (forty miles nearer Dublin), I suppose she is not yet able to determine, till I can send her some further information; and that I cannot do to my own satisfaction

till I am on the spot. For though Lough Neagh is scarce fifteen miles from hence, yet I can hardly find any one here who knows any more of the circumstances of it than if it lay in the East Indies.

Hitherto I have had an extremely prosperous journey, and all the fields are white unto harvest. But that the labourers are few, is not the only hindrance to the gathering it in effectually. Of those few, some are careless, some heavy and dull. Scarce one is of the spirit of Thomas Walsh. The nearest to it is Mr. Morgan; but his body too sinks under him, and probably will not last long.

In a few days I expect to be at Carrickfergus, and to hear, from those on whose word I can depend, a full account of that celebrated campaign. I believe it will be of use to the whole kingdom. Probably the Government will at last awake, and be a little better prepared against the next encounter.

When you have half an hour to spare, I hope you will give it me under your own hand, that Mrs. Blackwell and you are not only in good health, but labouring more than ever after an healthful mind, and trampling the world and the devil under your feet.—I am, dear Sir, your ever affectionate servant.

The week after next I shall spend mostly at Sligo.

## 'A tender Point . . . where there is a Gospel Ministry already.'

This concerned the work of Wesley's preachers, where the clergy of the Church of England were active and evangelical. Letter XLI. shows a compromise which was observed,—for a time only. Yorkshire Methodism was vigorous, and supplied a real need.

*Letter XL.*

BRADFORD, *July* 16, 1761.

DEAR SIR,—Methinks it is a long time since I saw or heard anything of you. I hope, however, that Mrs. Blackwell and you are not only alive, but more alive than ever, seeking and enjoying something more than King George[1] is likely to find either at his wedding or his coronation. And can you likewise give me a comfortable account of Miss Freeman, both as to her health and her spirit? I often think of her, and sometimes have a mind to send her another letter, though she is one in my debt already.

Mr. Venn[2] was so kind as to come over hither yesterday, and spend the evening with us. I am a little embarrassed on his account, and hardly know how to act. Several years before he came to Huddersfield, some of our preachers went thither, carrying their lives in their hands, and with great difficulty established a little earnest society. These eagerly desire them to preach there still; not in opposition to Mr. Venn (whom they love, esteem, and constantly attend), but to supply what they do not find in his preaching. It is a tender point. Where there is a gospel ministry already, we do not desire to preach; but whether we can leave off preaching because such an one comes after, is another question; especially when those who were awakened and convinced by us beg and require the continuance of our assistance. I love peace, and follow it; but whether I am at liberty to purchase it at such a price, I really cannot tell.

I hear poor Mr. Walker[3] is near death. It seems strange, that when there is so great a want of faithful labourers, such as he should be removed. But the will of God is always

[1] George III.
[2] Rev. Henry Venn, vicar of Huddersfield.
Rev. Samuel Walker, Truro, an earnest clergyman.

best, and what He does we shall know hereafter. I have been for some days with Mr. Grimshaw,[1] an Israelite indeed. A few such as he would make a nation tremble. He carries fire wherever he goes. Mr. Venn informs me, that Mr. Whitefield[2] continues very weak. I was in hope, when he wrote to me lately, that he was swiftly recovering strength. Perhaps, Sir, you can send me better news concerning him. What need have we, while we do live, to live in earnest.—I am, my dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

If you have not a mind for me to write again, you must not write yourself. For about a fortnight I shall be at or near Leeds.

## 'We have amicably compromised.'

*Letter XLI.*

NORWICH, *August* 15, 1761.

DEAR SIR,—As you are encompassed with a thousand temptations, and some of them of the most dangerous kind, it is an unspeakable blessing that you still continue with your face heavenward. And if you have resolution to break through a thousand hindrances, and allow some time every day for private prayer, I doubt not but you will receive every gospel blessing in this world and in the world to come.

Mr. Venn and I had some hours' conversation together, and have explained upon every article. I believe there is no bone of contention remaining, no matter of offence, great or small. Indeed, fresh matter will arise, if it be sought, but it shall not be sought by me. We have amicably compromised the affair of preaching. He is well pleased that the preachers should come once a month.

That story was one of those that we cleared up. But

[1] Rev. William Grimshaw, vicar of Haworth, Yorkshire, one of Wesley's helpers.

[2] See p. 102.

Mr. Oddie[1] (the person of whom it was told) will be in town next week, and can himself give you full satisfaction concerning it. On this day se'nnight I hope to be in town, and to-morrow se'nnight at West Street Chapel. With sincere love to Mrs. Blackwell and Mrs. Dewal.—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

I thank you for sending me the letters.

## 'The late Proceedings of the French here.'

*Letter XLII.*

CARRICKFERGUS, *May* 7, 1760.

DEAR SIR,—I can now give you a clear and full account of the late proceedings of the French here; as I now lodge at Mr. Cobham's, under the same roof with M. Cavenac, the French Lieutenant-General.[2] When the people here saw three large ships, about ten in the morning, anchor near the town, they took it for granted they were English, till about eleven the French began landing their men. The first party came to the north gate between twelve and one. Twelve soldiers planted on the wall (there were one hundred and sixty in the town) fired on them as they advanced, wounded the General, and killed several. But when they had fired four rounds, having no more ammunition, they were obliged to retire. The French then entered the town (at the same time that another party entered at the east end of it), keeping a steady fire up the street, till they came near the castle. The English then fired hotly from the gate and walls, killed their second General (who had burst open the gate, and gone in sword in hand), with upwards of fourscore men; but having no more cartridges, nor any man that knew how to make them, they thought it best to capitulate. They agreed to furnish such a quantity of provisions in six

[1] See p. 218. [2] See Letter XXXIX., and *Journal*, vol. iv. p. 380.

hours, on condition the French should not plunder. But they began immediately to serve themselves with meat and drink; having been in such pressing want that, before they landed, the men were glad to eat raw oats, to sustain nature; and some hours after, no provisions being brought, they took all they could find, with a good deal of linen and wearing apparel, chiefly from the houses where the inhabitants were run away. But they neither hurt nor affronted man, woman, or child, nor did any mischief for mischief's sake; though many of the inhabitants affronted them, cursed them to their face, and even took up pokers or other things to strike them.

I have had much conversation with M. Cavenac, who speaks Latin pretty readily. He is a Lieutenant-General in the King's Guards, and a Knight of the Order of St. Louis. (Indeed, all the soldiers were picked men, draughted out of the Guards, and more like officers than common men.) I found him not only a very sensible man, but thoroughly instructed even in heart-religion. I asked him, if it was true that they had a design to burn Carrick and Belfast. (After one General was killed, and the other wounded, the command had devolved upon him.) He cried out, 'Jesu, Maria! we never had such a thought. To burn, to destroy, cannot enter into the head or the heart of a good man.' One would think the French King sent these men on purpose to show what officers he has in his army. I hope there are some such in the English army; but I never found them yet.—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

## 'We are not Proprietors here, but only Tenants at Will.'

*Letter XLIII.*

DUBLIN, *July* 28, 1762.

DEAR SIR,—It was seven or eight weeks before I could prevail upon any of our brethren in England to let me know

whether 'Mr. Blackwell, an eminent banker, died at his house in Lewisham,' or not. John Maddern[1] was the first who occasionally told me—he was alive. Now, a messenger of good news should be rewarded. But what can be done for this poor man, in truth, I cannot tell. He hinted at a distance, as if he would be much obliged, if I would be bound for his behaviour. But how could I be bound for a thousand pounds, who am not worth a groat! I could not, therefore, but advise him to give up the thought of being a banker's clerk, as I see no manner of probability of his procuring such sureties as are requisite. Indeed, I heartily wish he was in any way of business, as he is capable of almost anything.

The people in this kingdom have been frightened sufficiently by the sickness and by the levellers, whose design undoubtedly was deep laid, and extended to the whole kingdom. But they broke out too soon. Nothing should have appeared till a French or Spanish squadron came. The nation is not now in the same state as it was in 1641. Then there were not four thousand soldiers in the kingdom; now there are near twenty thousand.

I hope you and yours have escaped the general disorder, or have found it a blessing. It little matters whether we escape pain, or suffer it, so it be but sanctified. Without some suffering, we should scarce remember that we are not proprietors here, but only tenants at will, liable to lose all we have at a moment's warning. Happy it were if we continually retained a lively impression of this on our minds! Then should we more earnestly seek that portion which shall never be taken from us.

In two or three days I am likely to embark, in order to meet our brethren at Leeds. Then I hope to have it under your own hand, that both you, Mrs. Blackwell, Mrs. Dewal,

[1] One of Wesley's preachers, from 1742 to 1756.

and Miss Freeman are alive, in the best sense.—I am, dear Sir, your affectionate servant.

## 'Apprehensions lest that Chariot should cost you your Life.'

As at the time of the last letter, Blackwell is now ill again, two years later. Was his lameness then (Letter XXXIX.) due to an accident by his 'chariot'? Wesley delighted in horse riding; but next year he had an accident by the falling of his horse. To this he refers in Letter XLV. A few months afterwards, Miss Lewen gave *him* a 'chariot'[1] —a chaise and pair of horses, which he used when he needed.

*Letter XLIV.*

LIVERPOOL, *July* 14, 1764.

DEAR SIR,—My brother informs me that you have been so extremely ill that your life was hardly expected. I really am under apprehensions lest that chariot should cost you your life. If, after having been accustomed to ride on horseback for many years, you should now exchange a horse for a carriage, it cannot be that you should have good health. It is a vain thing to expect it. I judge of your case by my own. I must be on horseback for life, if I would be healthy. Now and then, indeed, if I could afford it, I should rest myself for fifty miles in a chaise; but without riding near as much as I do now I must never look for health.

In the mean time, I trust both Mrs. Blackwell and you are looking for health of a nobler kind. You look to be filled with the spirit of love and of a healthful mind. What avails everything else—everything that passes away as an arrow through the air?

'The arrow is flown! The moment is gone!
The millennial year
Rushes on to the view, and eternity's here!'

[1] See p. 6.

You want nothing more of this world. You have enough, and, by the peculiar blessing of God, know you have. But you want a thousand times more faith. You want love, you want holiness. The Lord God supply all your wants from the riches of His mercy in Christ Jesus!—I am, dear Sir, your very affectionate servant.

Next week I shall set my face toward Bristol.

## 'Let us mend our Pace!'

In the last we have of this long series of letters, Wesley strikes the same notes as often before in them: the marvellous growth of his work; the urgency of the call to it, and to life's highest ends.

Blackwell would note with pleasure that Mrs. Wesley was again travelling with her husband. With her daughter, they are now on their way to Lady Maxwell's, at Edinburgh. Mrs. Wesley has been ill; but is better. Two years later, at Wesley's house at the Foundery, London, she was again dangerously ill. Himself far from well, and exceptionally pressed with duties in Bristol, Wesley hurried thence to her side. She recovered.

### *Letter XLV.*

SUNDERLAND, *May* 6, 1766.

DEAR SIR,—William Matthews writes me word, that he has quitted the school at the Foundery, and begs me to speak to you in his behalf. I should be glad to serve him in anything that was in my power, either for his late brother's sake or his own. I judge him to be a right honest man, one that may be trusted in every respect, and one that would perform, with all diligence, whatever he undertook, not so much for gain as for conscience' sake.

I am not yet quite free from the effects of the fall which

I had at Christmas, and perhaps never shall in this world. Sometimes my ankle, sometimes my knee, and frequently my shoulder, complains. But, blessed be God, I have strength sufficient for the work to which I am called. When I cannot walk any farther, I can take a horse, and now and then a chaise, so that hitherto I have not been hindered from visiting any place which I purposed to see before I left London.

The fields in every part of England are indeed white for the harvest. There is everywhere an amazing willingness in the people to receive either instruction or exhortation. We find this temper now even in many of the higher rank, several of whom cared for none of these things. But surely the time is coming for these also; for the Scripture must be fulfilled: 'They shall all know Me, from the least even to the greatest.'

We who have lived more years have need of more earnestness and vigour in running the race which is set before us, or some of those that come after us will get before us in the way. Many of those who have lately set out run well. Gray heads stand upon green shoulders:

'They make their morning bear the heat of day.'

Let us mend our pace! What is there here that is worth lingering for? A little while, and this world of shadows will vanish; and all will be boundless, bottomless eternity!

My wife, who has been very ill,[1] but is much better, joins with me in wishing Mrs. Blackwell and you every blessing which is purchased for you with the blood of the covenant. —I am, dear Sir, your ever affectionate servant.

* * * * * *

Wesley's last reference to the Blackwell's home, where he had spent so many happy hours, is in the pathetic reference

[1] See p. 355.

in his *Journal*, under date Saturday, August 20, 1782. Blackwell died on April 21st of that year. Wesley says: 'My brother and I paid our last visit to Lewisham, and spent a few hours with the relict of our good friend, Mr. Blackwell. We took one more walk round the garden and meadow, which he took such pains to improve. Upwards of forty years this has been my place of retirement, when I could spare two or three days from London. In that time, first Mrs. Sparrow went to rest; then Mrs. Dewal; then good Mrs. Blackwell; now Mr. Blackwell himself. Who can tell how soon we may follow them?'

# CHAPTER IX

## TO HIS WIFE AND SOME LADY FRIENDS

ALEXANDER KNOX of Dublin, who knew Wesley intimately,[1] says that the characteristic openness which marks all Mr. Wesley's letters is never more conspicuous than when he is writing to his female friends. He adds, 'It is certain that he had a predilection for the female character, partly because he had a mind ever alive to amiability, and partly from his generally finding in females a quicker responsiveness to his own ideas of interior piety and affectionate devotion.'

Wesley's letters to his wife are in a class by themselves. Otherwise, his letters to lady friends, selected from many for this chapter and the next (to Lady Maxwell), confirm and illustrate the opinion expressed by Knox. They concern themselves almost exclusively with the spiritual interests of these ladies, their work as Methodists, their reading, friendships, and health. Several of them, who were physically afflicted or frail in youth, probably owed long and happy years to his advice, and his urgent counsels that they should secure divine peace and joy, and spend themselves in ceaseless, unselfish activities. Some of them were deaconesses, others were preachers.

### To his Wife.

We select two letters from those sent by Wesley to his wife. These are here preceded by two extracts, from other letters to her[2] in 1751 and 1758 respectively. The

[1] See Southey's *Life of Wesley*, 3rd ed., p. 411.
[2] *Wesley Studies*, pp. 102, 103.

first extract was written five weeks after their marriage. He had left her in her home in Threadneedle Street, London, to make one of his preaching tours. The extract shows him affectionate, and grateful to God for her.

The second extract gives perhaps the chief occasion of the miserable disagreement between them which soon began. Wesley maintained, not always wisely in form or measure, the freedom which he here claims: his wife carried out the terrible threats he here quotes from her.

Wesley asks, 'Do I write too soon? Have not you above all the people in the world a right to hear from me as soon as I possibly can? You have surely a right to every proof of love I can give, and to all the little help which is in my power. For you have given me even your own self. O how can we praise God enough, for making us helps meet for each other! I am utterly astonished at His goodness. Let not only our lips but our lives shew forth His praise!'

* * * * *

Wesley says, 'I insist on choosing my own company! . . . I insist upon conversing, by speaking or writing, with those whom I (not you) judge proper.

'For more than seven years this has been a bone of contention between you and me, and it is so still; for I will not, I can not, I dare not give it up. But then you will rage and fret and call me names. I am sorry for it, but I cannot help it. I still do and must insist, that I have a right to choose my own company. Then you will "denounce against me all the curses from Genesis to the Revelation." You may so, but you gain no ground thereby, for still I cannot give up my right. Nay, but you "will say all manner of evil of me." Be it so; but still I stand just where I was. Then you will "show my private letters to all the world." If you do, I must assert my right still. All this will not

extort it from me, nor anything else which you can do. You may, therefore, as well allow it now as after we have squabbled about it (if we live so long) seven years longer. For it is my right by all the laws of God and man, and by a right which I can never part with. O do not continue to trouble yourself and me, and to disturb the children of God by still grasping at a power which must be denied you, by him who is nevertheless your truly affectionate husband.'

## 'You spared no Pains in nursing me.'

The first letter shows Wesley still dutiful and tender to his wife, notwithstanding all the vexatious treatment he had received from her. Mrs. Wesley had been dangerously ill at his house at the Foundery, in London. He hurried to her side from Bristol. When the crisis was past, he returned to urgent duties there. And memory is quick with gratitude for her wifely devotion to him in a grievous, almost fatal illness before referred to (page 323). These letters must be read in the light of those to Ebenezer Blackwell, and the explanations given in connection with them on pages 311, 334 and onwards.

*Letter I.*

BRISTOL, *August* 1768.

MY LOVE,—I can make allowance for faintness, and weakness, and pain. I remember when it was my own case, at this very place, and when you spared no pains in nursing and waiting upon me, till it pleased God to make you the chief instrument in restoring my strength. I am glad you have the advice of a skilful physician; but you must not be surprised or discouraged if you do not recover your strength so soon as one might wish, especially at this time of the year. What is chiefly to be desired is, that God may sanctify all His dispensations to you, and that all may be the means of your being more entirely devoted to Him,

whose favour is better than strength, or health, or life itself.—I am, dear Molly, your ever affectionate husband.

Soon after this letter Mrs. Wesley appears to have left her husband. She went to Newcastle-on-Tyne, leaving Wesley lonely as a bachelor—'a mere Fellow of a College,' as he says when writing to his brother Charles, who was so happy with his wife.[1] Little more than two years later Wesley's wife went to Newcastle and lived with her daughter, who, in 1769, had married William Smith, a prosperous merchant and Methodist there. Wesley made the well-known entry in his *Journal* (January 23, 1771): 'For what cause I know not to this day—my wife set out for Newcastle, purposing never to return.' *Non eam reliqui; non dimisi; non revocabo.*[2] She did 'return' to him, however, and was with him for short periods.[3] During one of these, in 1775, she did him further grievous disservice, as his niece, Miss Sarah Wesley, told.[4]

## 'At length know me and know yourself.'

The following are extracts from a long, painful letter to her a few years before her death in 1781. The letter is given, in part only, by Wesley's first biographers, Coke and Moore. By her will Mrs. Wesley left Wesley a mourning ring, 'in token that I die in love and friendship towards him.'

### *Letter II.*

I cannot but add a few words; not by way of reproach, but of advice. God has used many means to break your stubborn will and curb the impetuosity of your temper. He has given you a dutiful but sickly daughter: He has taken away one of your sons: another has been a grievous cross, as

[1] See above, p. 89.
[2] I have not left her; I have not sent her away; I will not recall her.
[3] See *Journal*, vol. v. pp. 400, 474, and a painful letter in *Wesley Studies*, p. 105.
[4] See below, p. 445.

the third probably will be: He has suffered you to be defrauded of much money: He has chastened you with strong pain; and still He may say, 'How long liftest thou up thyself against Me?' Are you more humble, more patient, more placable than you were? I fear quite the reverse: I fear your natural tempers are rather increased than diminished. Oh! beware lest God give you up to your own heart's lusts, and let you follow your own imaginations.

Under all these conflicts it might be an unspeakable blessing that you have a husband who knows your temper and can deal with it: who, after you have tried him numberless ways, laid to his charge things that he knew not, robbed him, betrayed his confidence, revealed his secrets, given him a thousand treacherous wounds, purposely aspersed and murdered his character, and made it your *business* so to do, under the poor pretence of vindicating your own character; . . . who, I say, after all these provocations, is still willing to forgive you all; to overlook what is past, as if it had not been, and to receive you with open arms: only, not while you have a sword in your hand, with which you are continually striking at me though you cannot hurt me. If, notwithstanding, you continue striking, what can I, what can all reasonable men think, but that either you are utterly out of your senses, or your eye is not single: that you married me only for my money: that, being disappointed, you were almost always out of humour: that this laid you open to a thousand suspicions, which, once awakened, could sleep no more.

My dear Molly, let the time past suffice. If you have not (to prevent my giving it . . . ) robbed me of my substance too; if you do not blacken me on purpose that, when this causes a breach between us, no one may believe it to be your fault; stop, and consider what you do. As yet the breach may be repaired: you have wronged me much, but not

beyond forgiveness. I love you still. . . . At length know me and know *yourself*. Your enemy I cannot be: but let me be your friend. Suspect me no more; asperse me no more; provoke me no more. Do not any longer contend for master, for power, money, or praise. Be content to be a private, insignificant person, known and loved by God and me. Attempt no more to abridge me of my liberty, which I claim by the laws of God and man. Leave me to be governed by God and my own conscience. Then shall I govern you with gentle sway, and show that I do indeed love you even as Christ the Church.

## To Mrs. Mary Fletcher.

Like her husband, John Fletcher, referred to on page 138, Mary Fletcher, formerly Miss Bosanquet, was one of the saints of early Methodism. She reproduced in Protestantism features of the lives of Saint Theresa and Madam Guyon. From 1757, when she was about eighteen, until his death Wesley held her in the highest regard, constantly wrote to her, and often visited her establishment. First at Leytonstone, Essex, then at Cross Hall, near Leeds, she maintained 'a kind of inn' for needy Christian visitors. It was an orphanage also. There in a large apartment filled with children, her dependents, neighbours, and ministers, she modestly, and with much ability and spiritual insight, often expounded the Scriptures. This raised the question of preaching by women among the Methodists. At length Wesley settled this by statements such as he gives in Letter II.,[1] notwithstanding that, like himself, Mrs. Fletcher was profoundly attached to the Church of England. The courageous and wise decision which they and others came

[1] This letter is given by Moore, *Life of Mrs. Fletcher* (p. 421), and by Tyerman, *Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 112, as to Mrs. Fletcher. In the *Works*, vol. xii. p. 339, it is said to be to Mrs. Crosby (see below, p. 361). It applied to both cases. Others such are cited in *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. p. 321.

to was prompted, they believed, by the Holy Spirit, and required by circumstances. It was completely justified by results. It anticipated much modern Church work.

Wesley's letters to this lady advise her on 'the welfare of the family'—the orphans and others; and hint at his own unhappiness. His wife was away from him at this time. Sometimes in these and other letters Wesley uses expressions liable to grievous misconstruction by the jealous and the captious. In Letter III., written when Miss Bosanquet was thirty-six years old, he tells of a shrewd preacher who was wishful to win her as wife. It was not until 1781 that she married Fletcher. He says he wished to 'hide' at her house at the end of July. This was to prepare himself and the business for the Conference, to be held in Leeds near by, at the beginning of August.

## 'The Welfare of the Family. Beware of increasing your Expenses.'

*Letter I.*

LONDON, *January* 15, 1770.

MY DEAR SISTER,—It is not strange if the leading of one soul be very different from that of another. The same Spirit worketh in every one; and yet worketh several ways, according to His own will. It concerns us to follow our own light; seeing that we are not to be judged by another's conscience.

A little time will show who hinders, and who forwards the welfare of the family; and I hope you will have steadiness to pursue every measure which you judge will be to the glory of God.

I am glad you find your temporal difficulties are lessened. Beware of increasing your expenses. I advise you not to take any other child till all these expenses are over. It is pity but you had an electric machine.[1] It would prevent

[1] See below, p. 453.

much pain in a family, and supersede almost all other physic. I cure all vomiting and purging by warm lemonade.

She is there still, and likely to be so, unless I would hire her to return; which I dare not do. I will not buy a cross, though I can bear it. Many are much stirred up here, and are greatly athirst for pure love. I am sure you tasted it once, though you were reasoned out of it. How soon may you find it again! Simple faith is all we want. Peace be with your spirit!—I am, my dear sister, your affectionate brother.

## 'Your having an extraordinary Call.'

*Letter II.*

LONDONDERRY, *June* 13, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I think the strength of the cause rests there; on your having an extraordinary call. So I am persuaded has every one of our lay preachers; otherwise, I could not countenance his preaching at all. It is plain to me that the whole work of God called Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of His providence. Therefore, I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation.' Yet, in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions; at Corinth in particular.—I am, dear sister, your affectionate brother.

## 'An Opportunity of hiding myself a Day or two.'

*Letter III.*

CLONES, *May* 29, 1775.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I was particularly glad to hear from you at this time, as I wanted to know how you was going on, and whether you were the person concerning whom one of our preachers warily asked my advice.

Whether you should part with your house, and things pertaining to it, is a very important question. The answering of this depends upon many circumstances which I am not yet acquainted with. But necessity has no law. It *must* be done, if your income will not otherwise answer the expenses.

The last day of June I hope to be in Dublin, and the end of July in England. If I have a ready passage, probably I may have an opportunity of hiding myself a day or two with you; but I do not desire any of the preachers to come to me till I send for them. If they do, I shall run away. I will not be in a crowd.

Probably you know whether Mr. Saunderson is at Knaresborough. If he is, pray take up a cross for me. Write to him, in my name, and tell him, I desire him, without delay or excuse, to return to Bristol; otherwise he will disoblige me for ever.—I am, my dear sister, your affectionate brother.

## To Mrs. Sarah Crosby.

This godly and gifted woman, whose husband died when she was only twenty, remained a widow, like Lady Maxwell, and gave her life to the work of Wesley and Methodism. Of this, and her religious experience, he often wrote to her.

Letter I. shows the emergence of a real difficulty—that which her dear friend Mrs. Fletcher, with whom she lived for some years, had faced—Ought a woman to preach? Mrs. Crosby's class-meeting at Derby, for Christian testimony and personal counsel, sometimes increased to a congregation of two hundred persons. This made instruction to individuals impossible. In Wesley's views on this matter, as on the last page, she found guidance and authority. Later, with Leeds as a centre, she held one hundred and twenty public services, and led six hundred class and private meetings in one year. She and her colleagues in Leeds were often referred to under the quaint title of 'the Female Brethren.'

Under the name Sarah Williamson she is probably 'the blessed woman' referred to by George Eliot in *Adam Bede*, as the friend of Dinah Morris (Elizabeth Tomlinson Evans), who was also a Methodist preacher.

The second letter here, believed to be a new one, copied from the original in the library of Drew Methodist Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey, U.S.A., is thought to be a letter to Mrs. Crosby. In address and subscription it is like many letters sent by Wesley to her, and it fills a gap in that series.

## 'You have not gone too far.'

*Letter I.*

LONDON, *February* 14, 1761.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Miss —— gave me yours on Wednesday night. Hitherto, I think you have not gone too far. You could not well do less. I apprehend, all you can do more is, when you meet again, to tell them simply, 'You lay me under a great difficulty. The Methodists do not allow of women preachers: neither do I take upon me any such character. But I will just nakedly tell you what is in my heart.' This will, in a great measure, obviate the grand objection, and prepare for John Hampson's[1] coming. I do not see that you have broken any law. Go on calmly and steadily. If you have time, you may read to them the *Notes*[2] on any chapter before you speak a few words; or one of the most awakening sermons, as other women have done long ago.[3]

The work of God goes on mightily here, both in conviction and conversion. This morning I have spoken with four or five who seem to have been set at liberty within this

[1] John Hampson, Senr., one of Wesley's preachers.
[2] Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament*.
[3] *E.g.* Wesley's own mother in the rectory kitchen, Epworth, to the villagers.

month. I believe, in five weeks, six in one class have received remission of sins, and five in one band received a second blessing. Peace be with you all!—I am, your affectionate brother.

## 'God is willing to give always what He gives once.'

*Letter II.*

LONDON, *January* 1, 1770.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Whereunto you have attained hold fast. You never need let it go. Nothing is more certain than that God is willing to give always what He gives once. If therefore He now gives you power to yield to Him your whole heart, you may confidently expect the continuance of that power till your spirit returns to God: provided you continue watching unto prayer, denying yourself and taking up your cross daily. Only beware of evil reasoning! Hang upon Him that loves you as a little child; living *to-day*, and trusting Him for *to-morrow*!—I am, dear Sally, your affectionate brother.

## To Miss Sarah Mallett.

This hitherto unpublished letter, from the original in the possession of Alderman Alfred Jermyn, J.P., of King's Lynn, throws light upon Wesley, his *Journal* for December 1786, and a remarkable woman mentioned there. He says that he then met Miss Sarah Mallett, a young lady of twenty-two years, and was impressed by her piety, strong intellect, and usefulness as a preacher. She had been driven to this duty by dreams and 'fits.' These no longer troubled her; but she was suffering from a kind of consumption, which Wesley believed to be incurable. She continued her trying work, however, and as he here says, 'many who profited by her loved her more than enough.' Two years later she desired

to meet Wesley again. His letter is a fine combination of pointed counsel and kindly practical interest in her affairs. Does she need money? On the back of Wesley's letter is a note by Miss Mallett, stating that she worked with her own hands, so as not to be chargeable to the people to whom she preached; that 'Mr. Wesley heard of all this, and became a father to me when my own father refused to do a father's part.' She laboured chiefly in Suffolk and Norfolk. Miss Mallett is the only woman known to have held the authority of Mr. Wesley and the Methodist Conference 'as a preacher in our Connexion.'[1] It was issued to her by Joseph Harper, a preacher in the Norwich circuit, who added, 'You receive this by order of Mr. Wesley and the Conference.' Miss Mallett afterwards became Mrs. Boyce.

## 'In travelling up and down you will want a little Money.'

BATH, *March* 8, 1788.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I should have been exceedingly glad to see you, for I have a tender affection for you. And I shall always be well pleased to hear from you, and to hear how your soul prospers.

It is no wonder you should have trials. You may expect them from every quarter; your bread daily [? indeed may be] sorrow and death. But they cannot hurt you whilst your heart cleaves to God. Beware of pride! Beware of foolishness! Beware of dejection! But above all beware of inordinate affection! Those who profit by you will be apt to love you more than enough, and will not this naturally lead you into the same temptation? My Sally, is not this the case already? Is your heart still whole with God? Is it without idols? I think you can speak to

[1] There were several others in other Methodist Churches not long afterwards: compare *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. pp. 322, 509, 520, 585.

me freely (though on so delicate a subject you can hardly speak free to anyone else). Is He still the sole object of your desire, the treasure and joy of your heart? Considering your age and sex and situation, what but Omnipotence can keep you in the midst of the fire?

You will not take it amiss if I ask you another question. I know neither your father nor your uncle is rich; and in travelling up and down you will want a little money. Are you not sometimes straitened? Only let me know, and you shall want nothing that is in the power of, my dear Sally, yours affectionately.

## To Miss Nancy Bolton.

Adam Clarke told James Everett[1] that he had one hundred of Wesley's letters to Miss Nancy Bolton. She was favoured above many. Probably more than half these letters remain to be traced. Of those known we select three.

This lady lived with her brother, Edward Bolton, at Blandford Park, Witney, Oxfordshire. He was an excellent Methodist local preacher and sometimes accompanied Wesley. His delightful home was one of several similar resting-places frequently used by Wesley on his preaching tours. The latter would not allow even praise of its advantages, by his host, to lessen these for him; and he never forgot that there was a deeper peace, an interior calm, which they both needed. When Bolton and he were seated together in this quiet home on one occasion, the former reminded Wesley, busy with his thoughts and pen, of their quietude. 'All is silent,' said he, 'all retired, and no distracting noises of the multitude intrude themselves.' 'True, Neddy,' said Wesley, in his quick, apt way, 'but noisy thoughts may.'

There, too, Miss Bolton found the need of Wesley's counsels.

[1] In Everett's manuscript Diaries and Memoranda, vol. xiii. p. 30, now in the writer's possession.

To no one, except to his wife and relatives, did Wesley write in terms of more intimate affection than to her. In other letters he says, 'What business would hinder my writing to *you?*' 'Nay, Nancy, I designed but to have written you but one page! But I know not how, when talking with *you*, though only by letter, I can hardly break off.' He says he cannot tell how near she is to him; begs her not to be a month before writing again to him, and he believes, that business, not want of affection, keeps her from writing.

Letter I. gives us one of their topics. In his journey from Liverpool through Birmingham to Witney, Wesley read John Byrom's poems,[1] then just published in Manchester. While staying with the Boltons at Witney, Wesley seems to have read selections from these volumes. Now he copies for Miss Bolton 'two or three,' in fact eight, of those 'little things' which she had doubtless admired. He thought very highly, surely too highly, of Byrom's poetry. These verses are from 'Miscellaneous pieces consisting of Thoughts on Various Subjects, Fragments, Epigrams, etc.' Wesley wrote Byrom's shorthand freely and used it constantly; but probably Miss Bolton did not. He copied these extracts in longhand for her. The first is often quoted; but is seldom credited to Byrom.

## 'Two or three little Things I have sent you.'

### *Letter I.*

LONDON, *July* 18, 1773.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Your late conversation was exceeding pleasant to me. I had sometimes been almost inclined to think that your affection was lessened; but now I believe it is not. I trust your love is not grown cold. This gave me much satisfaction, though I could not but be concerned at

[1] *Miscellaneous Poems*, by John Byrom, M.A., F.R.S., inventor of the Universal English Shorthand (2 vols., 1773).

seeing you so encumbered with worldly business. Surely it will not be so always. But God's time is best!

Two or three of those little things I have sent you:—

With peaceful mind thy race of duty run:
God nothing does, or suffers to be done,
But what thou wouldst thyself, if thou couldst see
Through all events of things as well as He.

Let thy repentance be without delay:
If thou defer it to another day,
Thou must repent for a day more of sin,
While a day less remains to do it in.

Nor steel nor flint alone produces fire,
Nor spark arises till they both conspire:
Nor faith alone, nor work without, is right;
Salvation rises when they both unite.

If gold be offer'd thee, thou dost not say,
'To-morrow I will take it, not to-day';
Salvation offer'd, why art thou so cool,
To let thyself become to-morrow's fool?

Prayer and thanksgiving is the vital breath
That keeps the spirit of a man from death;
For prayer attracts into the living soul
The life that fills the universal whole;
And giving thanks is breathing forth again
The praise of Him who is the life of men.

Two different painters, artists in their way,
Have drawn religion in her full display.
To both she sat: One gazed at her all o'er;
The other fix'd upon her features more:
*Hervey* has figured her with every grace
That dress could give: but *Law* has hit her face.

The specious sermons of a learned man
Are little else than *flashes in the pan;*
The mere haranguing upon what they call
Morality, is *powder* without *ball*;
But he who preaches with a Christian grace
*Fires* at your vices, and the *shot* takes place.

Faith, Hope, and Love were question'd what they thought
Of future glory, which Religion taught:
Now Faith *believed* it, firmly, to be true,
And Hope *expected* so to find it too;
Love answer'd, smiling with a conscious glow,
'Believe! expect! I *know* it to be so.'

Go on in this humble, gentle love; that you may abound therein more and more. Aim at nothing higher than this: and may the God of love still possess you whole, and guide your every thought, and word, and work.—Continue to pray for your affectionate brother.

## 'Afflictive Circumstances that have followed you . . . that you may learn Obedience.'

### *Letter II.*

LONDON, *January* 2, 1781.

MY DEAR SISTER,—It is a great step towards Christian resignation, to be thoroughly convinced of that great truth, that there is no such thing as chance in the world; that fortune is only another name for Providence; only it is covered Providence. An event, the cause of which does not appear, we commonly say, comes by chance. O no; it is guided by an unerring Hand; it is the result of infinite wisdom and goodness. Such are all the afflictive circumstances that have followed you in a constant succession, almost from your childhood. He that made the Captain of your salvation perfect through sufferings has called you to walk in the same path, and for the same end; namely, that you may learn obedience, a more perfect conformity to His death, by the things that you suffer. A little while, and 'He will wipe all tears from your eyes; and there shall be no more sorrow or crying; neither shall be any more pain!' but you shall hear the great voice out of Heaven saying,

'The tabernacle of God is with men: and God himself shall be with them, and be their God!'

Still love and pray for your ever affectionate brother.

## 'The Day after you receive this, go. . . . Sick or well, go!'

*Letter III.*

HIGH WYCOMBE, *November* 4, 1790.

MY DEAR SISTER,—The more I consider your case, the more I am convinced that you are in the school of God, and that the Lord loveth whom He chasteneth. From the time you omitted meeting your class or band, you grieved the Holy Spirit of God, and He gave a commission to Satan to buffet you; nor will that commission ever be revoked till you begin to meet again. Why were you not a mother in Israel? a repairer of the waste places? a guide to the blind? a healer of the sick? a lifter up of the hands which hung down? Wherever you came God was with you, and shone upon your path. Many daughters had done virtuously; but thou excelledst them all.

Woman, remember the faith! In the name of God, set out again, and do the first works! I exhort you, for my sake (who tenderly love you), for God's sake, for the sake of your own soul, begin again without delay. The day after you receive this go and meet a class or band. Sick or well, go! If you cannot speak a word, go; and God will go with you. You sink under the sin of omission! My friend, my sister, go! Go, whether you can or not. Break through! Take up your cross. I say again, do the first works, and God will restore your first love! and you will be a comfort, not a grief, to yours most affectionately.

# JOHN WESLEY'S LETTERS

## To Miss Peggy Dale.

This hitherto unpublished letter, from the original, owned by the Rev. Principal E. S. Tipple, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D., of Drew Methodist Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey, U.S.A., is one of many sent to Miss Peggy Dale of Newcastle-on-Tyne.[1] Wesley's friend and generous helper, Miss Margaret Lewen[2] of that city, introduced this young lady to him. She was probably her niece. Three years earlier than this letter Miss Dale made Wesley her spiritual confidant. A correspondence began. Wesley wrote monthly to her and Miss Lewen. A sister, Miss Molly Dale, was also an earnest worker for Wesley.[3]

### 'I have answered every Letter.'

LIVERPOOL, *April* 7, 1768.

MY DEAR PEGGY,—I do not well understand what letter you mean. I have answered (if I do not forget) every letter which I have received; and I commonly answer either of you, within a day or two. In this respect, I do not love to remain in your debt. In others, I must always be so; for I can never pay you the affection I owe. Accept of what little I have to give.

Mr. Law[4] does well to insist so much on those sister graces, Lowliness, Meekness, and Resignation. These one would most importunately ask of God; and indeed without these, Love is only a Name. Let your Faith thus work by Love and it will make you fruitful in every good temper and word and work.

[1] Some are given in the *Life and Letters of Thomas Pelham Dale* (2 vols., 1894).
[2] See p. 65.
[3] *Journal*, vol. v. p. 111.
[4] The Rev. William Law in *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.*

I hope to be at Glasgow on Wednesday the 29th instant; at Aberdeen, the 28th; at Edinburgh, May 5th; at Newcastle, on Friday, May 20th. Peace be with your spirits.—I am, my dear Peggy, your affectionate brother.

## To Miss Ann Loxdale.

This letter is earlier than the well-known letters to this lady, Miss Ann Loxdale of Shrewsbury. Its date, not hitherto given, is fixed by its references to Wesley's movements. It opened a considerable correspondence with this lady, now twenty-six years of age. She was a member of a wealthy family, and distinguished by her vigorous mind, acquirements, and much refinement.[1] Under Wesley's guidance she earned praise which filled the churches for her exalted piety and Christian kindness. His clever phrase 'think aloud' describes the kind of letters he desired from her.

It is good, in Letter II., to have Wesley's encomium of St. Paul's Hymn of Love. Jane Cooper, to whom Wesley refers, as embodying its teachings, was a domestic servant in London, who died there in 1762, aged twenty-four, of smallpox. He regarded her as 'a pattern of all holiness, and of the wisdom which is from above.' He often cited her as an example—'that lovely saint Jane Cooper,' and published a series of remarkable letters by her—'the almost inimitable letters.' One of these, with an account of her death, he used in his important work, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection.*

A year later than this letter Wesley had to warn Miss Loxdale against accepting unworthy human love in an unsuitable offer of marriage.[2] She profited by his friendly counsel. In 1811, when she was fifty-seven, she became the second wife of Dr. Coke.

[1] Drew's *Life of Coke*, pp. 345-7.
[2] Wesley Historical Society *Proceedings*, vol. ix. p. 184.

## 'Always "think aloud" whenever you speak or write to me.'

*Letter I.*

[SHREWSBURY, *March* 27, 1781.]

MY DEAR MISS LOXDALE,—You remind me of my dear Miss Ritchie,[1] and seem to breathe the same spirit. Both Miss C—— and our friends at Broadmarston have spoken to me concerning you, so that I promised myself a great deal of satisfaction in conversing with you; but I find it cannot be. To-morrow we are appointed to preach at Burslem, then Congleton, Macclesfield, Stockport, and Manchester, where I am to stop till Tuesday, when I go forward, God permit, to Chester, Liverpool, and Ireland. As we cannot yet have an opportunity of being together, I wish you would write freely. Your heart is toward mine as mine is toward thee; there need be no reserve between us. I hope you will always 'think aloud' whenever you speak or write to me.—My dear Miss Loxdale, yours in tender affection.

## 'There is the true Picture of Christian Perfection.'

*Letter II.*

LIVERPOOL, *April* 12, 1782.

MY DEAR MISS LOXDALE,—I advised formerly my dear Jenny Cooper, and now I advise you, frequently to read and meditate upon the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. There is the true picture of Christian perfection! Let us copy after it with all our might. I believe it might likewise be of use to you to read more than once the *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. Indeed, what is it more or less than humble, gentle, patient love!

[1] See below, p. 377.

It is undoubtedly our privilege to 'rejoice evermore' with a calm, still, heartfelt joy. Nevertheless, this is seldom long at one stay. Many circumstances may cause it to ebb and flow. This, therefore, is not the essence of religion; which is no other than humble, gentle, patient love. I do not know whether all these are not included in that one word, resignation. For the highest lesson our Lord (as man) learned on earth to say was, 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt.' May He confirm you more and more!—Yours most affectionately.

## To Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers.

Miss Hester Ann Roe of Macclesfield was a young lady of twenty-two when Wesley began his correspondence with her. She was then ill and one of many in like case whom he cheered by his letters and visits. A year earlier than that of Letter I. she 'turned Methodist,' notwithstanding the frowns of her wealthy relatives. She became the wife of James Rogers, one of Wesley's preachers, and died when only thirty-eight. Her short life was literally filled with self-forgetting service, alike among the poor and the 'gen-teeler sort,' to whom Wesley refers (Letter III.). Her saintliness was winsomely attractive. Some of Wesley's letters to her, her *Experience*, and her *Spiritual Letters* were published.[1] They became classics among Methodists, and in a much wider circle.

Wesley lived eight years after the illness and strange dream to which he refers in Letter II. The wish of the great itinerant and shepherd of the wandering, to die among his friends, was met in part. Fletcher predeceased him, Coke was on a missionary tour when Wesley died in 1791. James Rogers, this lady's husband, was then one of the London preachers, and lived with his wife and little boy in Wesley's house in City Road. They were all with 'his brethren' at the side of Wesley when he departed.

[1] *Account of J. and H. A. Rogers* (Bristol: Edwards, 1796).

'Can you, notwithstanding this, rejoice evermore?'

*Letter I.*

WHITEHAVEN, *May* 3, 1776.

With pleasure I sit down to write to my dear Miss Roe, who has been much upon my mind since I left Macclesfield. Once I saw my dear friend, Miss Beresford; when I came again, she was in Abraham's bosom! Once I have seen her living picture, drawn by the same hand, and breathing the same spirit; and I am afraid I shall hardly see *you* again, till we meet in the garden of God. But if you should gradually decay, if you be sensible of the hour approaching when your spirit is to return to God, I should be glad to have notice of it, wherever I am, that if possible I might see you once more before you

> 'Clap your glad wing, and soar away,
> And mingle with the blaze of day.'

Perhaps, in such a situation, I might be of some little comfort to your dear mother, who, in such circumstances, would stand in much need of comfort; and it may be, our blessed Master would enable me to 'Teach you at once—and learn of you, to die'!

In the meantime, see that you neglect no probable means of restoring your health; and send me, from time to time, a particular account of the state wherein you are. Do you feel your own will quite given up to God, so that you have no repugnance to His will in anything? Do you find no strivings of pride? no remains of vanity? no desire of praise, or fear of dispraise? Do you enjoy an uninterrupted sense of the loving presence of God? How far does the corruptible and decaying body press down the soul? Your disorder naturally sinks the spirits, and occasions heaviness

and dejection. Can you, notwithstanding this, 'rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks'?

Mr. Fletcher shows (as does the *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*) that sanctification is plainly set forth in Scripture. But certainly before the root of sin is taken away, believers may live above the *power* of it. Yet what a difference between the *first*, and the *pure* love! You can explain this to Mr. Roe by your own experience. Let him follow on, and how soon may he attain it!

I am glad you wrote to Miss Yates, and hope you will write to Miss R[itchie]. As to health, they are not much better than you are; only Miss R[itchie] is a little strengthened by a late journey. I never conversed with her so much before. I can give you her character in one line. She is 'all praise, all meekness, and all love.' If it will not hurt you, I desire you will write often to, my dear Hetty, yours affectionately.

## 'One of our Sisters here told us a particular Dream.'

*Letter II.*

BRISTOL, *March* 16, 1783.

MY DEAR HETTY,—It has frequently been on my mind of late, that my pilgrimage is nearly at an end; and one of our sisters here told us this morning a particular dream which she had two months ago. She dreamt that the time of Conference was come, and that she was in a church expecting me to enter, when she saw a coffin brought in, followed by Dr. Coke and Mr. Fletcher, and then by all our preachers walking two and two. A fortnight ago, she dreamt the same dream again. Such a burying I have ordered in my will, absolutely forbidding either hearse or coach.

I intended to have written a good deal more. For a few days I have had just such a fever as I had in Ireland a few years ago. But all is well. I am in no pain; but the wheel of life seems scarcely able to move. Yet, I made a shift to preach this morning to a crowded audience, and hope to say something to them this afternoon. I love that word, 'And Ishmael died in the presence of all his brethren.'—I am, in life or death, my dear sister, yours affectionately.

## 'Many of the genteeler sort. You have a particular Mission to these.'

*Letter III.*

[? Newcastle-on-Tyne], *May* 28, 1788.

My dear Hetty,—My not hearing from you for so long a time would have given me concern, but I knew it was not from want of affection. I am glad to hear you prosper in your soul. Rest in nothing you have attained; but press on till you are filled with all the fulness of God.

In this day of God's power, I hope many of the backsliders in Cork will be brought back. There are great numbers of them in and about the city, and many are of the genteeler sort. It seems you have a particular mission to these. Perhaps they will hear none but you. I hope you have already found out Mrs. Forbes (Captain Forbes's wife), and that now she is more than almost persuaded to be a Christian.

The pearl on my eye is but just discernible, and dulls the sight a little, but not much. As it grows no worse, I do not much regard it.

Mr. Smith's society, I verily believe, will do us no harm. And every one may speak of me as he will. I am just flying away as a shadow. It more than makes me amends

that James and you still love, and pray for, my dear Hetty, your most affectionate.

## To Miss Elizabeth Ritchie.

When Wesley 'made an exception,' as he here says, and started a correspondence with Miss Elizabeth Ritchie[1] of Otley, Yorkshire, he set up one of the happiest and tenderest associations of his old age. This young lady was the daughter of Dr. Ritchie, a retired naval surgeon, and a Methodist, with whom Wesley stayed a week before this letter. She was now twenty: Wesley was seventy-one. Miss Ritchie became 'unto him as a daughter'; and she says of him, 'I loved him with a grateful and affectionate regard, as given by God to be my guide, my spiritual father, and my dearest friend.' Her life was threatened by serious illnesses. In one of these (1777) Wesley paid three visits to Otley, once travelling forty-eight miles through the night to see her. Sometimes, with his wife or one of the preachers, she accompanied him on his preaching tours, and then, and often besides, was diligent in visitation and counsel. Wesley often pointed to her as an ideal young Methodist. Ten years after Wesley's death she married Harvey W. Mortimer of London. She lived to the ripe age of eighty years.

Subsequent history was a fine fulfilment of Wesley's expectation in Letter II. as to the revival which God had used him to lead. His shrewd tolerant judgements on Swedenborg are notable. There, too, is his common phrase 'scraps of time.' What marvels Wesley did in these! Here he is at his inimitable *Journal*.

Letter III. shows us the aged Wesley, now everywhere welcomed and honoured, filled with thankful wonder. He was to live six more such happy years. Two years before their close, Alexander Knox saw him in 1789, and left this exquisite miniature of him—an aged, lovely, Christian

[1] Agnes Bulmer's *Memoirs of Elizabeth Mortimer*, and Wesley Historical Society *Proceedings*, vol. iii. p. 78, vol. vii. p. 158.

gentleman: 'It was too obvious that his bodily frame was sinking; but his spirit was as alert as ever; he was the life of the company. Such unclouded sunshine of the breast, in the deepest winter of age, and on the felt verge of eternity, bespoke a mind whose recollections were as unsullied as its present sensations were serene.' When Wesley had actually 'well-nigh finished his course,' of which he here writes beforehand, Miss Ritchie, with Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers, was his tender nurse (February-March,[1] 1791). She read to him daily from 6 A.M. until breakfast time. 'Betsy,' said he, 'you must be eyes to the blind.' As he desired, she was by his bedside in his dying hours. Her pen graphically described these for the weeping praying hosts to whom he had been truly a right reverend father in God. The memorable and triumphant sayings which she caught from his lips and gave to the world[2] are among the most frequently quoted of his many words.

## 'I would have you just such an one as Miranda.'

*Letter I.*

[WHITEHAVEN], *May* 8, 1774.

MY DEAR BETSY,—It is not common for me to write to anyone first: I only answer those that write to me. But I willingly make an exception with regard to you; for it is not a common concern that I feel for you. You are just rising into life; and I would fain have you, not almost, but altogether, a Christian. I would have you just such a one as Miranda;[3] and you cannot be content with less. You

[1] See above, p. 373.

[2] *An Authentic Account of the Last Moments of that Great and Good Man, the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.* Signed, E. R. (Leeds: Bowling, 1791.)

[3] The daughter of Prospero in Shakespeare's *Tempest*; but Wesley doubtless here refers to the character bearing that name in Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. Chapter VIII. is entitled, 'How the wise and pious use of an estate naturally carries us to great perfection in all the virtues of the Christian life, represented in the character of Miranda.' This book, which profoundly affected Wesley in early life, he was never tired of recommending, and he gave away thousands of copies of it.

cannot be satisfied with right notions: neither with harmlessness; no, nor yet with barely external religion, how exact soever it be; nay, you will not be content with a taste of inward religion. This it has pleased God to give you already. You know in whom you have believed; you have tasted of the powers of the world to come; but

> 'A taste of love cannot suffice;
> Your soul for all His fulness cries!'

Cry on, and never cease! Mind not those who rebuke you, that you should hold your peace. Cry so much the more, 'Jesus of Nazareth, take away all my sins! Leave none remaining! Speak the word only, and I shall be healed!'

Write freely to yours affectionately.

## 'This Revival of Religion will continue.'

*Letter II.*

London, *February* 12, 1779.

My dear Betsy,—The remark of Luther, 'that a revival of religion seldom continues above thirty years,' has been verified many times in several countries. But it will not always hold. The present revival of religion in England has already continued fifty years. And, blessed be God, it is at least as likely to continue, as it was twenty or thirty years ago. Indeed, it is far more likely, as it not only spreads wider, but sinks deeper, than ever; more and more persons being able to testify that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. We have therefore reason to hope that this revival of religion will continue, and continually increase till the time when all Israel shall be saved, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall come.

I have heard that Mr. —— is in London, but have not

heard where he is, or what he does. As far as I can learn, he lives in the utmost privacy, and does not preach at all. He seems to think that his present calling is to be a hermit in London.

Surely it is your wisdom to stand fast even in the outward liberty wherewith Christ has made you free. You are now happily disengaged from caring for the things of this world, and need only care for the things of the Lord; how you may be holy in body and spirit, and how you may promote His kingdom upon earth.

I have abundant proof that Baron Swedenborg's fever, which he had thirty years before he died, much affected his understanding. Yet his tract is 'majestic, though in ruins.' He has strong and beautiful thoughts, and may be read with profit by a serious and cautious reader.

Some weeks since, I began another *Journal*, and am going on with it when I have any scraps of time: probably it will be finished next month. I expect to visit Yorkshire this spring, when I hope to see you.—I am, yours affectionately.

## 'I am become, I know not how, an honourable Man.'

*Letter III.*

DUBLIN, *June* 26, 1785.

MY DEAR BETSY,—Our Lord has indeed poured out abundance of blessings almost in every part of this kingdom. I have now gone through every province, and visited all the chief societies, and I have found far the greater part of them increasing, both in number and strength. Many are convinced of sin, many justified, and not a few perfected in love. One means of which is that several of our young preachers, of whom we made little account, appear to be (contrary to all expectation) men full of faith, and of the

Holy Ghost; and they are pushing out, to the right hand and the left; and wherever they go, God prospers their labour. I know not whether Thomas Walsh[1] will not revive in two, if not three, of them.

Many years ago I was saying, 'I cannot imagine how Mr. Whitefield can keep his soul alive, as he is not now going through honour and dishonour, evil report and good report, having nothing but honour and good report attending him wherever he goes.' It is now my own case; I am just in the condition now that he was then in. I am become, I know not how, an honourable man. The scandal of the cross is ceased; and all the kingdom, rich and poor, Papists and Protestants, behave with courtesy, nay, and seeming good-will! It seems as if I had well-nigh finished my course, and our Lord was giving me an honourable discharge.

My dear Betsy, have you not something to do in Dublin? If so, the sooner you visit our friends, the better. Peace be with your spirit! Adieu!

[1] One of Wesley's Irish preachers, of exceptional abilities and saintliness.

# CHAPTER X

## TO LADY MAXWELL

### Wesley's most distinguished Follower in Scotland.

No group of Wesley's letters brings out more clearly than these to Lady Maxwell (1742-1810) his constant anxiety for the highest welfare of men and women, whether poor or rich, or better displays his old-world courtesy towards those who ranked with himself in birth and breeding, or his charm and tact, which attracted all classes. Wesley recognised the strength of mind and character of Lady Maxwell, and gained, while he gave much, by the correspondence. Very beautiful are these intimate and affectionate letters, given here more completely than ever before, from this true father in God to this young lady, a childless widow in high society. He was then sixty-one; she was twenty-two.[1] We see him giving her counsel in the stages of earnest seeking after God, of penitent diffidence, calm peace, and hushed rapture. Always devotion to duty is urged. These letters should be compared with those to ladies in the preceding chapter.

### Lady Maxwell.

Miss Darcy Brisbane, of Brisbane, Largs, Ayrshire, was married to Sir Walter Maxwell, Bart., of Pollok, Scotland, when she was only seventeen, the year following that of her introduction at Court by her aunt, the Marchioness of Lothian. Two years after their marriage her husband died,

[1] *Methodist Magazine* (1816); R. Bourne's *Christian Sketch* (1819); Lancaster's *Life of Darcy, Lady Maxwell* (1826).

and their only child also. In these shattering sorrows Lady Maxwell believed she heard the divine call to a dedicated life. In her diary, which Southey said 'showed more of high enthusiastic devotion, unmingled and undebased, than is found in any other composition of the kind,' she wrote, 'I see God requires my whole heart; and He shall have it. . . . He saw I could not bear what the world calls happiness—riches, honour, and pleasure. With a hand graciously severe He tore all from me. . . . He informed my judgement, but first affected my heart. I was drawn rather than driven.'

## An Ideal Methodist.

Nearly fifty years of saintly life and service followed this covenant with God. Her course had the delightful monotony of almost uniform excellence. In her nice and eager use of time she imitated Wesley, and in her intelligent self-forgetting benevolence also. Every hour had its devotions or its happy task. The Methodist services, especially the class-meeting where she met the preachers and others, were her delight. For many years her house in Chalmers Close, in the High Street, was the centre of Methodism in Edinburgh. When Calvinism held sway in Scotland, it marked her conviction and strength to say, 'If God has a people on earth, and He has many, it is the Methodists.' She herself was almost the ideal Methodist. Few so nearly embodied its teaching on Christian perfection. Lady Maxwell joined the Methodists in 1764, and continued with them until her death. She also maintained appreciative connection with the Church of Scotland. She continually enjoyed the luxury of doing good, by relieving the sick, the poor, and embarrassed tradespeople, and by educating likely youths. Her courtly bearing and dignity made imposition difficult. In her lifetime eight hundred poor children passed through the school which she established and endowed in Edinburgh. Wesley received £800 from her for his Kingswood school. She was among the first to see the value of Sunday-schools. So absorbed, she declined suitable offers of marriage, which her beauty and position prompted. Her deeply affectionate

nature found delight in the friendship of her relative Lady Glenorchy, and this was not lessened when that lady forsook Wesley and embraced Calvinism. Lady Maxwell was her executrix. Among difficult tasks which this trust involved was the erection in 1789 of Hope Chapel, Bristol, for Calvinistic teaching. It was a memorial of Lady Henrietta Hope, the beloved young *protégée* of the two elder ladies.

## Wesley's Letters to her, 1764-1788.

Begun at her request, Wesley's letters date from the month following her memorable visit to Edinburgh in 1764, when he met her, and many evangelical Scottish leaders, among them the minister of her church, Dr. Webster. The correspondence was continued until within a few years of Wesley's death, probably until then. As ever and to all, Wesley is full of eager solicitude for his reader's spiritual decision and perfecting. 'Why not this hour?' he asks. Pleading with her merges into pleading for her. Often in these letters he seems to lay aside the pen and, like St. Paul for his readers, he bows his knees in prayer.

## 'Be not afraid to know yourself.'

*Letter I.*

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, *June* 20, 1764.

Will it be agreeable to my dear Lady Maxwell that I trouble her with a letter so soon? and that I write with so little ceremony? that I use no compliment, but all plainness of speech? If it be not, you must tell me so, and I shall know better how to speak for the time to come. Indeed, it would be unpleasing to me to use reserve. The regard I feel for you strongly inclines me to 'think aloud,' to tell you every thought which rises in my heart. I think God has taken unusual pains, so to speak, to make you a Christian; a Christian indeed, not in name, worshipping God in spirit

and in truth; having in you the mind that was in Christ, and walking as Christ also walked. He has given you affliction upon affliction; He has used every possible means to unhinge your soul from things of earth, that it might fix on Him alone. How far the design of His love has succeeded I could not well judge from a short conversation. Your Ladyship will therefore give me leave to inquire, Is the heaviness you frequently feel merely owing to weakness of body and the loss of near relations? I will hope it is not. It might, indeed, at first spring from these outward pressures. But did not the gracious Spirit of God strike in, and take occasion from these to convince you of sin, of unbelief, of the want of Christ? And is not the sense of this one great cause, if not the greatest, of your present distress? If so, the greatest danger is, either that you should stifle that conviction, not suffering yourself to be convinced that you are all sin, the chief of sinners; or, that you should heal the wound lightly, that you should rest before you know Christ is yours, before His Spirit witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God. My dear Lady, be not afraid to know yourself; yea, to know yourself as you are known. How soon, then, will you know your Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous! And why not this day? Why not this hour? If you feel your want, I beseech the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to look upon you now! O give Thy servant power to believe! to see and feel how Thou hast loved her! Now let her sink down into the arms of Thy love; and say unto her soul, 'I am thy salvation.'

With regard to particular advices, I know not how far your Ladyship would have me proceed. I would not be backward to do anything in my power; and yet I would not obtrude. But in any respect you may command, My dear Lady, your Ladyship's affectionate servant.

## 'Do not stop one Moment!'

*Letter II.*

MANCHESTER, *July* 10, 1764.

MY DEAR LADY,—Till I had the pleasure of receiving yours, I was almost in doubt whether you would think it worth your while to write or not. So much the more I rejoiced when that doubt was removed, and removed in so agreeable a manner. I cannot but think of you often: I seem to see you just by me, panting after God, under the heavy pressure of bodily weakness and faintness, bereaved of your dearest relatives, convinced that you are a sinner, a debtor that has nothing to pay, and just ready to cry out,

> 'Jesu, now I have lost my all,
> Let me upon Thy bosom fall.'

Amen, Lord Jesus! Speak, for Thy servant heareth! Speak Thyself into her heart! Lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees. Let her see Thee full of grace and truth, and make her glad with the light of Thy countenance.

Do not stop, my dear Lady, one moment, 'because you have not felt sorrow enough.' Your Friend above has felt enough of it for you.

> 'O Lamb of God, was ever pain,
> Was ever love like Thine!'

Look, look unto Him, and be thou saved! He is not a God afar off: He is now hovering over you with eyes of tenderness and love! Only believe! Then He turns your heaviness into joy. Do not think you are not humble enough, not contrite enough, not earnest enough. You are nothing: but Christ is all, and He is yours. The Lord

God write it upon your heart, and take you for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

O that you may be ever as dead to the world as you are now! I apprehend the greatest danger from that quarter. If you should be induced to seek happiness out of Christ, how soon would your good desires vanish! Especially if you should give way to the temptation to which your person, your youth, and your fortune will not fail to expose you. If you escape this snare, I trust you will be a real Christian, having the power, as well as the form, of religion. I expect you will then have likewise better health and spirits: perhaps to-morrow. But, O! take Christ to-day! I long to have you happy in Him! Surely few have a more earnest desire of your happiness than, My very dear Lady, Your Ladyship's most affectionate servant.

'Faith, Living, Conquering, Loving Faith, is undoubtedly the Thing you want.'

Wesley will not let her stop short of that Gospel hope, the sense of sins forgiven. Assurance to the human spirit by the divine Spirit, of acceptance by God for Christ's sake, is one of his messages to the world. He is here upon work he loves. 'I do not often write such long letters.'

*Letter III.*

LONDON, *Aug.* 17, 1764.

MY DEAR LADY,—Since I had the pleasure of yours I have hardly had an hour that I could call my own: otherwise I should not have delayed writing so long, as I have a very tender regard for you and an earnest desire that you should be altogether a Christian. I cannot be content with your being ever so harmless or regular in your behaviour or even exemplary in all externals: Nay, more than all this you have received already: for you have the fear of God. But shall you stop here? God forbid. This is only the

beginning of wisdom. You are not to end here: Fear shall ripen into love. You shall know (perhaps very soon) that love of God which passeth knowledge. You shall witness the kingdom of God within you: even righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

It is no small instance of the goodness of God towards you that you are conscious of your want: your want of living faith. And His goodness herein is more remarkable because almost all your neighbours would set you down for a right good believer. O beware of these flatterers! Hold fast the conviction which God hath given you! Faith, living, conquering, loving faith, is undoubtedly the thing you want. And of this you have frequently a taste to encourage you in pressing forward: Such is the tender mercy of Him who loves you: Such His desire that you should receive all His precious promises! Do not think they are afar off. Do not imagine you must stay long (years or months) before you receive them. Do not put them off for a day, an hour! Why not now? Why should you not look up this instant and see as it were Jesus Christ set forth, evidently set forth, crucified before your eyes? O hear His voice! 'Daughter, be of good cheer: thy sins are forgiven thee!' Say not in thy heart, 'Who shall go up into heaven, or who shall go down into the deep?' No; the word is nigh thee; even in thy mouth and in thy heart. 'Lord I believe; help my unbelief.'

Joy in the Holy Ghost is a precious gift of God; but yet tenderness of conscience is still greater; and all this is for you. Just ready,—

> 'The speechless awe which dares not move,
> And all the silent heaven of love.'

I am no great friend to solitary Christianity: nevertheless in so peculiar a case as yours I think an exception may be

admitted. It does seem most expedient for you to retire out of the city, at least for a season, till God has increased your strength. For the company of those who know not God, who are strangers to the religion of the heart, especially if they are sensible, agreeable people, might quite damp the grace of God in your soul.

You cannot oblige me more than by fully opening your mind to me: there is no danger of your tiring me. I do not often write such long letters: but when I write to you, I am full of matter. I seem to see you just before me, a poor, feeble, helpless creature, but just upon the point of salvation: upright of heart (in a measure), full of real desires for God, and emerging into light. The Lord take you wholly! So prays, My dear Lady, Your affectionate servant.

## 'At present but a tender, sickly Plant.'

Three months have passed since their interview. Lady Maxwell has joined the Methodists. Like all fervid, aggressive sections of the Church, it drew to itself some strange, unworthy folk, as well as many who were excellent and sincere.

*Letter IV.*

BRISTOL, *Sept.* 22, 1764.

MY DEAR LADY,—You need be under no manner of apprehension of writing too often to me. The more frequent your letters are, the more welcome they will be. When I have not heard from you for some time, I begin to be full of fears; I am afraid either that your bodily weakness increases, or that your desires after God grow cold. I consider you are at present but a tender, sickly plant, easily hurt by any rough blast. But I trust this will not be so long; for you have a strong Helper. And the Lord, whom you serve, though feebly and imperfectly, will suddenly come to His temple. When, Lord? Are all things ready

now? Here is the sinner; one whose mouth is stopped; who has nothing to pay; who pleads neither her own harmlessness, nor works, nor good desires, nor sincerity; but can adopt that strange word,—

> 'I give up every plea beside,
> Lord, I am damn'd; but Thou hast died.'

He has died; therefore you shall live. O do not reason against Him! Let Him take you now! Let Him take you just as you are, and make you what is acceptable in His sight.

It gives me pleasure indeed to hear that God has given you resolution to join the society. Undoubtedly you will suffer reproach on the account; but it is the reproach of Christ. And you will have large amends, when the Spirit of glory and of God shall rest upon you. Yet I foresee a danger: at first you will be inclined to think that all the members of the society are in earnest. And when you find that some are otherwise (which will always be the case in so large a body of people), then prejudice may easily steal in, and exceedingly weaken your soul. O beware of this rock of offence! When you see anything amiss (upon hearsay you will not readily receive it), remember our Lord's word, 'What is that to thee? Follow thou Me.' And I entreat you, do not regard the half-Methodists,—if we must use the name. Do not mind them who endeavour to hold Christ in one hand and the world in the other. I want you to be all a Christian; such a Christian as the Marquis de Renty or Gregory Lopez was. Such a one as that saint of God, Jane Cooper: all sweetness, all gentleness, all love. Methinks you are just what she was when I saw her first. I shrink at the thought of seeing you what she was when I saw her last. But why should I? What is all the pain of one that is glorifying God in the fires, with 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit'?

May I not take upon me to give you one advice more? Be very wary how you contract new acquaintance. All, even sincere people, will not profit you. I should be pained at your conversing frequently with any but those who are of a deeply serious spirit, and who speak closely to the point. You need not condemn them, and yet you may say, 'This will not do for me.'

May He that loves you supply all your wants, and answer your enlarged desires! So prays, My very dear Lady, Your affectionate servant.

## 'I found the same Openness and Sweetness . . . Tenderness and Steadiness.'

A month earlier than this letter Wesley was in Edinburgh, and began a chapel for the Methodists. He was probably Lady Maxwell's guest. Here he is fighting confidence in good works as a basis of acceptance with God: 'Cast your deadly doing down!' His recognition of spiritual growth and tenderness in promoting it here may be contrasted with his method with his audiences in Londonderry, where he now was:—'I spoke as strongly and closely as I could; but yet I cannot find the way to wound the people. They are neither offended nor convinced.'

*Letter V.*

LONDONDERRY, *May* 25, 1765.

MY DEAR LADY,—It is not easy for me to express the satisfaction I received in the few hours I lately spent with you. Before I saw you, I had many fears concerning you, lest your concern for the one thing should be abated, lest your desire should be cooled, or your mind a little hurt by any of the things which have lately occurred. So much the greater was my joy when all those fears were removed; when I found the same openness and sweetness as before, both in your spirit and conversation, and the same earnest-

ness of desire after the only thing which deserves the whole strength of our affection. I believe tenderness and steadiness are seldom planted by nature in one spirit. But what is too hard for almighty grace? This can give strength and softness together. This is able to fill your soul with all firmness, as well as with all gentleness. And hereunto you are called; for nothing less than all the mind which was in Christ Jesus.

It was with great pleasure that I observed your fixed resolution not to rest in anything short of this. I know not why you should; why you should be content with being half a Christian devoted partly to God and partly to the world, or more properly to the devil. Nay, but let us be all for God. He has created the whole, our whole body, soul, and spirit. He that bought us hath redeemed the whole; and let Him take the purchase of His blood. Let Him sanctify the whole, that all we have and are may be a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving!

I am not afraid of your being satisfied with less than this; but I am afraid of your seeking it the wrong way. Here is the danger, that you should seek it, not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law. See how exactly the Apostle speaks: You do not seek it directly, but, as it were, by works. I fear lest this should be your case, which might retard your receiving the blessing. Christ has died for you: He has bought pardon for you. Why should you not receive it now? while you have this paper in your hand? Because you have not thus or thus? See your own works. Because you are not thus or thus? more contrite? more earnest? more sincere? See your own righteousness. O let it all go! None but Christ! None but Christ! And if He alone is sufficient: if what He has suffered and done, if His blood and righteousness are enough, they are nigh thee! in thy mouth and in thy heart! See, all things are

ready! Do not wait for this or that preparation! for something to bring to God! Bring Christ! Rather, let Him bring you; bring you home to God! Lord Jesus take her! Take her and all her sins! Take her as she is! Take her now! Arise, why tarriest thou? Wash away her sins! Sprinkle her with Thy blood! Let her sink down into the arms of Thy love and cry out, 'My Lord and my God!'

Let me hear from you as soon as you can. You do not know how great a satisfaction this is to, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

## 'Light in an Instant or by Degrees.'

Wesley learns while he teaches. He has seen and will yet see multitudes pass in a moment from the valley of decision into the sunlight of conscious acceptance with God in Christ; but it may be He is 'working more gradually in you.' Notice his customary solicitude as to health: 'Having good spirits, very much depends on this.'

*Letter VI.*

KILKENNY, *July 5*, 1765.

MY DEAR LADY,—As yours was sent from Dublin to Cork, and then back again hither, I did not receive it until yesterday. I am now setting my face again towards England: but I expect to be in Dublin till the beginning of next month, and then to cross over, so as to be at Manchester (if it please God) about the middle of August. Either at Dublin, or at Manchester, I hope to have the pleasure of hearing from you. This is indeed a pleasure, as it is to write to you: though sometimes I do this with fear: a fear lest I should give you any pain, as I know the tenderness of your spirit. I wish I could be of some service to you: that I could encourage you to cast yourself on Him that loves

you: that is now waiting to pour His peace into your heart, to give you an entrance into the holiest by His blood. See Him, see Him! full of grace and truth! full of grace and truth for thee! I do not doubt but He is gradually working in you: but I want you to experience, likewise, an instantaneous work. Then shall the gradual go on swiftly. Lord, speak! Thy servant heareth! Say thou, 'Let there be light,' and there shall be light. Now let it spring up in your heart!

It may be, He that does all things well has wise reasons, though not apparent to us, for working more gradually in you than He has done of late years in most others. It may please Him to give you the consciousness of His favour, the conviction that you are accepted through the Beloved, by almost insensible degrees, like the dawning of the day! And it is all one how it began, so you do but walk in the light. Be this given in an instant, or by degrees, hold it fast. Christ is yours: He hath loved you: He hath given Himself for you. Therefore, you shall be holy as He is holy, both in heart and in all manner of conversation.

Give me leave, my dear friend, to add a word, likewise, concerning your bodily health. You should in anywise give yourself all the air and exercise you can. And I should advise you (even though long custom made it difficult, if that were the case) to sleep as early as possible: never later than ten, in order to rise as early as health will permit. The having good spirits, so called, or the contrary, very much depends on this. I believe medicines will do you little service: You need only proper diet, exact regularity, and constant exercise, with the blessing of God.

Your speaking or writing was never tedious to me yet; and I am persuaded never will be. Your letters are more and more agreeable to, My very dear Lady, Your most affectionate servant.

# TO LADY MAXWELL

## 'That strange Reserve which so prevails in North Britain.'

*Letter VII.*

LONDON, *December* 1, 1765.

MY DEAR LADY,—Perhaps there is scarce any child of man that is not, at some time, a little touched by prejudice, so far, at least, as to be troubled, though not wounded. But it does not hurt, unless it fixes on the mind. It is not strength of understanding which can prevent this. The heart, which otherwise suffers most by it, makes the resistance which only is effectual. I cannot easily be prejudiced by any person whom I tenderly love till that loves declines. So long therefore as our affection is preserved by watchfulness and prayer to Him who gave it, prejudice must stand at a distance. Another excellent defence against it is openness. I admire you upon this account. You dare (in spite of that strange reserve which so prevails in North Britain) speak the naked sentiments of your heart. I hope my dear friend will never do otherwise. In simplicity and godly sincerity, the very reverse of worldly wisdom, have all your conversation in the world.

Have you received a gleam of light from above, a spark of faith? O let it not go! Hold fast, by His grace, that token of His love, that earnest of your inheritance. Come just as you are, and come boldly to the throne of grace. You need not delay! Even now the bowels of Jesus Christ yearn over you. What have you to do with to-morrow? I love you to-day. And how much more does He love you! He

> 'Pities still his wandering sheep,
> Longs to bring you to His fold!'

To-day hear His voice: the voice of Him that speaks as never man spake: the voice that raises the dead, that calls

the things which are not as though they were. Hark! What says He now? 'Fear not: only believe! Woman, thy sins are forgiven thee! Go in peace: thy faith hath made thee whole.' Indeed I am, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

## 'Trial did not turn you out of the Way.'

Lady Maxwell has proved the truth of Wesley's warning in a previous letter that not all professors are possessors of religion. She was unaffected. He is about to see her in Edinburgh, with his wife and her daughter, Miss Vazeille. This he did, as is seen in the letter next to this. They were probably Lady Maxwell's guests. That letter from Glasgow, and the subsequent one from Hartlepool, are new.

### *Letter VIII.*

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, *May* 6, 1766.

MY DEAR LADY,—It was well that I did not hear anything of a trial that you lately had till it was past. You have great reason to bless God that this did not turn you out of the way. You might very easily have inferred from it that 'all these people are alike,' and thence have given way to a thousand reasonings, which would have brought you into utter darkness. But it is plain you are not left to your own weakness. You have a strong Helper. The Lord stands on your right hand; therefore you are not moved. And I make no doubt He will continue to help till His arm brings you salvation. But, in the meantime, you have need of patience; and the more so because you have a weak body. This, one may expect, will frequently press down the soul; especially until you are strong in faith. But how soon may that be, seeing it is the gift, yea, and the free gift, of God! Therefore, it is never far off. The word is nigh thee! 'Only believe!' Look unto Jesus! Be thou saved!

Receive out of His fulness, grace upon grace; mercy, and grace to keep mercy.

On the 24th instant, I hope to be at Edinburgh with my wife and daughter. But perhaps you will see the salvation of God before you see, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

## 'Our Late Conversations.'

Besides matters of deep spiritual concern did Wesley chat with her of the sessions of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which he attended? He was shocked at the behaviour of many of its members. 'Had any preacher behaved so in our Conference,' says his *Journal*, 'he would have had no more place amongst us.'

### *Letter IX.*

GLASGOW, *June* 22, 1766.

MY DEAR LADY,—How great was the satisfaction which I received in several of our late conversations! The fears which I long entertained concerning you are now wellnigh at an end. I am not now afraid of your being entangled again by your honourable relations or acquaintance: or of your regarding the pleasures that perish in the using, or seeking happiness in the things of earth. God has given you a taste for better things, and has taught you to see the Honour that comes from Him only. Oh what is all the applause or admiration of our poor fellow-worms to this! Let them censure or praise: of how small concern is this, so your Great Judge says, 'Servant of God, well done.' This is the applause which I trust you will always seek, and of which you cannot be disappointed, seeing 'every one that seeketh, findeth: every one that asketh, receiveth.'

Before this, I hope it is made plain to you whether you should comply with St. James or no. I incline to think

something of the kind would be good for your body. All the doubt is, whether your soul will prosper! I commend you for being more careful on this than on any other account. And unless you have a clear, particular conviction from God that He will preserve you in the fiery furnace, I cannot advise you to venture into it. Your mind is as yet exceeding tender. You are weak as an infant; your bones are not knit; you are not able to bear.

Yet if it should please our Lord to call you into the combat, He would strengthen you for it, and you would be able to testify, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.'

Pray let me hear (at Newcastle-upon-Tyne) that you use *some exercise* every day. I cannot tell you how tender a concern I feel for you. Fulfil you my joy by receiving all the promise. Then, I am sure, you will love and pray for, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

## 'The Safest Step.'

*Letter X.*

HARTLEPOOL, *July* 8, 1766.

MY DEAR LADY,—You have certainly taken the safest step. There would have been danger if you had acted otherwise. There is something infectious in the familiar conversation of persons that know not God. Unless we are continually on the watch, it damps and deadens the soul. So much the more reason you have to praise God for the liberty He has given you. He has dealt exceedingly tender with you. He has given you a thousand tokens for good. Do not dare to distrust His goodness any more! Check every thought of that kind. It cometh not from Him that calleth you. Christ is yours. Here is your foundation. Let nothing remove you from this. Jesus hath loved *you*. He

hath given himself for *you*. And the Father Himself loves you, and will withhold from you no manner of thing that is good.

I am in much hope. Mr. Taylor will be of use to you. You will not object to his plainness of speech, but rather encourage him from time to time to tell you all that is in his heart concerning you.

Mrs. Douglas spent a day with our friends at Newcastle, and I believe a profitable one. I have desired my wife to call upon her next week and bring the Colonel and her to York. If she could spend a few days with the simple Christians there, I hope it would be the means of establishing her for ever.

I rejoice to hear that you have the resolution to sleep and rise early. The uneasiness of it will soon be over, but the advantage will remain for ever. Oh, fear no cross, God is on your side, and will command all to work together for good.—I am, My dear Lady, Your most affectionate servant.

## 'Your Health . . . and the Peace of God.'

*Letter XI.*

NORWICH, *Feby.* 23, 1767.

MY DEAR LADY,—For a considerable time I was under apprehensions that you were in a state of temptation. And as I had no other way of helping you, this put me upon commending you the more frequently to Him that is able to save you. Your last, therefore, was doubly acceptable to me, as it relieved me from my fears concerning you, and gave me the occasion of rejoicing over one for whom I have the most sincere and tender affection. Sure it is, that the grace of God is sufficient for you, in this and in every trying hour. So you have happily experienced it to be already; and so I trust you will experience it to the end. But you must not imagine that you are yet out of the

reach of temptation. Thoughts will be suggested again and again: so that you have still need to be

> 'For ever standing on your guard
> And watching unto prayer.'

And let my dear friend keep at the utmost distance from temptation and carefully shun all occasions of evil. Oh it is a good though painful fight! You have Him with you who can have compassion on your infirmities, who remembers you are but dust, and who, at the same time, has all power in heaven and earth, and so is able to save you to the uttermost. Exercise, especially as the spring comes on, will be of greater service to your health than a hundred medicines, and I know not whether it will not be restored in a larger measure than for many years when the peace of God fixes in your heart. Is it far off? Do not think so. His ear is not heavy; He now hears the cry of your heart. And will He not answer? Why not to-day? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Your openness obliges me to be more than ever, My dear Lady, your affectionate friend and servant.

## 'I begin to be full of Fears.'

Lady Maxwell, as shown by her diary of a few weeks earlier than the next letter, was 'distressed in mind and weak in body, and without those comfortable views which I formerly had.' She therefore made, if possible, more than her usual careful preparation for attendance at the Lord's Table—a rare and exalted sacred season in the Scottish churches, which she never neglected. Wesley's letter from Ireland, until now almost unknown, was very welcome to her. It is here reproduced in facsimile.

*Letter XII.*

CASTLEBAR, *May* 7, 1767.

MY DEAR LADY,—Your silence is not enough. I will not believe you are tired of my correspondence unless I have it

# WESLEY'S LETTER

TO

# LADY MAXWELL

From CASTLEBAR, May 7, 1767

*FACSIMILE* from the ORIGINAL
in the Everett Collection, United
Methodist College, Victoria Park,
Manchester.
*THE TEXT* of this LETTER is
given on page 400

LETTERS OF JOHN WESLEY

BY REV. GEORGE EAYRS, F.R.HIST.S.

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1916

into one spirit. Miss Peggy is one of the holiest young women that I have any knowledge of: indeed, I think both the sisters have no desire but to glorify God with their body and with their spirit. You will be so kind as to let me know when you expect to be at Newcastle, and possibly I may meet you there. As you were providentially called to the place where you now are, I cannot doubt but you will be preserved. But you have need of much prayer and continual watching, or you may insensibly lose what God has given. I am jealous over you: I cannot but be interested in whatever concerns you. I know your tender spirit, your desire to please all for their good; your unwillingness to give pain. And even these amiable dispositions may prove a snare; for how easily may they be carried too far! If you find anything hurts you, or draws your soul from God, I conjure you, flee for your life! In that case you must not stand upon ceremony; you must escape without delay. But I hope better things: I hope you are sent to Brisbane, not to receive hurt, but to do good; to grow in grace, to find a deeper communion than ever with Him that gave Himself for you, and to fulfil the joy of, My dear Lady, Your most affectionate friend.

## 'A Christian after the Common Rate. No!'

A strange letter, and a new one, mingled of Christian counsel, close confidences, and a ghost story. 'The strange account of Elizabeth Hobson of Sunderland,' a woman of twenty-four, was a long story of ghostly apparitions and sounds which she stated she had seen and heard from childhood at the times when people died whom she knew. Wesley gives it in full in his *Journal* under date May 25 of this year. Some one had filched half Wesley's account of it. Lady Maxwell has these, or a copy of the complete account. Elizabeth Hobson had since met 'the ghost' again. This, she declared, was that of her grandfather, who

appointed Boyldon Hill, half a mile from Durham, as meeting-place! Johnson and Boswell did not accept the story. Wesley did, and many such, as his *Journal* shows. Dr. Fitchett aptly says that the strange sounds at Epworth Rectory, the home of Wesley's boyhood, made a path in his brain for all such stories, and for the supernatural.

In the letter next to the following, Wesley refers to his mother's and his own views as to some apparitions.

*Letter XIV.*

REDRUTH, *Sept.* 9, 1768.

MY DEAR LADY,—It is impossible for me to give *you* pain without feeling it myself. And yet the manner wherein you receive my plain dealing gives me pleasure too. Perhaps you never had so uncomplaisant a correspondent before. Yet I think you hardly ever had one who had a more tender regard for you. But it is this very thing which lays me under a constraint to tell you all I hear or fear concerning you, because I cannot be content that you should be a Christian after the common rate. No. I want you to have all the mind that was in Christ, and in *everything* to walk as He walked. To live like an angel here below, unblameable in spotless love.

What a comfort it is when we can have confidence in each other! I rejoice that you can speak freely, even upon so delicate a subject. You may be assured that no eye but mine shall see your letter. One cannot be too wary in things of this kind; some men are so weak, and others so wicked. I give entire credit to everything you say, particularly concerning Mr. H., and I join with you in thinking there must be some mistake in the person who informed me of that circumstance. I do not believe [he] uttered such a word. I cannot think him capable of it. I am now entirely easy upon that head, being persuaded that, through the power of Christ strengthening you, you will stand fast both in the

inward and outward liberty wherewith He has made you free. I am glad to hear Lady Baird has the courage to cast in her lot with a poor, despised people. In what instance do you apprehend L. B. to be in danger of enthusiasm? When I know more particularly, I will take an opportunity of either speaking or writing.

I suppose a copy of the strange account of Eliz. Hobson was sent you from Newcastle from my papers. Not long after, the former half of these papers, eight pages out of sixteen, was taken away, none can tell how to this day. What I could remember I wrote down again. But I question whether my memory served me as to every circumstance, and must therefore ask of you a copy of what was lost. If you please, Mr. Thompson can transcribe it for me. The thing is now brought, I hope, to a final issue. She has met him at Boyldon Hill, when he took his leave with, 'I shall see you more, in time or in eternity.'

How much happiness is it for us, that we hope to see each other, both in time and in eternity? 'Nor shorter space True Love can satisfy.'

That you may be daily more athirst both for holiness and glory, is the prayer of, My dear Lady, Your affectionate servant.

I am now setting my face toward Bristol.

## 'An Apprehension of a deceased Friend.'

*Letter XV.*

London, *March* 3, 1769.

My dear Lady,—To be incapable of sympathising with the distressed is not a desirable state; nor would one wish to extirpate either sorrow or any other of our natural passions. And yet it is both possible and highly desirable to attain the same experience with the Marquis de Renty,

who, on occasion of his lady's illness, told those who inquired how he could bear it, 'I cannot say but my nature is deeply affected with the apprehension of so great a loss; and yet I feel such a full acquiescence in the will of God, that, were it proper, I could dance and sing.'

I have heard my mother say, 'I have frequently been as fully assured that my father's spirit was with me as if I had seen him with my eyes.' But she did not explain herself any further. I have myself many times found on a sudden so lively an apprehension of a deceased friend that I have sometimes turned about to look; at the same time I have felt an uncommon affection for them. But I never had anything of this kind with regard to any but those that died in faith. In dreams I have had exceedingly lively conversations with them, and I doubt not but they were then very near.

It gives me pleasure to hear that you did not neglect our own preaching in order to attend any other. The hearing Mr. F. at other times I do not know that any could blame, unless you found it unsettled your mind or weakened your expectation of an entire deliverance from sin. And this, I apprehend, it did not.

You never 'take up too much of my time.' To converse with you, even in this imperfect way, is both agreeable and useful to me. I love your spirit, and it does me good. I trust God will give you that hunger and thirst after righteousness till you are satisfied therewith. And who knows how soon?—I am, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

'Concerned that you are unwell.'

Always frail, Lady Maxwell's course is again interrupted by sickness.

# TO LADY MAXWELL

*Letter XVI.*

LONDONDERRY, *April* 29, 1769.

MY DEAR LADY,—A while ago I was concerned at hearing from Edinburgh that you were unwell, although I could not doubt but it was ordered well by an unerring Providence as a means of keeping you dead to all below, and of quickening your affections to things above. And indeed this is the rule whereby the inhabitants of a better world judge of good and evil. Whatever raises the mind to God is good; and in the same proportion as it does this. Whatever draws the heart from its centre is evil; and more or less so, as it has more or less of this effect. You have accordingly found pain, sickness, bodily weakness, to be real goods, as bringing you nearer and nearer to the fountain of all happiness and holiness. And yet, it is certain, nature shrinks from pain, and that without any blame. Only in the same moment that we say, 'If it is possible, let this cup pass from me,' the heart should add, like our great Pattern, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

Lady Baird I did not see before I left London, and Lady K. B. I did not understand. She was exceedingly civil, and I think affectionate, but perfectly shut up, so that I knew no more of her state of mind than if I had never seen her. —I am, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

## 'Live To-day.'

It is probable that the one in high place here referred to was Lady Glenorchy.[1] She had opened St. Mary's Chapel, Edinburgh, for use by Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Methodists. Wesley found a minister for her as Lady Maxwell and she asked—the Rev. Richard De Courcey—a Calvinist. The common use of the chapel proved unworkable. After six months Lady Glenorchy expelled the

[1] See p. 418.

Methodist preachers, as their evangelical Arminianism differed from her Calvinism. The two letters which follow this one give some particulars of this trouble.[1] Even Whitefield's death did not stop controversy. *That* Wesley passes lightly. 'Live to-day!' which he enjoins as a counsel to her here, was his motto, *Vive hodie*. His warnings in later letters against De Courcey are very quaint.

### *Letter XVII.*

LONDON, *February* 17, 1770.

MY DEAR LADY,—To us it may seem that uninterrupted health would be a greater help to us than pain or sickness. But herein we certainly are mistaken: we are not such good judges in our own cause. You may truly say, 'Health I shall have, if health be best.' But in this and in all things you may trust Him that loves you. Indeed, nervous disorders are, of all others, as one observes, enemies to the joy of faith. But the essence of it—that confidence in a loving, pardoning God—they can neither destroy nor impair. Nay, as they keep you dead to all below, they may forward you therein; and they may increase your earnestness after that precious love which turns earth into Paradise.

It will be by much pains and patience that you will keep one in high life steadfast in the plain, old way. I should wish you to converse with her as frequently as possible. Then, I trust, God will use you to keep alive the fire which He has kindled. I am in great hopes that the chapel will be of use; but it will not be easy to secure a converted clergyman. A schoolmaster will be more easily found; although many here are frightened at the name of Scotland. A diligent master may manage twenty or perhaps thirty children. If one whom I lately saw is willing to come, I believe he will answer your design.

[1] *Journal, in loc*; Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 64.

I have some thoughts of going to America; but the way is not yet plain. I wait till Providence shall speak more clearly, on one side or the other. In April I hope to reach Inverness, and to take Edinburgh on my way back to England. But let us live to-day! What a blessing may you receive now!

> 'Now let your heart with love o'erflow
> And all your life His glory show!'

I am, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

## 'I never preach in a Controversial Way.'

*Letter XVIII.*

LONDON, *January* 24, 1771.

MY DEAR LADY,—Although Mr. M'Nab is quite clear as to justification by faith, and is, in general, a sound and good preacher, yet I fear he is not clear of blame in this. He is too warm and impatient of contradiction, otherwise he must be lost to all common sense, to preach against final perseverance in Scotland. From the first hour that I entered the kingdom, it was a sacred rule with me never to preach on any controverted point, at least *not in a controversial way.* Any one may see that this is only to put a sword into our enemies' hands. It is the direct way to increase all their prejudices, and to make all our labours fruitless.

You will shortly have a trial of another kind. Mr. De Courcey purposes to set out for Edinburgh in a few days. He was from a child a member of our societies in the south of Ireland. There he received remission of sins, and was for some time groaning for full redemption. But when he came to Dublin the Philistines were upon him, and soon prevailed over him. Quickly he was convinced that 'there is no perfection,' and that 'all things depend on *absolute and un-*

*changeable decrees.*' At first he was exceedingly warm upon these heads; now he is far more calm. His natural temper, I think, is good; he is open, friendly, and generous. He has also a good understanding, and is not unacquainted with learning, though not deeply versed therein. He has no disagreeable person, a pleasing address, and is a lively as well as a sensible preacher. 'Surely such a preacher as this was never in Edinburgh before! Mr. Whitefield himself was not to compare with him! What an angel of a man!' Now, when you add to this that he is quite new, and very young, you will judge how he will be admired and caressed. How will a raw, inexperienced youth be able to encounter this? If there be not the greatest of miracles to preserve him, will it not turn his brain? And may he not then do far more hurt than either Mr. W. or Mr. T. did? Will he not prevent your friend from going on to perfection or thinking of any such thing? Nay, may he not shake you also? He would; but that the God whom you serve is able to deliver you. At present, indeed, he is in an exceedingly loving spirit. But will that continue long? There will be danger on the one hand if it does; there will be danger on the other if it does not.

It does not appear that any great change has been wrought in our neighbours by Mr. Whitefield's death. He had fixed the prejudice so deep that even he himself was not able to remove it; yet our congregations have increased exceedingly, and the work of God increases on every side. I am glad you use more exercise. It is good for both body and soul. As soon as Mr. De Courcey is come, I shall be glad to hear how the prospect opens. You will then need a larger share of the wisdom from above; and I trust you will write with all openness to, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

# TO LADY MAXWELL

## 'The Preachers . . . felt a Damp upon their Spirits.'

*Letter XIX.*

LONDON, *February* 26, 1771.

MY DEAR LADY,—I cannot but think that the chief reason of the little good done by our preachers in Edinburgh is the opposition which has been made by the ministers of Edinburgh, as well as by the false brethren from England. These steeled the hearts of the people against all the good impressions which might otherwise have been made; so that the same preachers, by whom God hath constantly wrought, not only in various parts of England, but likewise in the northern parts of Scotland, were in Edinburgh only not useless. They felt a damp upon their spirits; they had not their usual liberty of speech; and the word they spoke seemed to rebound upon them, and not to sink into the hearts of the hearers. At my first coming I usually find something of this myself; but the second or third time of preaching, it is gone; and I feel, greater is He that is with us than all the powers of earth and hell.

If any one could show you, by plain Scripture and reason, a more excellent way than that you have received, you certainly would do well to receive it; and I trust I should do the same. But I think it will not be easy for any one to show us either that Christ did not die for all or that He is not willing as well as able to cleanse from all sin, even in the present world. If your steady adherence to these great truths be termed bigotry, yet you have no need to be ashamed. You are reproached for Christ's sake, and the spirit of glory and of Christ shall rest upon you. Perhaps your Lord may use you to soften some of the harsh spirits, and to preserve Lady Glenorchy or Mr. De Courcey from being hurt by them. I hope to hear from you (on whom I

can depend) a frequent account of what is done near you. After you have suffered awhile, may God stablish, strengthen, settle you!—I am, My dear Lady, Your very affectionate servant.

## 'Easier to lose Love than to find Truth.'

Fletcher,[1] whom Wesley here and often justly praises, had defended him and his Conference by his *First Check to Antinomianism.* It was directed against the Countess of Huntingdon and other Calvinistic leaders who accused Wesley and the Conference, hastily and unjustly, of favouring Justification by Works. To make the Methodist teaching quite clear, Wesley wrote a Declaration at the Conference of 1770, and he and fifty-three preachers signed it. It stated that their trust and that of all 'real Christian Believers' was 'in the alone merits of Christ for salvation, in Life, Death, or the Day of Judgement.'

But what of Lady Maxwell herself and her spiritual progress? This, as always, is Wesley's chief concern.

### *Letter XX.*

LONDON, *February* 8, 1772.

MY DEAR LADY,—I commend you for meddling with points of controversy as little as possible. It is abundantly easier to lose our love in that rough field than to find truth. This consideration has made me exceedingly thankful to God for giving me a respite from polemical labours. I am glad He has given to others both the power and the will to answer them that trouble me, so that I may not always be forced to hold my weapons in one hand, while I am building with the other. I rejoice, likewise, not only in the abilities but in the temper of Mr. Fletcher. He writes as he lives. I cannot say that I know such another clergyman in Eng-

[1] See p. 138.

land or Ireland. He is all fire, but it is the fire of love. His writings, like his constant conversation, breathe nothing else to those who read him with an impartial eye. And although Mr. Shirley scruples not to charge him with using subtilty and metaphysical distinctions, yet he abundantly clears himself of this charge in the *Second Check to Antinomianism*. Such the last letters are styled, and with great propriety, for such they have really been. They have given a considerable check to those who were everywhere making void the law through faith, setting 'the righteousness of Christ' in opposition to the law of Christ, and teaching that 'without holiness any man may see the Lord.'

Notwithstanding both outward and inward trials, I trust you are still on the borders of perfect love. For the Lord is nigh!

> 'See the Lord thy Keeper stand
> Omnipotently near!
> Lo! He holds thee by thy hand,
> And banishes thy fear!'

You have no need of fear. Hope unto the end! Are not all things possible to him that believeth? Dare to believe! Seize a blessing now! The Lord increase your faith! In this prayer I know you join with, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

## 'I want Heat more than Light.'

City Road Chapel, London, was the new building which required Wesley's presence. It was to become a centre of world-wide effort and devout interest. High impulse was received by him from Lady Maxwell's letters. Like St. Paul, he was profuse in thanks. As he had so long desired and prayed, Lady Maxwell now enjoyed the riches of the Christian life. Her diary for 1776 says—'What God has done for my soul mocks all power of expression. . . . He

shines now with meridian brightness.' The footnote of this letter links with Wesley's humble boast—'Our people die well.'

*Letter XXI.*

NEWCASTLE, *May* 3, 1777.

MY DEAR LADY,—The new chapel which we are now building in London requires much of my attendance there, so that I cannot be conveniently absent more than two Sundays together. Accordingly, when I set out I fixed Saturday the 19th inst. for my return, and ordered notice to be given of my design to meet the classes the week following. I cannot therefore have the pleasure of seeing you now, which, if it could be, I should greatly desire. I love your spirit, I love your conversation, I love your correspondence. I have often received both profit and pleasure thereby. I frequently find a want of more light; but I want heat more than light, and you have frequently been an instrument of conveying this to my soul, of animating me to run the glorious race. I trust you find no decay in your own soul, but a still increasing vigour. Some time since you enjoyed a measure of that great salvation, deliverance from inbred sin. Do you hold fast whereunto you had attained, and still press forward, to be filled with all the fulness of God? There is the prize before you! Look up, believe, and take all you want!

Wishing you the whole gospel blessing, I remain, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

I hear Sister Gow is gone hence. Did she go in triumph, or only in peace?

## 'Rags and Ruffles.'

Five years later (May 31, 1782) Wesley was Lady Maxwell's guest at Saughton Hall, an old mansion-house three miles from Edinburgh. He preached to the poor folk she gathered. Next day he further helped her good work. He

still has a sharp eye and a quick pen. He writes—'I spent a little time with forty poor children whom Lady Maxwell keeps at school. They are swiftly brought forward in reading and writing, and learn the principles of religion. But I observed in them all the *ambitiosa paupertas*—the love of finery among the poor. Be they ever so poor, they must have a scrap of finery. Many of them have not a shoe to their foot; but the girl in rags is not without her ruffles.'[1]

## 'A Manifestation few are favoured with.'

Wesley is now aged eighty-four; but he is still alert to collect and compare varieties of religious experience. Lady Maxwell's intense devotion to God and her mystical utterances may be compared with those of À Kempis, Madame Guyon, and among early Methodists, Mary Fletcher. These spiritual things are discerned by the spiritual. Lady Maxwell speaks of a certain fast day in 1775 when 'the heavenly King appeared in His beauty, and my fellowship was with the Father and the Son in a *most remarkable manner*.' Often the experience was hers to which Wesley here refers. It continued in later years. Amidst the clash of business, like Brother Lawrence, she practised the Presence of God. She wrote—'I have dwelt in the secret place of the Most High, and abode under the shadow of the Almighty; my fellowship with Deity hath been particularly near, solemn, and sweet, more so than words can express, with increasing power to realise the divine Presence, to be all attention to an in-dwelling, in-speaking God. I have also been enabled to get through much business.'

### *Letter XXII.*

DUBLIN, *July* 3, 1787.

MY DEAR LADY,—Our correspondence, I hope, will never be broken off till one of us be removed into a better world. It is true I have often wondered that you were not weary of so useless a correspondent, for I am very sensible the writing of letters is my brother's talent rather than mine.

[1] *Journal, in loc.*

Yet I really love to write to you, as I love to think of you. And sometimes it may please Him, who sends by whom He will send, to give you some assistance by me. And your letters have frequently been an encouragement and a comfort to me. Let them never, my dear friend, be intermitted during the few days I have to stay here below.

After Miss Roe[1] first, and then Miss Ritchie,[2] had given me so particular an account of that branch of their experience, I examined, one by one, the members of the select society in London on that head. But I found very few, not above nine or ten, who had any conception of it. I think there are three or four in Dublin who likewise speak clearly and scripturally of having had such a manifestation of the several persons in the ever-blessed Trinity. Formerly I thought this was the experience of all those that were perfected in love: but I am now clearly convinced that it is not. Only a few of these are favoured with it. It was indeed a wonderful instance of divine mercy that at a time when you were so encumbered with the affairs of the world that you should have so much larger a taste of the powers of the world to come. It reminds me of Brother Lawrence's words: 'When I was charged with the affairs of the convent at Burgundy I did not understand them: and yet, I know not how, all was well done!' I doubt not you will find the very same experience in everything which God calls you to: His word will be more and more eminently fulfilled. 'In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths.' I rejoice to be, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

'The Itinerant Plan. . . . Oh do not hide that you are a Methodist.'

The 'itinerant plan,' in which Methodist preachers have their circuits confirmed or changed by a Conference each

[1] See p. 373. [2] See p. 377.

year, Wesley thought of vital importance. It has continued, modified, as he allowed, to meet needs.

Lady Maxwell continued 'a thorough-paced Methodist' until her death.

*Letter XXIII.*

LONDON, *August* 3, 1788.

MY DEAR LADY,—It is certain many persons both in Scotland and England would be well pleased to have the same preachers always. But we cannot forsake the plan of acting which we have followed from the beginning. For fifty years God has been pleased to bless the itinerant plan: the last year most of all. It must not be altered till I am removed, and I hope will remain till our Lord comes to reign upon earth.

I do not know (unless it unfits us for the duties of life) that we can have too great a sensibility of human pain. Methinks I should be afraid of losing any degree of this sensibility. I had a son-in-law (now in Abraham's bosom) who quitted his profession, that of a surgeon, for that very reason, because he said it made him less sensible of human pain. And I have known exceeding few persons who have carried this tenderness of spirit to excess. I recollect but one who was constrained to leave off, in a great measure, visiting the sick, because he could not see any one in pain without fainting away.

Mr. Charles Perronet was the first person I was acquainted with who was favoured with the same experience as the Marquis de Renty with regard to the ever-blessed Trinity: so that this is not as I was at first apt to suppose, the common privilege of all that are 'perfect in love.'

Pardon me, my dear friend, for my heart is tenderly concerned for you, if I mention one fear I have concerning you—lest on conversing with some you should be in any degree warped from Christian simplicity. Oh do not wish to hide

that you are a Methodist! Surely it is best to appear just what you are. I believe you will receive this as a proof of the sincerity with which I am, My dear Lady, Your ever affectionate servant.

## 'Throw that Money into the sea.'

Our last letter is undoubtedly to Lady Maxwell, though not hitherto so given. The 'great person' is the Countess of Huntingdon,[1] a leader of Calvinism. Wesley here risks his friendship with Lady Maxwell for what he believes is the cause of truth. He would deter her from advancing Calvinism by building chapels, etc., for which purpose her friend, Lady Glenorchy, has left funds to her as executrix. Notwithstanding the vigorous pleadings of her aged and beloved guide, Lady Maxwell discharged her trust.[2] She herself remained faithful to the wider views of Methodism. These are now freely taught in those sanctuaries.

### *Letter XXIV.*

LONDON, *September* 30, 1788.

MY DEAR LADY,—For many years a great person professed, and I believe had, a great regard for me. I therefore believed it my duty to speak with all freedom, which I did in a long letter. But she was so displeased that she said to a friend, 'I hate Mr. Wesley above all the creatures upon the earth.'

I now believe it my duty to write freely to you. Will it have the same effect? Certainly I would not run the hazard did I not regard your happiness more than your favour. Therefore I will speak. May God enable you not only to pardon it but to profit thereby! Indeed, unless you profit by it, I do not expect you to forgive.

Be pleased to observe I do not affirm anything: I only

[1] See her *Life and Times* (1839), vol. ii. p. 235 *et seq.*
[2] See p. 118.

beg you calmly to consider, Would it be right for me to propagate a doctrine which I believed to be false, particularly if it were not only false but dangerous to the souls of men, frequently hindering their growth in grace, stopping their pursuit of holiness?

And is it right in you to do this? You believe the doctrine of predestination is false. Is it then right for you to propagate this doctrine in any kind or degree, particularly as it is not only false but a very dangerous doctrine, as we have seen a thousand times? Does it not hinder the work of God in the soul? feed all evil, and weaken all good tempers? turn many quite out of the way of life, and drive them back to perdition?

Is not Calvinism the very antidote of Methodism? the most deadly and successful enemy which it ever had? 'But my friend desired that I would propagate it, and lodged money with me for this very purpose.' What then? May I destroy souls because my friend desired it? Ought you not rather to throw that money into the sea? Oh let not any money, or any friend, move you to propagate a lie! to strike at the root of Methodism! to grieve the holiest of your friends, and to endanger your own soul! Living or dying, I shall always be, My dear Lady, Your most affectionate servant.

# CHAPTER XI

## TO YOUNG FRIENDS AND OTHERS—CONCERNING LIFE, LEARNING, LITERARY STYLE, SLEEP, HEALTH, AND RELIGIOUS EARNESTNESS

WESLEY eagerly gave guidance to young people; albeit, as previous pages show, he seldom wrote to any one on any subject without offering counsel, 'plain and home,' upon the reader's own life. Dr. J. H. Rigg noted that Wesley's letters indicate that he 'had in no ordinary measure what Miss Julia Wedgwood thought that he lacked, a great faculty of sympathy with individuals.' His many letters grappled thousands, one by one, to himself, and communicated widely the message of Methodism. Without them it could not have been established. He often begged people to write to him, so that he might have occasion to write and help them. We have not traced complaint by any one of his many correspondents that he failed to reply or avoidably delayed his reply. His letters, especially those to young people, may be compared with Chesterfield's *Letters to His Son*, and Swift's *Letters*. Wesley hated the former; the latter he thought 'trash, dear at twopence a volume.'

Although he had no children of his own, Wesley loved children and young people.[1] The children of Mrs. William Smith of Newcastle-on-Tyne, the daughter of Wesley's wife by her former husband, called Wesley 'grandpa,' and they were his happy companions in his journeys near their parents'

[1] At Manchester in 1768 he sharply claimed to instruct children, citing as examples for himself St. Paul and the Apostles, no one of whom, so far as we know, had children of his own.—*Journal*, vol. v. p. 253.

home.[1] Wesley's exclusion of play from the time-table at Kingswood School, since 'he that plays when he is a boy will play when he is a man,' is balanced by his own recreations and sight-seeings, and the fact, told by Mrs. Hughes of Bath, that when there he filled his coach with children and gave them half-an-hour's ride each day before he set out on his preaching tour. Southey told James Everett this incident of Wesley's visit to his father's house in Bristol. With his beautiful little sister, her ringlets floating over her shoulders, the boy Southey ran downstairs before Wesley. He overtook them on the landing, lifted the little girl in his arms and kissed her, and, placing her on her feet again, put his hand upon the boy's head and blessed him. At Oldham, in 1782, 'a whole troop of boys and girls would not be content till Wesley shook each by the hand.' He would give each an appropriate word. Such was not always tender. 'God bless you, Mr. Wesley,' said a Derbyshire girl to him on one occasion as he passed by. 'Young woman,' said he, 'your blessing would be of more value if your face and apron were cleaner.'

## To the Rev. Samuel Furley.

Here Wesley is guide, philosopher, and friend to Samuel Furley, while a student at Cambridge University, and in his later formative years also. He became a clergyman, embraced Calvinistic views, and was drawn thereby away from Wesley and into the circle of the Countess of Huntingdon.[2] After his course at Queen's College, Cambridge (where he received Letters I. to VI.), and some short terms of service, he ministered at Slaithwaite, near Huddersfield (Letters X.-XII.); then for many years (1766-1795) at Roche, Cornwall. On September 14, 1768, Wesley records that he spent a comfortable evening with him there. Furley became a devoted man—'a son of thunder rather than a son of consolation.' His growth under Wesley's hand and his life of service may

[1] During one of these Wesley and they were preserved from imminent death, which was threatened by the running away of the horses with Wesley's carriage.—*Journal*, June 20, 1774.

[2] See *Life and Times*, vol. ii. p. 2.

be contrasted with that of young John Henderson of Pembroke College, Oxford, in whom Wesley was also interested. Of him he wrote (*Journal*, March 13, 1789), 'with as great talents as most men in England he had lived two-and-thirty years and done just nothing.'[1]

Some of these letters to Furley are strangely vivid. Those on literary style are still good counsel. Seven of the letters, those numbered II., III., IV., V., VI., X., XII.,[2] are little known. They throw further light on Wesley's character, and his service to Furley.

## 'Make and keep one Resolution.'

Furley was now about twenty-two. While at Cambridge he had the friendship of Henry Venn, afterwards the earnest vicar of Huddersfield. Like Venn, he sought Wesley's advice. The latter recalls his University career and the steadying influence of the Holy Club and the Oxford Methodists. If Furley mastered the books presented by Wesley for the scholars at Kingswood and those added for a four years' 'course of academical learning,'[3] he would be as Wesley said, 'a better scholar than nine in ten of the graduates at Oxford or Cambridge' then. Wesley was no easy taskmaster for himself or others. If Furley rose at five o'clock each day, Wesley had been at work an hour already.

*Letter I.*

BRISTOL, *March* 30, 1754.

DEAR SIR,—I received your letter, and rejoiced to find that you are still determined to save yourself, by the grace of God, from this perverse generation. But this cannot possibly be done at Cambridge (I speak from long experience)

[1] See an illuminating note by the late Rev. H. J. Foster, Wesley Historical Society *Proceedings*, vol. iii. p. 162.

[2] These and No. IX. were copied from the originals by the editor of the *United Methodist Free Churches Magazine* (Rev. William Reid), and published by him therein in 1866 (p. 249 *et seq.*). A list of other Wesley letters to Furley is given in Wesley Historical Society *Proceedings*, vol. vi. p. 99.

[3] *Works*, vol. xiii. pp. 252-255.

unless you can make and keep one resolution,—to have no acquaintance but such as fear God. I know it may be some time before you will find any that truly bear this character. If so, it is best to be alone till you do, and to converse only with your absent friends by letter. But if you are carried away with the stream into frequent conversation with harmless, good-natured, honest triflers, they will soon steal away all your strength, and stifle all the grace of God in your soul.

With regard to your studies, I know no better method you could pursue, than to take the printed rules of Kingswood School, and to read all the authors therein mentioned, in the same order as they occur there. The authors set down for those in the school you would probably read in about a twelvemonth; and those afterwards named, in a year or two more: and it will not be lost labour.

I suppose you rise not later than five: to allow an hour in the morning and another in the evening for private exercises; an hour before dinner, and one in the afternoon for walking; and go to bed between nine and ten.

I commend you to Him who is able to carry you through all dangers, and am, dear sir, your affectionate brother and servant.

## 'Further than this you are not called at present.'

Eager to follow Wesley's rule[1] and do all the good he can, Furley is solicitous about his tutor. The booklet Wesley recommends is an abridgment of Chapter I. of

[1] The rule runs:—

'Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.'

William Law's *Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection.* Of this summary Wesley printed nineteen editions (1740-1785).

*Letter II.*

LONDON, *December* 7, 1754.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—For the present it does not appear to be necessary for you to enter into any dispute with your instructor. But perhaps he would read a short tract: suppose, *The Nature and Design of Christianity.* If at any time he should be touched by what he reads, it would then be a reasonable time to speak.

I should not advise you by any means to enter upon anything like teaching or exhorting a company of people. If any poor townsman, who is sick, desired your assistance, you need not scruple to visit him. But further than this, it seems you are not called to go at present.

The main point is now, to improve your time in private; to keep close to God in prayer, and to fix your eye on Him in whatever you do. Then the unction of the Holy One will teach you of all things.—I am, your affectionate brother.

## 'I would engage to take any Person, and teach him in seven Years.'

Furley wishes to become a clergyman; but he thinks that Wesley embodies and exacts too high a standard for those who fill that office. This had just been set forth by him in his published *Address to the Clergy.*[1] Among natural and acquired qualifications he includes 'good understanding, liveliness and readiness of thought'; 'knowledge of the Scriptures—the literal meaning of every word,' 'acquaintance with the original tongues, profane history, the sciences—especially logic, metaphysics, natural philosophy, and even

[1] *Works*, vol. x. p. 480-500.

geometry'; 'knowledge of the Fathers'; 'knowledge of the world'; 'common sense; the courtesy of a gentleman, and a strong and clear voice.'[1] In the *Address* and here he insists also upon 'the main point.' The closing paragraph of Letter VI. gives his summary of ministerial qualifications.

### *Letter III.*

LONDON, *February* 18, 1756.

DEAR SAMMY,—You are a very complacent person. I know in my little circle of acquaintance, more than twenty, who have all the natural qualifications mentioned in the *Address to the Clergy*; and several others who have all the acquired ones, either by education or by grace. And I would engage to take any person of fourteen years of age, who has good natural abilities, and teach him in seven years everything which is there required to a good degree of perfection.[2]

*Ex pede Herculum!*[3] You may easily see what Latin I write, by one of the Dissertations in *Jobum*,[4] or even by the short conversation with C[ount] Zinz[endor]f which is printed in the *Journal*.[5] I do not know that I have any theme or declamation left. But why do you not talk Latin when you are with me? Do this, and you will see the excellence of Terence's Language; whereas Tully would make you talk like a mere stiff pedant.

[1] Wesley regarded his own preachers at first as supplementary to the clergy as instructors; but he rigorously required them to be constant and close students—'five hours in the twenty-four.' See his 'Twelve Rules of a Helper,' *Works*, vol. viii. p. 309, and *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. pp. 295-297.

[2] On Wesley's work as Oxford don and lecturer see *A New History of Methodism*, vol. i. p. 177.

[3] From the foot we recognise a Hercules, *i.e.* we judge of the whole from a specimen.

[4] His father's Latin Commentary on Job, published in 1736.

[5] For September 3, 1741: *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 488. A translation of this dialogue with the Moravian leader is given by Moore, *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 481.

Randal's *Geographical Grammar* is far the best compendium of geography which I have seen. And you need nothing more on that subject, adding only the terrestrial globe.

If you are master of Hutcheson's *Metaphysics*, and Clerc's *Ontologia*, I advise you to look no further that way; unless you would add Malebranche's *Search after Truth*, or the Bishop of Cork's two books again.

The main point is, with all and above all, study the Greek and Hebrew Bible, and the love of Christ.—I am, yours affectionately.

## 'Never write to that Person at all, nor of her.'

Only three days after the last letter Wesley must send this urgent message. This and Letters v. and vi. show Furley's grave peril, and Wesley's fatherly anxiety. The young man's acquaintance with a lady, his questions about many books, rather than close study of any, and his proposal to see life in London, draw from Wesley sharp rebukes and commands: 'Keep you close' to work, or 'quit the college,' and 'come away to me.' Wesley was no kill-joy, woman-hater, or misanthrope. Too little has been made of the lighter and more attractive aspects of his character.[1] In his own youth he was sought after as an engaging companion, and always his radiance, Hampson says his hilarity, delighted people. Miss Sarah Wesley, his niece (see page 357), said that her uncle John always showed peculiar sympathy to young people in love. But he could not forget the perils, failures, and struggles of his past years.[2] Echoes of them seem to accompany his calls and cries to young Furley. 'Stop the leak . . . else what signifies it to adorn the ship?'

[1] See Book I. chapter i. p. 5, and *Journal*, vol. i. pp. 20-27.
[2] See above, p. 7.

# TO YOUNG FRIENDS

*Letter IV.*

[LONDON], *February* 21, 1756.

DEAR SAMMY,—There is but one possible way to gain the victory. Conquer desire, and you will conquer fear. But as long as you are a slave you must be a coward. Be free therefore or you can't be bold. Never write to that person at all, nor of her; and continue instant in prayer. Cut off the right hand and cast it from you: otherwise you will be a poor dastardly wretch all your days, and one sin will punish another, till the day of grace is at an end.—I am, your affectionate brother.

## 'Fight, Sammy, fight.'

*Letter V.*

KINGSWOOD, *March* 14, 1756.

DEAR SAMMY,—You are sick of two diseases: that affection for a poor silly worm like yourself which only absence (through the grace of God) will cure, and that evil disease which Marcus Antonius complains of,—the δίχα βιβλίων.[1] That you are far gone in the latter plainly appears from your not loving and admiring that masterpiece of reason and religion, the *Reflections on the Conduct of Human Life, with Regard to Knowledge and Learning*;[2] every paragraph of which must stand unshaken (with or without the Bible) till we are no longer mortal.

If your French book is *The Art of Thinking*, the author is a very poor tool. But there is none like Aldrich. I scarce know one Latin writer who says so much in so few words. Certainly I shall not write much on Metaphysics of Natural

[1] Disputes about books.

[2] *Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life with reference to Learning and Knowledge*; extracted by Wesley from a work by John Norris of Bemerton, and published by Wesley in 1741.

Philosophy. My life is too far spent. But if you can tell me of any thing (not stuff'd with Mathematics) which is worth abridging, well. Hutcheson's compendium is intitled *Synopsis Metaphysicæ*; 'Ontologiam and Pneumatologiam Complectens.' It is a masterly thing. I believe there is nothing yet extant in Natural Philosophy, like the abridgment of the *Philosophical Transactions*. But an abridgment of that abridgment would be far better.

Fight, Sammy, fight. If you do not conquer soon, probably God may send a French army to help you.[1]—I am, yours affectionately.

## 'Are you stark, staring mad?'

*Letter VI.*

DUBLIN, *Good Friday* [*April* 16], 1756.

How? going up to town? Are you stark, staring mad? Will you leap into the fire with your eyes open? Keep off. What else have you to do? Fly for your life, for your salvation. If you thus tempt the Spirit of God any more, who knows what may be the consequence? I should not wonder at all to hear you was confined in St. Luke's Hospital; and then, farewell study! Farewell all hope, either of intellectual or moral improvement; for after this poor machine has received a shock of that kind, it is never more capable of close thinking.

If you have either sense or religion enough to keep you close to the College, it is well. If not, I see but one possible way to save you from destruction, temporal and eternal. Quit the College at once. Think of it no more, and come away to me. You can take a little advice from me; from other people none at all. You are on the brink of the pit; fly away, or you perish.

[1] The Seven Years' War with France was beginning.

There is no disagreement at all between the *Reflections* and the *Address to the Clergy*. I have followed Mr. Norris's advice these thirty years, and so must every man that is well in his senses. But whether you study more or less, does not signify a pin's point. You are taking all this pains in a sinking ship. Stop the leak, stop the leak, the first thing you do; else what signifies it to adorn the ship?

As to the qualifications of a Gospel minister, grace is necessary; learning is expedient. Grace and supernatural gifts are ninety-nine parts in a hundred. Acquired learning may then have its place.—I am, dear Sammy, yours affectionately.

## 'The care of a Parish is, indeed, a weighty Thing.'

Furley came through his trials safely. He is now ministering at Kippax, near Leeds. His sister Nancy is with him. His energetic temperament still needs restraint. He must also cultivate willingness to learn the things of God from some who, ignorant and poor in things temporal, may enrich him, since they are heirs of the Kingdom. He would meet some such in Yorkshire. Wesley himself was a mystic, ready to hearken to any who knew the secret.

### *Letter VII.*

[London], *January* 25, 1762.

Dear Sammy,—If you entangled yourself with no kind of promise to the archbishop, I doubt not but your ordination will prove a blessing. The care of a parish is, indeed, a weighty thing, which calls for much and earnest prayer. In managing it, you must needs follow your own conscience, whoever is pleased or displeased. Then, whether your success be less or more, you will, by and by, give up your account with joy.

I myself hear frequently unscriptural, as well as irrational,

expressions from those at whose feet I shall rejoice to be found in the day of the Lord Jesus; but blasphemy I never heard from one of them, either teacher or hearer. What is wide of Scripture or reason I mildly reprove; and they usually receive it in love. Generally they are convinced; when I cannot converse, I can bear with them, and indeed, rejoice at the grace of God which is in them.

Sammy, beware of the impetuosity of your temper! It may easily lead you awry. It may make you evil affected to the excellent ones of the earth. Don't expect propriety of speech from uneducated persons. The longer I live, the larger allowances I make for human infirmities. I exact more from myself, and less from others. Go thou and do likewise! —I am, with love to Nancy, your ever affectionate friend and brother.

## 'Forty or fifty People . . . the happiest and holiest in the Kingdom.'

A bright, clever letter in which Wesley raps Furley, and states his points well. He uses the Baconian argument in regard to his favourite doctrine of Christian Perfection. He is not to be drawn into bitter controversy on such a subject. Indeed, as he said about this time, 'I have entirely lost my readiness in disputing; and I take this to be a providential discharge from it.' He had been compelled to do much in defence of himself and his work. As we have seen, he always felt free to decline it.[1] He did answer Dr. Free, the warmest, most prolific, and most scurrilous of his opponents.' After a second reply Wesley said, 'I leave him now to laugh, and scold, and witticise, and call names just as he pleases; for I have done.' He invites Furley to the next Methodist Conference in the neighbouring city, where he dealt with doctrine and discipline.

[1] See p. 36.

# TO YOUNG FRIENDS

*Letter VIII.*

DUBLIN, *July* 30, 1762.

DEAR SAMMY,—'If I am unanswered, then I am unanswerable.' Who can deny the consequence? By such an argument you carry all before you, and gain a complete victory. You put me in mind of the honest man, who cried out, while I was preaching, '*Quid est tibi nomen?*'[1] And upon my giving no answer, called out vehemently, 'I told you he did not understand Latin.'

I do sometimes understand though I do not answer. This is often the case between you and me. You love dispute, and I hate it. You have much time, and I have much work. *Non sumus ergo pares.*[2] But if you will dispute the point with Nicholas Norton,[3] he is your match. He has both leisure and love for the work.

For me, I shall only once more state the case. There are forty or fifty people who declare (and I can take their word, for I know them well) each for himself, 'God has enabled me to rejoice evermore, and to pray and give thanks without ceasing. I feel no pride, no anger, no desire, no unbelief, but pure love alone.' I ask, 'Do you then believe you have no further need of Christ, or His atoning blood?' Every one answers, 'I never felt my want of Christ so deeply as I do now.' But you think: 'They cannot want the merit of His death, if they are saved from sin.' They think otherwise. They know and feel the contrary, whether they can *explain* it, or no. There is not one, either in this city, or in this kingdom, who does not agree in this.

Here is a plain fact. You may dispute, reason, cavil about it, just as long as you please. Meantime, I know, by

[1] What is your name?
[2] I am not therefore your equal.
[3] A heated disputant to whom Wesley wrote a long letter.—*Works*, vol. xiii. pp. 187-192.

all manner of proof, that these are the happiest and holiest people in the kingdom. Their light shines before men. They have the mind that was in Christ, and walk as Christ also walked. And shall I cease to rejoice over these holy, happy men, because they mistake in their judgement? If they do, I would to God that you and I and all mankind were under the same mistake; provided we had the same faith, the same love, and the same inward and outward holiness! —I am, dear Sammy, yours affectionately.

*P.S.*—Will you not meet us at Leeds on the 10th of August?

## 'Do you believe Evil Tempers remain till Death?'

Furley thinks he detects contradictions in Wesley's teaching on Christian Perfection. With a broad hint that Furley may be mistaken, Wesley gives him an important explanation.

*Letter IX.*

BRISTOL, *October* 13, 1762.

DEAR SAMMY,—In general, when I apprehend 'certainly this is a contradiction,' if I find other persons of equal sagacity with myself, of equal natural and acquired abilities, apprehend it is not, I immediately suspect my own judgement; and the more so, because I remember I have been many times *full as sure* as I am now: and yet afterwards I found myself mistaken.

As to this particular question, I believe I am able to answer every objection which can be made. But I am not able to do it without expending much time, which may be better employed. For this reason, I am persuaded, it is so far from being my duty to enter into a formal controversy concerning it, that it would be a wilful sin. It would be

employing my short residue of life in a less profitable way than it may be employed.

The proposition which I still hold is this, 'A person may be cleansed from all *sinful tempers*, and yet need the atoning blood.' For what? For 'negligences and ignorances': for both words and actions (as well as omissions) which are, in a sense, transgressions of the perfect law. And I believe no one is clear of these, till he lays down this corruptible body.

Now, Sammy, dropping the point of contradiction or no contradiction, tell me simply, What would you have more? Do you believe evil tempers remain till death? All, or some? If some only, which? I love truth wherever I find it; so if you can help me to a little more of it, you will oblige, dear Sammy, yours affectionately.

## 'It *might* have pleased God to make you a wit too.'

Now at Slaithwaite, where he laboured successfully for about five years (1762-1766), Furley still seeks Wesley's counsel. In his reply he finds room for a good story.

### *Letter X.*

[*Circa*, 1764.]

DEAR SAMMY,—Charles Perronet,[1] the author of that remark on 2 Peter iii. 13, does not believe that Christ will reign at all upon earth, nor in any Millennium, till we come to heaven. The argument by which he endeavours to prove that St. Peter speaks there only to what will precede the Day of Judgement is this: 'If those expressions "a new heaven and a new earth" refer only to this world when they occur in *Isaiah*, then they refer to nothing more when they are used by *St. Peter*.'

I should never have suspected Dr. Sherlock of writing anything in a burlesque way. He never aimed at it in his

[1] See above, p. 330.

controversy with Dr. South, and seemed exceedingly angry at his opponent for doing so. Probably he knew himself to be over-matched by the Dr., and therefore did not care to engage him on his own ground. 'But why should you be angry,' says Dr. South, 'at wit? It *might* have pleased God to make you a wit too.'

I think the danger in writing to Bishop Warburton,[1] is rather that of saying too much than too little. The least said is the soonest amended, and leaves an ill-natured critic the least to take hold of. I have therefore endeavoured to say as little upon each head as possible. If he replies, I shall say more. But I rather think he will not, unless it be by a side stroke, when he writes on some other subject.

How does the work of God prosper at Huddersfield and Slaithwaite? Do you begin to see the fruit of your labours? and does your own soul prosper? What signifies all but this, to save our own souls and them that hear us?—I am, dear Sammy, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'What is it that constitutes a good Style?'

'Our late conversation,' between Wesley and Furley, probably occurred as Wesley passed through or near Furley's village, Slaithwaite, on his way 'over the mountains' from Huddersfield to Manchester, eight days before this letter. One would give much to have heard them talk—the one charmingly simple and strong, the other self-conscious and stilted, on this subject of literary style. It was a favourite minor topic with Wesley. He is delightfully frank with Furley in these letters. Evidently he was not thanked for his pains.

It is admitted that Wesley here writes of what he knew, and that, as a stylist, he is among the first in his kind. These letters are good counsel, and Wesley's writings are an example, as Edward Fitzgerald said, of 'pure, unaffected,

[1] See above, p. 36.

undying English.' As specimens of formal writing he might have commended to Furley his *Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion*. Of less formal composition these letters and many others here given are excellent examples. A present-day master of style has paid high tribute to Wesley's incomparable *Journal*.[1] Wesley was a consummate master in stating a case. His prefaces are singularly clever. Informing, sharp, droll, satiric, by turns, they make together a complete *apologia pro vita sua* for an editor. Although Wesley says he never thought of his style when writing, he knew when he wrote effectively, as he tells Furley. He declined to burn some of his old sermons. Though he held that if angels wrote books we should have few, yet he wrote many.[2]

Wesley offers no apology to Furley or to any one for the plainness of his style. He declared, when eighty-two years of age, that he '*could* even then write as floridly and rhetorically as even the admired Dr. Blair; but I dare not. I dare no more write in a fine style than wear a fine coat.'[3] He thought the English of St. John's First Epistle a model of style. Few will challenge this opinion, or the eminence of the stylists whom he commends to Furley, or the counsels he gives to him.

The second and little known letter on this subject here given (Letter XII.), adds valuable confirmation and illustration from Wesley's experience. Mr. Telford shows[4] how

[1] 'There is no book, I humbly think, in all the world like John Wesley's *Journal*. It is pre-eminently the book of the resurrection life lived in this world. It has very few companions. Indeed, it stands out solitary in all Christian literature—clear, detached, columnar. It is a tree that is ever green before the Lord. It tells us of a heart that kept to the last its innocent pleasures and interests, but held them all loosely and lightly, while its Christian, passionate peace grew and grew to the end. To the last these are, not diminishing, but increasing; the old zeal, the old wistfulness, the calm but fiery and revealing eloquence. John Wesley was, indeed, one of these who had attained the Second Rest—of those who, to use his own fine words, are "at rest before they go home; possessors of that rest which remaineth even here for the people of God."'

Sir WILLIAM ROBERTSON NICOLL, M.A., LL.D.

[2] See above, p. 7.

[3] *Works*, vol. vi. p. 187.

[4] *Wesley Studies*, p. 194.

Wesley learned to adapt his style on occasion to meet the humblest. He read one of his sermons to Betty, a maid-servant, and asked her to stop him whenever there was a word she did not understand. The 'Stop, sir,' came so often that he was annoyed; but he learned a lesson.

*Letter XI.*

LIVERPOOL, *July* 15, 1764.[1]

DEAR SIR,—I have had many thoughts since we parted, on the subject of our late conversation. I send you them just as they occur. 'What is it that constitutes a good style?' Perspicuity, purity, propriety, strength, and easiness, joined together. When any one of these is wanting, it is not a good style. Dr. Middleton's style wants easiness; it is stiff to a high degree. And stiffness in writing is full as great a fault as stiffness in behaviour. It is a blemish hardly to be excused, much less to be imitated. He is pedantic. 'It is pedantry,' says the great Lord Boyle, 'to use a hard word, where an easier will serve.' Now, this the Doctor continually does, and that of set purpose. His style is abundantly too artificial: *Artis est celare artem*;[2] but his art glares in every sentence. He continually says, 'Observe how fine I speak': whereas, a good speaker seems to forget he speaks at all. His full round curls naturally put one in mind of Sir Cloudesley Shovel's peruke, that 'eternal buckle taken in Parian stone.' Yet this very fault may appear a beauty to you, because you are apt to halt on the same foot. There is a stiffness both in your carriage and speech, and something of it in your very familiarity. But for this very reason you should be jealous of yourself, and guard against your natural infirmity. If you imitate any writers let it be

[1] If this date is strictly correct this letter was written on a Sunday; but Wesley sometimes slips as to dates and names.

[2] It is the highest art to conceal art.

South, Atterbury, or Swift, in whom all the proprieties of a good writer meet. I was myself once much fonder of Prior[1] than Pope; as I did not then know that stiffness was a fault. But what in all Prior can equal, for beauty of style, some of the first lines that Pope ever published?—

> 'Poets themselves must die, like those they sung,
> Deaf the praised ear, and mute the tuneful tongue;
> E'en he whose heart now melts in tender lays,
> Shall shortly want the generous tear he pays.
> Then from his eyes thy much-loved form shall part;
> And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart;
> Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
> The Muse forgot, and thou beloved no more.'

Here is style! How clear, how pure, proper, strong, and yet how amazingly easy! This crowns all; no stiffness, no hard words; no apparent art, no affectation; all is natural, and therefore consummately beautiful. Go thou and write likewise.

As for me, I never think of my style at all; but just set down the words that come first. Only when I transcribe anything for the press, then I think it my duty to see every phrase be clear, pure, and proper. Conciseness (which is now, as it were, natural to me) brings *quantum sufficit*[2] of strength. If, after all, I observe any stiff expression, I throw it out, neck and shoulders.

Clearness in particular is necessary for you and me; because we are to instruct people of the lowest understanding. Therefore we, above all, if we think with the wise, yet must speak with the vulgar. We should constantly use the most common, little, easy words (so they are pure and proper) which our language affords. When I had been a member

[1] See above, p. 238. See also Wesley's 'Thoughts on the Character and Writings of Mr. Prior.' There he thinks Prior much finer than Pope. —*Works*, vol. xiii. p. 380.

[2] As much as suffices.

of the University about ten years, I wrote and talked much as you do now. But when I talked to plain people in the castle, or the town, I observed they gaped and stared. This quickly obliged me to alter my style, and adopt the language of those I spoke to. And yet there is a dignity in this simplicity, which is not disagreeable to those of the highest rank.

I advise you sacredly to abstain from reading any stiff writer. A bystander sees more than those who play the game. Your style is much hurt already. Indeed, something might be said if you were a learned Infidel, writing for money or reputation. But that is not the case: you are a Christian Minister, speaking and writing to save souls. Have this end always in your eye and you will never designedly use any hard word. Use all the sense, learning, and time you have; forgetting yourself, and remembering only those are the souls for whom Christ died; heirs of a happy, or miserable eternity!—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## 'I may say, . . . I know a good style from a bad one.'

*Letter XII.*

YARMOUTH, *October* 11, 1764.

DEAR SAMMY,—I have delayed writing thus long, because I was not inclined to draw the sword of controversy; particularly on a subject not very important, and with a person not very easy to be convinced. I simply told you my thoughts concerning style, and concerning yourself. If you can profit by them, well; if not, there is no harm done. I wanted to have you write in the most excellent way: if you prefer any other, you may. I have no prejudice for or against any writer; but I may say, without much vanity, I know a good style from a bad one, and it would be a shame

if I did not, after having spent five-and-forty years (with some natural understanding, much attention, and a free acquaintance with many eminent men) in reading the most celebrated writers in the English tongue.

Observing *you* to want one of the things essential to a good style, namely, *easiness*, I warned you of it, and to make the reason of my caution more clear, enlarged a little upon the head. You reply, '*Harmony* is essential to a good style.' It may be so; I have nothing to say to the contrary. In the very lines I quoted there is admirable harmony: *nihil supra*:[1] the soul of music breathes in them; but there is no stiffness. The lines are as easy as harmonious. This is the perfection of writing.

Whether *long* periods or *short* are to be chosen, is quite another question. Some of those you transcribe from Swift are long; but they are *easy* too; entirely easy, void of all stiffness, and, therefore, just such as I advise *you* to copy after. The paragraphs cited from *Hawksworth* are far inferior to them, not more harmonious, but more stiff and artificial. That from Wharton is worst of all, stiff as a stake, all art and no nature. I know not what taste they can have who admire his style; certainly they must prefer Statius to Virgil.

That 'poor people understand long sentences better than short' is an entire mistake. I have carefully tried the experiment for thirty years, and I find the very reverse to be true. Long sentences utterly confound their intellects; they know not where they are. If you would be understood by them, you should seldom use a word of many syllables, or a sentence of many words. Short sentences are likewise infinitely best, for the careless and indolent. They strike them through and through. I have seen instances of it a hundred times. Neither are the dull and stupid enlightened nor the careless affected by long and laboured

[1] Nothing could be better.

periods half so much as by such short ones as these, 'The work is great; the day is short; and long is the night wherein no man can work.'

But the main thing is, let us be all alive to God. Let Christ reign alone in our hearts. Let all that mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus; and let us walk as Christ also walked.

Peace be with you and yours!—I am, your affectionate friend and brother.

## To the Sons and Daughter of his brother Charles.

Interested in all, Wesley was always keenly alive to counsel and help his own relatives. Five letters follow which he sent to Charles, Samuel, and Sarah Wesley, the upgrown children of his brother Charles. They are of much interest.

Charles and Samuel were exceptionally gifted as musicians.[1] As little children they were regarded by competent authorities as musical prodigies. Their gifts developed with their years. They held many private concerts in their father's house in Marylebone, London. These were regularly attended by gifted musicians and the nobility. George III. and George IV. delighted in the genius of young Charles Wesley. Dr. Howard said that Samuel's gifts were surely heaven-born. John Wesley attended one of these chamber concerts; but he declared, 'I love plain music and plain company best.' Beautiful solicitude prompted him to send this letter to his nephew Charles a few months later. He was now twenty-four years of age.

### 'There is a Debt of Love which I should have paid before now.'

*To Charles Wesley, Junior.*

*Near* LEEDS, *August* 4, 1781.

DEAR CHARLES,—It has been much upon my mind to-day that I am still indebted to you. There is a debt of love

[1] Jackson's *Life of Charles Wesley*, vol. ii. pp. 297 *et seq.*

which I should have paid before now. But I must not delay it any longer.

I have long observed you with a curious eye; not as a musician, but as an immortal spirit, that is come forth from God, the father of spirits, and is returning to Him in a few moments. But have you well considered this? Methinks if you had, it would be ever uppermost in your thoughts. For what trifles, in comparison of this, are all the shining baubles of the world!

> 'Wise is the man that labours to secure
> The mighty, the important stake;
> And by all methods strives to make
> His passage safe, and his reception sure.'

God has favoured you with many advantages. You have health and strength, and a thousand outward blessings. And why should not you have all the inward blessings which God has prepared for those that love Him? You are good-humoured, mild and harmless. But *unless you are born again* you cannot see the kingdom of God. But ask, and you shall receive; for it is nigh at hand!—I am, dear Charles, your affectionate uncle.

## 'As your Business . . . calls you into the Fire, I trust you will not be burned.'

Wesley's letter drew from young Charles a gratifying reply, which Wesley followed with this second letter. Tyerman notes that Charles was a young man of deep feeling; that in later years he attended the chapels of the Methodists, and held their preachers in high esteem. This is confirmed by his sister's letter, quoted below.

*To Charles Wesley, Junior.*

BRISTOL, *September* 8, 1781.

DEAR CHARLES,—Your letter gave me a good deal of satisfaction. You received my advice just as I hoped you would.

You are now, as it were, in the crisis of your fate; just launching into life, and ready to fix your choice, whether you will have God or the world for your happiness. Scripture and reason tell you now, what experience will confirm, if it pleases God to prolong your life, that He 'made your heart for Himself; and it cannot rest till it rests in Him.' You will be in danger of being diverted from this thought by the fashion of the world. The example of those that are round about us is apt to get within our guard. And indeed their spirit steals upon us in an unaccountable manner, and inclines us to think as they think. Yet you cannot avoid being very frequently among elegant men and women, that are without God in the world. And as your business, rather than your choice, calls you into the fire, I trust you will not be burned; seeing that He whom you desire to serve is able to deliver you, even out of the burning, fiery furnace,—I am, dear Charles, your very affectionate uncle.

## 'If you are not born of God, you are of no Church.'

Wesley's nephew Samuel, to the poignant grief of his father Charles Wesley, entered the Church of Rome at the age of twenty. He was drawn in part by the chance to use his musical talents.[1] For one of his compositions, a high mass for use in the chapel of Pius VI., he received the thanks of that Pope. Apart from this step in life, young Wesley was less seriously inclined than were his brother and sister. Hence this letter sent to him, now twenty-two, by his uncle, John Wesley. Its tolerance and insistence on essentials are noteworthy. Young Wesley did not long remain in that Church. A sad season of belief in fatalism was followed by penitence in old age.

[1] When the Duchess of Norfolk suggested to the father motives which might have actuated his son, the poet replied in great agitation, 'Say, "the loaves and fishes," madam! say, "the loaves and fishes."'

# TO YOUNG FRIENDS

*To Samuel Wesley, Junior.*

[LLYNGWAIR, PEMBROKESHIRE],
*August* 19, 1784.

DEAR SAMMY,—As I have had a regard for you ever since you were a little one, I have often thought of writing to you freely. And I am persuaded what is spoken in love will be taken in love; and if so, if it does you no good, it will do you no harm.

Many years ago I observed, that as it had pleased God to give you a remarkable talent for music, so He had given you a quick apprehension of other things, a capacity for making some progress in learning, and what is of far greater value, a desire to be a Christian. But meantime I have often been pained for you, fearing you did not set out the right way. I do not mean with regard to this or that set of opinions, Protestant or Romish. All these I trample under foot. But with regard to those weightier matters, wherein if they go wrong, either Protestants or Papists, will perish everlastingly. I feared you were not *born again*; and 'except a man be born again,' if we may credit the Son of God, 'he cannot see the kingdom of heaven'; except he experience that inward change of the earthly, sensual mind, for the mind which was in Christ Jesus. You might have thoroughly understood the scriptural doctrine of the new birth, yea, and experienced it long before now, had you used the many opportunites of improvement which God put into your hand, while you believed both your father and me to be teachers sent from God. But, alas! what are you now? Whether of this Church or that, I care not; you may be saved in either, or damned in either; but I fear you are not born again; and except ye be born again you cannot see the kingdom of God. You believe the Church of Rome is right. What then? If you are not born of God, *you* are of *no Church*.

Whether Bellarmine or Luther be right, you are certainly wrong, if you are not *born of the Spirit*; if you are not renewed in the spirit of your mind in the likeness of Him that created you. I doubt you were never convinced of the necessity of this great change. And there is now greater danger than ever that you never will be; that you will be diverted from the thought of it by a train of new notions, new practices, new modes of worship; all which put together (not to consider whether they are unscriptural, superstitious, and idolatrous, or no), all I say put together, do not amount to one grain of true, vital, spiritual religion.

O Sammy, you are out of your way! You are out of God's way! You have not given Him your heart. You have not found, nay, it is well if you have so much as sought, happiness in God! And poor zealots, while you are in this state of mind, would puzzle you about this or the other church! O fools, and blind! Such guides as these lead men by shoals to the bottomless pit.

My dear Sammy, your first point is to repent and believe the Gospel. Know yourself a poor guilty, helpless sinner! Then know Jesus Christ and Him crucified! Let the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God, and let the love of God be shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto you; and then, if you have no better work, I will talk with you of transubstantiation or purgatory.

Meantime, I commend you to Him who is able to guide you into all truth; and am, dear Sammy, your affectionate uncle.

## 'The grand Hindrance . . . what very few People are aware of—Intemperance in Sleep.'

Miss Sarah Wesley, now twenty-one years of age, wrote to her honoured and venerable uncle for his advice on life

and education. With his usual practicality, Wesley links the physical and the spiritual in this reply. He gives counsel as to the amount of sleep she should allow herself. One of his own early easily besetting sins was immoderate sleep.[1] He struggled until he got free from it, and formed the habit of taking six hours each night, about the amount he names here as sufficient for a man. He thought this matter so important that he dealt with it in a sermon, which he also published, entitled 'Redeeming the Time.'[2] He promises here more advice to his niece, 'if you can take this.' Without a thrifty religious use of time, Wesley had small hope of any one. On his death-bed he asked Miss Wesley earnestly, 'Do you continue to rise early?'

Miss Wesley knew well his interest in her, and his faithfulness in fulfilling a promise to her, even at some risk to himself and his work. In later years she was wont to tell a characteristic story illustrative of this, and of her uncle's character and conduct in a crisis.[3] In 1775, when she was about fifteen, Wesley had promised to take her with him on his preaching tour to Canterbury and Dover. Mrs. Wesley was again behaving in her strange, unworthy way. She had searched his bureau, mutilated his letters, interpolated words, and cruelly and wickedly misinterpreted spiritual expressions.[4] These she read to his enemies. The letters were to be sent to the *Morning Post*. Charles Wesley begged his brother to stay in London and refute the slanders on his reputation. 'Brother,' said Wesley to him, 'when I devoted to God my ease, my time, my life, did I except my reputation? No. Tell Sally I will take her to Canterbury to-morrow.'

*To Miss Sarah Wesley.*

*Near* Leeds, *July* 17, 1781.

My dear Sally,—Without an *endeavour* to please God and to give up our own will, we never shall attain His

[1] See above, p. 7.
[2] *Works*, vol. vii. p. 67.
[3] Jackson's *Life of Charles Wesley*, vol. ii. p. 283.
[4] See above, p. 357.

favour. But till we have attained it, till we have the spirit of adoption, we cannot actually give up our own wills to Him.

Shall I tell you freely what I judge to be the grand hindrance to your attaining it? Yea, to your attaining more health both of body and mind than you have ever had, or, at least, for a long season? I believe it is, what very few people are aware of, intemperance in sleep. All are intemperate in sleep, who sleep more than what nature requires; and how much it does require is easily known. There is, indeed, no universal rule—none that will suit all constitutions. But, after all the observations and experience I have been able to make for upwards of fifty years, I am fully persuaded that men in general, need between six and seven hours sleep in twenty-four; and women, in general, a little more,—namely, between seven and eight.

But what ill consequences there are in lying longer in bed, —suppose nine hours in four-and-twenty?

1. It hurts the body. Whether you sleep or no (and, indeed, it commonly prevents sound sleep) it, as it were, soddens and parboils the flesh, and sows the seeds of numerous disorders; of all nervous diseases in particular, as weakness, faintness, lowness of spirits, nervous headaches, and consequent weakness of sight.

2. It hurts the mind; it weakens the understanding; it blunts the imagination; it weakens the memory; it dulls all the nobler affections. It takes off the edge of the soul, impairs its vigour and firmness, and infuses a wrong softness, quite inconsistent with the character of a noble soldier of Jesus Christ. It grieves the Holy Spirit of God, and prevents, or at least lessens those blessed influences which tend to make you, not almost, but altogether a Christian.

I advise you therefore, from this day forward, not trusting in yourself, but in Him that raiseth the dead, to take exactly

so much sleep as nature requires. If you need between seven and eight hours, then, in the name of God, begin this very night, in spite of all temptation to the contrary. Lie down at ten o'clock, and rise between five and six, whether you sleep or no. If your head aches in the day, bear it. In a week you will sleep sound.

If you can take this advice, you may receive more from, my dear Sally, yours most affectionately.

## 'Desire for Knowledge. . . . What Course you may take, I will point out.'

Miss Wesley must have complied with the conditions laid down by Wesley in the last letter as to sleep, etc., for three weeks later he sent her this. It contains an outline of a fine course of study. It should be compared with that proposed for Furley at Cambridge University, given on page 422. With the shining example of his mother before him, Wesley was quite modern in his views of the capacities and abilities of women students. He often wrote to his niece later. She was at his bedside when he died.

In the Everett Collection there is an interesting letter written by Miss Wesley on the back of one written by her mother, Mrs. Charles Wesley, the poet's aged widow, dated September 26, 1815. Miss Wesley's letter shows that she profited by her uncle's advice as to education, and more important matters also. She declares, 'I feel attached to the whole body of Methodists as the *children of my ancestors*, and rejoice to have intercourse with any of the preachers when they will oblige us with their visits. So does my mother and Charles.'

*To Miss Sarah Wesley.*

BRISTOL, *September* 4, 1781.

MY DEAR SALLY,—It is certain the Author of our nature designed that we should not destroy, but regulate, our

desire for knowledge. What course you may take in order to do this I will now briefly point out.

1. You want to know God, in order to enjoy Him in time and eternity.

2. All you want to know of Him is contained in one book, the Bible. And all that you learn is to be referred to this, either directly or remotely.

3. Would it not be well, then, to spend at least an hour a day in reading and meditating on the Bible? reading, every morning and evening, a portion of the Old and New Testament, with the *Explanatory Notes*?

4. Might you not read two or three hours in the morning, and one or two in the afternoon? When you are tired of severer studies, you may relax your mind by history or poetry.

5. The first thing you should understand a little of is grammar. You may read first the Kingswood English Grammar, and then Bishop Lowth's 'Introduction.'

6. You should acquire, if you have not already, some knowledge of arithmetic. Dilworth's *Arithmetic* would suffice.

7. For geography, I think you need only read over Randal's or Guthrie's *Geographical Grammar*.

8. Watts's *Logic* is not a very good one; but I believe you cannot find a better.

9. In natural philosophy, you have all that you need to know in *Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation*.[1] But you may add the Glasgow abridgment of Mr. Hutcheson's works.

10. With any or all of the foregoing studies you may intermix that of history. You may begin with Rollin'

[1] In five volumes (3rd ed., 1777), taken by Wesley from the Latin work of Buddæus, Professor of Philosophy at Jena; but Wesley retrenched, enlarged, or altered every chapter. This is a quite remarkable work, in which the evolutionary theory was anticipated.

*Ancient History*; and afterwards read, in order, the concise *History of the Church*, Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, the concise *History of England*, Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, Neal's *History of the Puritans*, his *History of New England*, and Robertson's *History of America*.

11. In metaphysics, you may read Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, and Malebranche's *Search after Truth*.

12. For poetry, you may read Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, and select parts of Shakespeare, Fairfax, or Hoole; *Godfrey of Bouillon*, *Paradise Lost*, the *Night Thoughts*, and Young's moral and sacred poems.

13. You may begin and end with divinity; in which I will only add, to the books mentioned before, Bishop Pearson on the Creed, and the *Christian Library*.[1]

By this course of study, you may gain all the knowledge which any reasonable Christian needs. But remember, before all, in all, and above all, your great point is, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.—I am, my dear Sally, your affectionate uncle.

## To a young Disciple.

Between the years 1769 and 1773 Wesley wrote nineteen letters to a young lady, a follower of Christ and a Methodist, whose name has not been traced. Here are three from the series. Wesley sought to direct her religious life, her reading, and her training of the young.

### 'The Bible gives us no Authority to think ill of any one.'

*Letter I.*

GALWAY, *May* 28, 1771.

MY DEAR MAID,—Your concern is with the present moment; your business is to live to-day. In every sense,

[1] See above, p. 303.

let the morrow take thought for the things of itself. It is true, the full assurance of hope excludes all doubts of our final salvation; but it does not, and cannot, continue any longer than we walk closely with God. And it does not include any assurance of our future behaviour; neither do I know any word in the Bible which gives us any authority to look for a testimony of this kind. But just so far you may certainly go, with regard to the present moment,—

> 'I want the witness, Lord,
> That all I do is right,
> According to Thy will and word,
> Well-pleasing in Thy sight.'

Seriously and steadily aim at this, and you will not be disappointed of your hope. With regard to the impression you speak of, I am in doubt whether it be not a temptation from the enemy. It may occasion many wrong tempers; it may feed both pride and uncharitableness. And the Bible gives us no authority to think ill of any one, but from plain, undeniable, overt acts.

Rollin was a pious man, and a fine historian. If you read one volume, you would feel whether it enlivened or deadened your soul. The same trial you may make as to serious poetry. Very probably this would enliven your soul; and certainly the volumes of Philosophy may, as Galen entitles his description of the human body 'A Hymn to the Creator.' Temporal business need not interrupt your communion with God, though it varies the manner of it.

It is certain every promise has a condition; yet that does not make the promise of none effect; but by the promise you are encouraged and enabled to fulfil the condition. You might like it better were there no condition; but that would not answer the design of Him that makes it.

It is certain, there are times of nearer access to God, and that it nearly imports us to improve these precious seasons.

But we may find plausible objections against this; and indeed, against anything.

The more free you are with me the more you oblige, my dear maid, yours affectionately.

## 'There may be Self-Approbation which is not Sin.'

*Letter II.*

DUBLIN, *July* 13, 1771.

MY DEAR MAID,—Truth and falsehood, and so right and wrong tempers, are often divided by an almost imperceptible line. It is the more difficult to distinguish right and wrong tempers, or passions, because, in several instances, the same motion of the blood and animal spirits will attend both one and the other. Therefore, in many cases, we cannot distinguish them but by the unction of the Holy One.

In the case you mention, all self-complacency or self-approbation is not pride. Certainly there may be self-approbation which is not sin, though it must occasion a degree of pleasure. 'This is our rejoicing, even the testimony of our conscience toward God.' And this joy is neither better nor worse for being accompanied by a natural motion of the blood and spirits.

Equally natural, and equally innocent, is the joy which we receive from being approved by those we love. But, in all these instances, there is need of the utmost care lest we slide from innocent joy, or self-approbation, into that which is not innocent, into pride (thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think), or vanity, a desire of praise—

'For thin partitions do their bounds divide.'

Be all in earnest, and always speak without reserve to yours affectionately.

## 'When we have to do with Children.'

This 'young disciple' sought Wesley's help in the training of children in religious matters. As already shown, he was deeply interested in children. He believed in their simple piety, and welcomed 'the first faint green blush of springing fruitfulness.' To Elizabeth Bushell, of Wilton, near Salisbury, a girl of nine years, who was refused the Lord's Supper at the parish church because she was so young, Wesley gave that sacrament after instructing her. Her subsequent life showed the sincerity of her early desires. The Saturday night at Kingswood School here referred to would be long remembered. He thought the Church 'catechism utterly improper for children of six or seven years old.' Hence his *Instructions for Children* here commended, prepared for 'all parents and schoolmasters.' This booklet was mainly a translation of that by Abbé Fleury and M. Poiret.

*Letter III.*

BRISTOL, *September* 8, 1773.

MY DEAR MAID,—We have the clearest proof when we have to do with children, that 'the help which is done upon earth, God doeth it Himself.' All our wisdom will not even make them understand, much less feel, the things of God. The *Instructions for Children* contain the best matter that we can possibly teach them. But nothing less than the finger of God can write it on their hearts. On Saturday night He sent another shower of grace upon our children at Kingswood. Sixteen of them were deeply affected; and, I think, thirteen found peace with God. Four or five of them were some of the smallest we had, not above seven or eight years old.

Although there may be some use in teaching very young children to 'say their prayers daily'; yet I judge it to be utterly impossible to teach any to 'practise prayers' till they are awakened. For, what is prayer but the desire of

the soul expressed to God, either inwardly or outwardly? How then will you teach them to express a desire who feel no desire at all? When, therefore, Madame Guyon talks in that manner, it often makes me afraid, that both she and her teacher Archbishop Fenelon, talked by rote of the things they knew not. Both of them had an amazing genius, but I doubt full little experience. It is exceeding certain neither his nor her writings are likely to do us any solid service. We have all the gold that is in them, without the dross; which is often not only useless, but dangerous. Let you and I keep the good old way:—

> 'In doing and bearing, the will of our Lord,
> We still are preparing, to meet our reward.'

Go on steadily in this path: there is none better. By patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality. You shall reap if you faint not.—My dear maid, yours affectionately.

## Counsel to an ailing Preacher.

Guidance in matters of health and sickness was often asked of Wesley and freely given. He and his preachers gave away many thousands of copies of his quaint book, *Primitive Physic.* His success in dealing with his own frail dyspeptic, consumptive body[1] gave him authority as counsellor. This letter, from the original in the John Rylands Library, Manchester, and little known, is here given as a specimen of many such counsels.

John Bredin, now at Whitehaven, was one of Wesley's preachers. He began the work in 1769, and, despite this illness and a later one, continued it for more than forty-three years. Wesley wrote of him to Mr. Adam Clarke as 'a weak brother,' in the work, who had behaved ill both at Jersey and Guernsey. When Wesley visited his work earlier, in 1787, at Kenagh, Ireland, he found it greatly

[1] See Book I. Chapter i.

revived, although Bredin was then just tottering over the grave.'

Wesley once asked in his Conference, 'Why do so many of our preachers fall into nervous disorders?' He answered with his characteristic directness, 'Because they do not avoid indolence and intemperance. Sometimes they sit the whole day. They take more food than nature requires. His advice to the nervous was:—1. Touch no dram, tea,[1] tobacco, or snuff. 2. Eat very light, if any, supper. 3. Breakfast on nettle- or orange-peel tea. 4. Lie down before ten; rise before six. 5. Every day use as much exercise as you can bear; or,—6. Murder yourself by inches.'

## 'Change of Air.'

*To John Bredin.*

*Near* London, *November* 30, 1782.

My dear Brother,—Medicines, I think, will be of no use to you: unless it were a course of tar-water. But very probably change of air might be of service. It might be of service to spend, suppose, a week or two at Liverpool. Afterwards, a week or two at Chester or Park-gate, and perhaps at Manchester. Your diet in the meantime should be chiefly milk and vegetables, of which I judge turnips, potatoes, and apples to be the best. Preach as much as you *can* preach, and no more.—I am, your affectionate brother.

## 'When I was young I had Abundance of Infirmities.'

To a clerical friend of long standing, Wesley repeats some of the above advice and gives some secrets of his longevity. Here he states the facts, referred to on page 8, concerning his many ailments as a youth. These are seldom remembered.

[1] His famous letter to a friend concerning tea (1748) is a booklet of 4500 words. He was very fond of tea; drank it when it was 18s. per lb. (1727); gave up drinking it for twelve years; recommenced its use under medical advice 'at the close of a consumption.'

# TO YOUNG FRIENDS

*To the Rev. Walter Sellon.*

LONDON, *January* 10, 1784.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—On the 28th of June I finished my eightieth year. When I was young I had weak eyes, trembling hands, and abundance of infirmities. But by the blessing of God I have outlived them all. I have no infirmities now but what I judge to be inseparable from flesh and blood. This hath God wrought. I am afraid you want the grand medicine which I use—exercise and change of air.—I am, your affectionate brother.

'Not delivered till I was gone, lest you should think I wanted anything.'

This characteristic letter is representative of hundreds of similar earnest pleadings with individuals on matters of spiritual concern. Wesley has evidently stayed with this Irish gentleman, or has met him, and has closely observed his personal and family life. Here he sets himself, as Richard Baxter did in many like cases, to remove by letter every obstacle and excuse which his reader may raise against real religion in heart and life. Did Knox reply to Wesley, as he asks? He hardly knows how Knox will take this appeal. He learned later, and endorsed the original of this letter (now in the Colman Collection) at foot, under Knox's name, with the sad summary, 'He came to nothing.' In his *Journal* (May 11, 1765) he noted Knox's defection and the coming to him of Alexander Knox of Londonderry.

*To James Knox, Sligo.*

*May* 30, 1757.[1]

Probably this is the last trouble of the kind which you will receive from *me*. If you receive it in the same spirit

[1] Should probably be 1758. Wesley was not in Ireland in 1757. He was in 1756, and again in 1758; and on May 27 and 28 of that year was at Sligo. A month later that year he was at Limerick with Mr. Beauchamp, at whose house he hoped to receive an answer to this letter. The *Works* version of it, slightly incomplete, is dated May 30, 1765.

wherein it is written I shall be glad. If not, my word is with the Most High. I did not choose it should be delivered till I was gone, lest you should think I wanted anything from you. By the blessing of God, I want nothing; only that you should be happy in time and in eternity. Still, I cannot but remember the clear *Light* you had, with regard to the nature of that scriptural charity. You saw what Heart Religion meant, and the gate of it, Justification. You had earnest *desires* to be a partaker of the whole gospel blessing. And you evidenced the sincerity of those desires by the *steps* you took in your *family*. So that in everything you was hastening to be not almost, but altogether a Christian.

Where is that *Light* now? Do you now see that true religion is not a negative or an external thing, but the life of God in the soul of man, the image of God stamped upon the heart? Do you now see that in order to this we are justified freely, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ? Where are the *desires* after this which you once felt, the hunger and thirst after righteousness? And where are the outward marks of a soul groaning after God, and refusing to be comforted with anything less than His love?

Will you say, 'But if I had gone on in that way, I should have lost my friends and my reputation?' This is partly true. You would have lost most of those friends who neither love nor fear God. Happy loss! These are the men who do you more hurt than all the world besides. These are the men whom, if ever you would be a *real Christian*, you must avoid as you would avoid hell fire. 'But then they will censure me.' So they will. They will say you are a fool, a madman, and what not. But what are you the worse for this? Why, the spirit of glory and of Christ shall rest upon you.

'But it will hurt me in my business.' Suppose it should,

the favour of God would be large amends. But very probably it would not; for the winds and seas are in God's hands, as well as the hearts of men.

'But it is inconsistent with my duty to *the Church*.' Can a man of understanding talk so? And talk so in earnest? Is it not rather a copy of his countenance? Indeed if you mean, 'inconsistent with my pleasing this or that clergyman,' I allow it. But let him be pleased or displeased, please thou God! But are these clergymen *the Church*? Unless they are *holy men*, earnestly loving and serving God, they are not even members of the Church; they are no part of it. And unless they preach the doctrines of the Church, contained in her articles and liturgy, they are no true ministers of the Church, but are eating her bread and tearing out her bowels.

'But you will not leave the Church.' You never will by my advice; I advise just the contrary. I advise you to lose no opportunity of attending the service of the Church, of receiving the Lord's Supper and of shewing your regard to all her appointments. I advise you steadily to adhere to her doctrine, in every branch of it, particularly with respect to the two fundamental points, Justification by Faith and Holiness. But, above all, I cannot but earnestly intreat you, not to rest till you experience what she teaches; till (to sum up all in one word), 'God cleanses the thoughts of your heart by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, that you may perfectly love Him and worthily magnify His holy name.' Unless this be done, what will it profit you to increase your fortune, to preserve the fairest reputation, and to gain the favour of the most learned, the most ingenious, the most honourable clergymen in the kingdom? What shall it profit a man to gain all these, and to lose his own soul?

I know, to God all things are possible. Therefore it is

possible you may take this kindly. If so, I shall hope to receive a line from you directed to Mr. Beauchamp's in Limerick. If not, let it be forgotten till we meet at the judgement seat of Christ.—I am, dear sir, your affectionate servant.

## 'I would fain give you one more Instance of my sincere Regard.'

A similar letter of thirty years later must be given. The holy ardour of youth and prime still burns in Wesley. He was now eighty-four, and truly a pastor of the pastors. He might have said with St. Paul, 'we were gentle among you, even as a nurse.' This letter, about which various mistakes[1] have arisen, is in the Colman Collection. A facsimile is here given.

The Rev. Dr. Leslie was rector of Tanderagee, near Belfast. He was Wesley's host on several occasions, and was particularly kind during his alarming illnesses there and in the neighbourhood in June, 1775. Of another visit in June, 1778, and of the delights of Dr. Leslie's domain, Wesley writes glowingly in his *Journal*: 'A pleasanter spot I never saw. . . . I know not that I have spent a more agreeable evening since I came into the kingdom. . . . I spent another hour with the amiable family this morning, and it was an hour I shall not soon forget.' He has just stayed here again for two days (June 13 and 14). Keenly observant as ever, he contrasts his impressions with those received during that visit of nine, he says 'ten,' years before. His *Journal* shows him more delighted than ever with Dr. Leslie's estate, 'the loveliest scene that can be conceived,' but he has fears concerning more important things. Who would not covet his zeal and his skill in rebuke and exhortation? Dr. C. H. Crookshank[2] concludes that this letter was received in the spirit in which it was written, for Wesley was welcomed again by Dr. Leslie at this beautiful Irish home.

[1] Cf. *Works*, vol. xii. p. 350.
[2] Wesley Historical Society *Proceedings*, vol. ii. p. 142.

# TO YOUNG FRIENDS

*To the Rev. Dr. Leslie.*

CHARLEMOUNT [CHARLEMONT, IRELAND],
*June* 16, 1787.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I have obligations to you on many accounts, from the first time I saw you, particularly for the kind concern you showed when I was ill at Tanderagee. These have increased upon me every time that I have since had the pleasure of waiting upon you. Permit me, Sir, to speak without reserve. Esteem was added to my affectionate regard when I saw the uncommon care and pains you took with the flock committed to your care; as also when I observed the remarkably serious manner whenever you read prayers in your family. Many years have passed since that time, many more than I am now likely to see under the sun. But before I go hence, I would fain give you one more instance of my sincere regard; the rather, because I can scarce expect to see you again till we meet in a better world. But it is difficult for me to do it, as I feel myself inferior to you in so many respects. Yet permit me to ask you a strange question: Is your soul as much alive to God as it was once? Have you not suffered loss from your relations or acquaintance, that are sensible and agreeable men, but not encumbered with religion? Some of them, perhaps, as free from the very form as from the power of it!

O, Sir, if you *lose* any of *the things which you have wrought*, who can make you amends for that loss? If you do *not receive a full reward*, what equivalent can you gain? I was pained even at your hospitable table, in the midst of those I loved so well. We did not *begin* and *close* the meal in the same manner as you did ten years ago. You was then, contrary to almost universal custom, unfashionably serious in asking a blessing and returning thanks. I know many would blame you for it. But, surely, your Lord said,

'Servant of God, well done.'—Wishing you and your lovely family every blessing, I am, dear and Rev. Sir, your obliged and affectionate brother and servant.

'Your kind Reproof. . . . I cannot write without Tears.'

By example, as by precept, Wesley showed nobly how a rebuke should be received. In the *Arminian Magazine* for 1782 he again expressed utter detestation of Jacob Behmen (Boehme) the Mystic and his teachings. Wesley asked, 'with the utmost certainty,' is he not '*illuminated* from beneath, rather than from above'; and 'ought he not to be styled *Demonosopher*, rather than *Theosopher*?' An old friend, though a much younger man than Wesley, Henry Brooke, a Dublin Methodist, remonstrated with him, and drew this beautiful letter. Brooke was the nephew of a gentleman of the same name whose fine novel, *The Fool of Quality*, Wesley abridged.

*To Henry Brooke.*

[Dublin], *April* 21, 1783.

Dear Harry,—Your letter gave me pleasure and pain. It gave me pleasure because it was written in a mild and loving spirit; but it gave me pain because I found I had pained you, whom I so tenderly love and esteem. But I shall do it no more. I sincerely thank you for your kind reproof. It is a precious balm, and will, I trust, in the hands of the Great Physician, be the means of healing my sickness. I am so sensible of your real friendship herein, that I cannot write without tears. The words you mention were too strong. They will no more fall from my mouth. —I am, dear Harry, affectionately yours.

# CHAPTER XII

## ON PUBLIC MATTERS AND TO PUBLIC MEN

WESLEY's well-known counsel to his preachers, 'You have nothing to do but to save souls,' was meant by him and accepted by them in no narrow sense. They were expected to circulate his books—that entitled *Primitive Physic* as well as the *Christian's Pattern*; to take good care of their horses and houses; observe and enforce rules of health and sanitation; read to Methodist voters, and freely distribute, Wesley's instructions[1] at a General Election, and even advise electors for the parliamentary candidate which Wesley favoured: all this, while chiefly promoting the spiritual interests of men, women, and children. In these varied activities Wesley set them an example, as his letters show. He was interested in everything, and nothing human was foreign to him. Here we have the address he prepared for presentation to the King; his letters to Premiers and ministers of the Crown on war, taxation, and Sunday drilling; to chief magistrates and city corporations about soldiers, or concerning a new theatre. He threatens to write frankly about Voltaire, and sends to hearten Wilberforce. It is probable that in city and national archives there are other letters of his on public questions and to public men, of which those here given are representative. That to the Premier, given on page 472, was long unknown.

The noble breeding, gifts, and training of Wesley come out well in these letters. As in his letters to bishops,

[1] *A Word to a Freeholder*, printed in 1748, and often reprinted until 1783; see also *Journal*, v. 343.

several of which we have given,[1] he is seen to be at once finely courageous, tactful, and courteous. He approached the most highly placed as to the manner born; but he never presumes, or hectors high or low, even when his services and influence were unquestionably large. In this group of letters, as always, Wesley's deepest interest is the spiritual welfare of men. He is an eager citizen and patriot, loyal to king and country; but he cannot close a letter without a personal appeal to its recipient. The dangers to the city of Mansoul—the moral life of the soldiers—concern him far more than the siege of a city which they are called to protect against the nation's enemies.

## 'To tender our most dutiful Regards to your sacred Majesty.'

This assurance of loyalty to George II. was prepared by Wesley when the King was alarmed by the threatened invasion of England. The Stuart Pretender to the throne was then in France, and had the support of the Papists. A month later France declared war. Convocation, the Protestant Dissenters, even the Quakers, presented loyal addresses to the King. This Address was not sent, as Charles Wesley thought that to present one in the name of the Methodists would seem to indicate that they were a sect, and separate from the Church of England. This view, everything which savoured of it, and all who held it, he abhorred. Had this Address been presented it might have killed earlier the baseless but persistent calumny that the Wesleys and their followers favoured the Pretender, or were otherwise disloyal.[2] They were summoned before magistrates and suffered much annoyance on this false charge. Charles Wesley was arraigned because in public prayer he asked that God would 'bring home His banished ones'—a scriptural euphemism for the restoration of sinners to divine favour. John Wesley published this Address in his *Journal* in 1753.

[1] See pp. 133, 135, 259.

[2] To contradict this many chapels were later named 'Hanover' or 'Brunswick,' after the titles of the reigning House.

# TO PUBLIC MEN

*To the King's Most Excellent Majesty (George II.)*

The humble Address of the Societies in England and Wales in derision called Methodists.

[LONDON, *March 5*, 1744.]

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,—So inconsiderable as we are, 'a people scattered and peeled, and trodden underfoot from the beginning hitherto,' we should in nowise have presumed, even on this great occasion, to open our lips to your Majesty, had we not been induced, indeed constrained to do so, by two considerations: the one, that in spite of all our remonstrances on that head, we are continually represented as a peculiar sect of men, separating ourselves from the Established Church; the other, that we are still traduced as inclined to Popery, and consequently as disaffected to your Majesty.

Upon these considerations we think it incumbent upon us, if we must stand as a distinct body from our brothers, to tender for ourselves our most dutiful regards to your sacred Majesty: and to declare, in the presence of Him we serve, the King of kings and Lord of lords, that we are a part (however mean) of that Protestant Church, established in these kingdoms: That we unite together for this, and no other end—to promote, so far as we may be capable, justice, mercy, and truth; the glory of God, and peace and good-will among men: That we detest and abhor the fundamental doctrines of the Church of Rome, and are steadily attached to your Majesty's royal person and illustrious House.

We cannot, indeed, say or do either more or less than we apprehend consistent with the written word of God; but we are ready to obey your Majesty to the uttermost, in all things which we conceive agreeable thereto. And we earnestly exhort all with whom we converse, as they fear God, to honour the King. We, of the clergy in particular,

put all men in mind to revere the higher powers as of God; and continually declare, 'Ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.'

Silver and gold (most of us must own) we have none; but such as we have we humbly beg your Majesty to accept, together with our hearts and prayers. May He who hath bought us with His blood, the Prince of all the kings of the earth, fight against all the enemies of your Majesty, with the two-edged sword which cometh out of His mouth! And when He calleth your Majesty from this throne, full of years and victories, may it be with that voice, 'Come, receive the kingdom prepared for thee, from the beginning of the world!'

These are the continual prayers of your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects,—JOHN WESLEY, etc.

## Letters to the Mayor of Newcastle-on-Tyne and General Husk.

Two letters to the Mayor of Newcastle-on-Tyne (Alderman Ridley) were sent while the city was fearing attack by the Young Pretender in 1745. News that he was at Edinburgh, and that the British under General Cope had fled before him, alarmed Newcastle citizens. The Mayor summoned all to meet him at the Town Hall. Wesley reached the city the day before this meeting, and begun at once to hold religious services. His non-attendance was noticed. Hence the first letter. The city prepared for a siege. Those who lived outside the walls removed within them, except Wesley and his helpers at the Orphan House, which was just beyond the Pilgrim Street gate. He thought it providential that these buildings were so placed that shells from cannon on the city walls would miss them and kill any approaching enemy. Some citizens thought otherwise. Hence Wesley's letter to General Husk, then directing protective measures.

Wesley was most disturbed at the overflowing of ungodliness in the city, which not even these grave dangers inter-

# WESLEY'S LETTER

TO THE

## REV. DR. LESLIE

Rector of Tanderagee
near Belfast

From CHARLEMONT, June 16, 1787

*FACSIMILE* from the ORIGINAL
in the Collection of Mr. Russell
J. Colman, D.L., J.P., Norwich

*THE TEXT* of this LETTER is
given on page 459

LETTERS OF JOHN WESLEY

BY REV. GEORGE EAYRS, F.R.HIST.S.

Published by Hodder & Stoughton, London, Toronto, New York
1916

knew not how far it might be either necessary or proper for me to appear on such an occasion. I have no fortune at Newcastle: I have only the bread I eat, and the use of a little room for a few weeks in the year.

All I can do for His Majesty, whom I honour and love—I think not less than I did my own father—is this, I cry unto God, day by day, in public and in private, to put all his enemies to confusion. And I exhort all that hear me to do the same; and, in their several stations, to exert themselves as loyal subjects; who, so long as they fear God, cannot but honour the King.

Permit me, Sir, to add a few words more, out of the fulness of my heart. I am persuaded you fear God, and have a deep sense that His kingdom ruleth over all. Unto whom, then (I may ask you), should we flee for succour, but unto Him whom, by our sins, we have justly displeased? O, Sir, is it not possible to give any check to these overflowings of ungodliness? To the open, flagrant wickedness, the drunkenness, and profaneness, which so abound, even in our streets? I just take leave to suggest this.

May the God whom you serve direct you in this, and all things! This is the daily prayer of, Sir, your obedient servant, for Christ's sake.

## 'I am ready to pull the House down.'

*To His Excellency General Husk.*

[ORPHAN HOUSE, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,
*October* 8, 1745.]

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—A surly man came to me this evening, as he said, from you. He would not deign to come upstairs to me, nor so much as into the house; but stood in the yard till I came, and then obliged me to go with him into the street, where he said, 'You must pull down the battle-

ments of your house, or to-morrow the General will pull them down for you.'

Sir, to me this is nothing. But I humbly conceive it would not be proper for this man, whoever he is, to behave in such a manner to any other of His Majesty's subjects, at so critical a time as this.

I am ready, if it may be for His Majesty's service, to pull not only the battlements, but the house down; or to give up any part of it, or the whole, into your Excellency's hands.

## 'The poor Men to whom our Lives are entrusted.'

*To the Worshipful the Mayor of Newcastle-on-Tyne, Alderman Ridley.*

*October* 26, 1745.

Sir,—The fear of God, the love of my country, and the regard I have for His Majesty King George, constrain me to write a few plain words to one who is no stranger to these principles of action.

My soul has been pained day by day, even in walking the streets of Newcastle, at the senseless, shameless wickedness, the ignorant profaneness of the poor men to whom our lives are entrusted! The continual cursing, and swearing, the wanton blasphemy of the soldiers in general, must needs be a torture to the sober ear, whether of a Christian or an honest infidel. Can any that either fear God or love their neighbour, hear this without concern? especially if they consider the interests of their country, as well as of these unhappy men themselves. For can it be expected, that God should be on their side who are daily affronting Him to His face? And if God be not on their side, how little will either their number, or courage, or strength avail?

Is there no man that careth for these souls? Doubtless there are some who ought so to do. But many of these,

if I am rightly informed, receive large pay, and do just nothing.

I would to God it were in my power, in any degree, to supply their lack of service. I am ready to do what in me lies, to call these poor sinners to repentance, once or twice a day (while I remain in these parts), at any hour, or at any place. And I desire no pay at all for doing this; unless what my Lord shall give at His appearing.

If it be objected (from our heathenish poet), 'This conscience will make cowards of us all,'[1] I answer, Let us judge by matter of fact. Let either friends or enemies speak. Did those who feared God behave as cowards at Fontenoy? Did J[ohn] H[aime], the Dragoon, betray any cowardice, before or after his horse sunk under him? Or did W[illiam] C[lements], when he received the first ball in his left, and the second in his right arm? Of John Evans, when the cannon-ball took off both his legs? Did he not call all about him, as long as he could speak, to praise and fear God, and honour the King? as one who feared nothing but lest his last breath should be spent in vain.

If it were objected, that I should only fill their heads with peculiar whims and notions, that might easily be known. Only let the officers hear with their own ears, and they may judge whether I do not preach the plain principles of manly, rational religion.

Having myself no knowledge of the General, I took the liberty to make this offer to you. I have no interest herein; but I should rejoice to serve, as I am able, my King and country. If it be judged that this will be of no real service, let the proposal die, and be forgotten. But I beg you, Sir,

[1] Incorrectly quoted from Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III. i. 83. 'Heathenish' is a strange adjective for Wesley to use of Shakespeare. He seldom quoted from him. A fine quarto copy of the poet's works survived Wesley's death, the margins of which were filled with critical notes in Wesley's handwriting. One of Wesley's preachers, John Pawson, destroyed it.

to believe that I have the same glorious cause, for which you have shown so becoming a zeal, earnestly at heart; and that therefore, I am, with warm respect, Sir, your most obedient servant.

## 'An Offer of raising a Company of Volunteers.'

West was Member of Parliament for St. Albans and joint Secretary to the Treasury. This letter to him was enclosed in one by Wesley, of the same date, to Ebenezer Blackwell, the influential London banker. Its occasion is there explained (page 331). England seemed in need of help from every patriot. Wesley offered soldiers,[1] and hurried to Bristol to help a parliamentary candidate, John Spencer. He was defeated. Charles Wesley republished his *Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution*, and set the Methodists singing—

'Ye servants of God, Your Master proclaim.'

George Whitefield fulminated against Romanists. We can trace no acceptance of Wesley's offer; but his letter exhibits his patriotism and practicality. The original of this valuable letter is in the British Museum (Addit. MSS., 1882-1887, 32,685, Auto. Letters, No. 12, on page 64).

Perhaps Wesley's anxiety to help the cause of the aged king, George II., who was then seventy-two, was quickened by his recollection of impressions received a few weeks earlier. On December 23, 1755, he wrote in his *Journal*, 'I was in the robe-chamber adjoining to the House of Lords when the King put on his robes. His brow was much furrowed with age, and quite clouded with care. And is this all the world can give, even to a king? All the grandeur it can afford? A blanket of ermine round his shoulders, so heavy and cumbersome he can scarce move under it! A huge heap of borrowed hair, with a few plates of gold and glittering stones upon his head! Alas, what a bauble is human greatness! And even this will not endure.'

[1] As he did in 1779 (see p. 257).

*To the Honourable James West.*

[MARLBOROUGH], *March* 1, 1756.

SIR,—A few days since, Mr. Whitefield and I desired a friend to ask your advice,—to whom it would be proper to make an offer of raising a company of volunteers for His Majesty's service. We apprehended the number would be about five hundred. Finding Mr. Whitefield has since been persuaded that such an offer is premature, I am constrained to make the following, independently of him: To raise, for His Majesty's service, at least two hundred volunteers, to be supported by contributions among themselves; and to be ready, in case of invasion, to act for a year, if needed so long, at His Majesty's pleasure; only within — miles of London.

If this be acceptable to His Majesty, they beg to have arms out of the Tower, giving the usual security for their return; and some of His Majesty's sergeants to instruct them in the military exercise.

I am now hastening to Bristol, on account of the election; but if my return to London would be of any service, you may command, Sir, your obedient servant.

## 'Most of the present Stage Entertainments are peculiarly hurtful to a Trading City.'

Here is the only reference to the theatre traced in Wesley's *Letters* or his *Works*. His courteous and tactful presentation of his views, and the gravamen of his opposition to the proposed theatre, as likely to be injurious to the commercial interests of the city, will be noted. Wesley had read the prophet Jeremiah's letter to the captive Jews in Babylon: 'Seek the peace of the city, whither I have caused you to be carried away captive.' The Wesleys and the Methodists had wrought for twenty-five years in Bristol and Kingswood,

and it was common knowledge that all the best interests had profited thereby.

Wesley prepared this letter in London and sent it to his brother Charles, then residing in Bristol, with a note saying, 'I suppose it is of little consequence in whose hand this is transcribed. Let it be accompanied by prayer, and good must follow one way or the other.'

*To the Mayor and Corporation of Bristol.*

*December* 20, 1764.

GENTLEMEN,—Both my brother and I, and all who have any connection with us, are extremely sensible of our obligations to you for the civility which you have shown us on all occasions; and we cannot but feel ourselves deeply interested in whatever we apprehend in any degree to concern your honour or the general good and prosperity of the city of Bristol. This occasions my giving you the present trouble, which (whether it has any farther effect or no) you will please to receive as a testimony of the high regard which we shall ever retain for you.

The endeavours lately used to procure subscriptions for building a new play-house in Bristol have given us not a little concern, and that on various accounts. Not barely as most of the present stage entertainments sap the foundation of all religion, as they naturally tend to efface all traces of piety and seriousness out of the minds of men; but as they are particularly hurtful to a trading city; giving a wrong turn to youth especially, gay, trifling, and directly opposite to the spirit of industry and close application to business; and as drinking and debauchery of every kind are constant attendants on these entertainments, with indolence, effeminacy, and idleness, which affect trade in a high degree.

It was on these very considerations that the corporation of Nottingham lately withstood all solicitations and absolutely forbade the building of a new theatre there, being

determined to encourage nothing of the kind. And I doubt not but that thousands will reap the benefit of their wise and generous resolution.

It does not become me, Gentlemen, to press anything upon you, but I could not avoid saying this much, both in behalf of myself and all my friends.

Wishing you the continuance and increase of every blessing.—I remain, Gentlemen, your obliged and obedient servant.

## To the Prime Minister, Lord North.

This historic and highly important letter is now first given with completeness.[1] The year when it was written was critical indeed in the relations between Great Britain and the American Colonies, as before pointed out.[2] It was sent to Lord North, then British Premier. As Tyerman reminds us, it was written within forty-eight hours of the Battle of Bunker's Hill, Boston, where its predictions, sadly and disastrously for Britain, were fulfilled. The original would be as fascinating a document as the letter from leading Boston citizens pleading with George III., which is inspected with so much interest, especially by Americans, in the Record Office, Fetter Lane, London. A copy of the letter to Lord North was sent to Lord Dartmouth, Secretary for the Colonies. This copy was in existence in 1866. The letter is of scarcely less importance as a self-revelation of Wesley. Seldom does a man write so candidly of himself or so courageously to a man in high place, and seldom has a hot, complicated issue been so dispassionately, clearly, or more ably judged, or with such Christian patriotism. Wesley

[1] Its history is curious. It was buried among British national documents, unseen and unheard of until published by the Rev. Samuel Dunn in his *Wesley Banner*, vol. i. p. 177, 1849, from which we give it. Dr. George Smith gave it seventeen years later in his *History of Methodism*, vol. i. App. E. The last strong paragraph is given only by Tyerman (*Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 200), who strangely omits half the long opening paragraph of the letter. See also *Journal*, vol. vi. p. 67.

[2] See above, p. 247.

had reliable correspondents, and had taken trouble to form a fine judgement upon the situation. He shows himself a true prophet—a forthteller and a foreteller. He has heard a great voice behind him, in history. He knows how to use the word 'Remember.' It booms like a solemn bell at the end of his letter.

## 'Is it Common Sense to use Force towards the Americans?'

*To the Right Honourable Lord North.*

ARMAGH, *June* 15, 1775.

MY LORD,—I would not speak, as it may seem to be concerning myself with things that lie out of my province, but I dare not refrain from it any longer. I think silence in the present case would be a sin against God, against my country, and against my own soul. But what hope can I have of doing good, of making the least impression upon your Lordship, when so many have spoken in vain, and those far better qualified to speak on so delicate a subject. They were better qualified in some respects; in others they were not. They had not less bias upon their minds; they were not free from worldly hopes and fears. Their passions were engaged; and how easily do those blind the eyes of their understanding. They were not more impartial; most of them were prejudiced in the highest degree. They neither loved the King nor his ministers; rather they hated them with a perfect hatred; and your Lordship knows that you could not, if you were a man, avoid having some prejudice to them. In this case it would be hardly possible to feel the full force of their arguments. They had not better means of information, of knowing the real tempers and sentiments either of the Americans on the one hand, or the English, Irish, or Scots on the other. Above all, they trusted in



* This letter is Carlyle's own citation on p. 152

themselves, in their own power of convincing and persuading; I trust only in the living God, who hath the hearts of all men in His hands. And whether my writing do any good or no, it need do no harm, for it rests within your Lordship's breast whether any eye but your own shall see it.

I do not intend to enter upon the question, whether the Americans are in the right or in the wrong?—Here all my prejudices are against the Americans, for I am a High Churchman, the son of a High Churchman, bred up from my childhood in the highest notions of passive obedience and non-resistance; and yet, in spite of all my long-rooted prejudices, I cannot avoid thinking, if I think at all, these, an oppressed people, asked for nothing more than their legal rights, and that in the most modest and inoffensive manner that the nature of the thing would allow.

But waiving this, waiving all considerations of right and wrong, I ask, Is it common sense to use force towards the Americans? A letter now before me, which I received yesterday, says, 'Four hundred of the regulars and forty of the militia were killed in the late skirmish.' What a disproportion is this! And this is the first essay of raw men against regular troops. You see, my Lord, whatever has been affirmed, these men will not be frightened; and it seems they will not be conquered so easily as was at first imagined. They will probably dispute every inch of ground, and if they die, die sword in hand. Indeed, some of our valiant officers say, 'Two thousand men will clear America of these rebels.' No, nor twenty thousand, be they rebels or not, nor perhaps treble that number. They are as strong men as you; they are as valiant as you, if not abundantly more valiant, for they are one and all enthusiasts—enthusiasts for liberty. They are calm, deliberate enthusiasts; and we know how this principle breathes into softer souls stern love of war, and thirst of vengeance, and contempt of death.

We know men, animated with this spirit, will leap into a fire, or rush into a cannon's mouth.

'But they have no experience in war.' And how much more have our troops?—Very few of them ever saw a battle. 'But they have no discipline.' That is an entire mistake. Already they have near as much as our army, and they will learn more of it every day; so that in a short time, if the fatal occasion continue, they will understand it as well as their assailants. 'But they are divided amongst themselves.' So you are informed by various letters and memorials. So, doubt not, was poor Rehoboam informed concerning the ten tribes! So, nearer our own times, was Philip informed concerning the people of the Netherlands. No, my Lord, they are terribly united. Not in the province of New England only, but down as low as the Jerseys and Pennsylvania. The bulk of the people are so united, that to speak a word in favour of the present English measures, would almost endanger a man's life. Those who informed me of this, one of whom was with me last week, lately come from Philadelphia, are no sycophants; they say nothing to curry favour; they have nothing to gain or lose by me. But they speak with sorrow of heart, what they have seen with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears.

These men think, one and all, be it right or wrong, that they are contending, *pro aris* and *focis;* for their wives, children, and liberty. What an advantage have they herein over many that fight only for pay! None of whom care a straw for the cause wherein they are engaged; most of whom strongly disapprove of it. Have they not another considerable advantage? Is there occasion to recruit the troops? Their supplies are at hand, and all round about them. Ours are three thousand miles off! Are we then able to conquer the Americans, suppose they are left to themselves, suppose all our neighbours should stand stock still, and leave us

and them to fight it out? But we are not sure of this. Nor are we sure that all our neighbours will stand stock still. I doubt they have not promised it; and if they had, could we rely upon those promises? Yet, it is not probable, they will send ships or men to America. Is there not a shorter way? Do they not know where England and Ireland lie? And have they not troops, as well as ships, in readiness? All Europe is well apprised of this; only the English know nothing of the matter! What if they find means to land but ten thousand men? Where are the troops in England or Ireland to oppose them? Why, cutting the throats of their brethren in America! Poor England, in the mean time!

'But we have our militia—our valiant, disciplined militia. These will effectually oppose them.' Give me leave, my Lord, to relate a little circumstance, of which I was informed by a clergyman who knew the fact. In 1716 a large body of militia were marching towards Preston against the rebels. In a wood which they were passing by a boy happened to discharge his fowling-piece. The soldiers gave in all for lost, and, by common consent, threw down their arms and ran for life. So much dependence is to be placed on our valorous militia.

But, my Lord, this is not all. We have thousands of enemies, perhaps more dangerous than French or Spaniards. As I travel four or five thousand miles every year, I have an opportunity of conversing freely with more persons of every denomination than any one else in the three kingdoms. I cannot but know the general disposition of the people—English, Scots, and Irish; and I know a large majority of them are exasperated almost to madness. Exactly so they were throughout England and Scotland, about the year 1640, and in a great measure by the same means: by inflammatory papers which were spread, as they are now, with the utmost

diligence, in every corner of the land. Hereby the bulk of the population were effectually cured of all love and reverence for the King. So that, first despising, then hating him, they were just ripe for open rebellion. And, I assure your Lordship, so they are now. They want nothing but a leader.

Two circumstances more are deserving to be considered: the one, that there was at that time a decay of general trade almost throughout the kingdom; the other, there was a common dearness of provisions. The case is the same in both respects at this day. So that even now there are multitudes of people, that, having nothing to do, and nothing to eat, are ready for the first bidder; and that, without inquiring into the merits of the cause, would flock to any who would give them bread. Upon the whole, I am really sometimes afraid that this evil is from the Lord. When I consider the astonishing luxury of the rich, and the shocking impiety of rich and poor, I doubt whether general dissoluteness of manners does not demand a general visitation. Perhaps the decree is already gone forth from the Governor of the world. Perhaps even now,

> 'As he that buys, surveys a ground,
> So the destroying angel measures it around.
> Calm he surveys the perishing nation;
> Ruin behind him stalks, and empty desolation.'

But we Englishmen are too wise to acknowledge that God has anything to do in the world! Otherwise should we not seek Him by fasting and prayer, before He lets the lifted thunder drop? O my Lord, if your Lordship can do anything, let it not be wanting! For God's sake, for the sake of the king, of the nation, of your lovely family, remember Rehoboam! Remember Philip the Second! Remember Charles the First!

I am, with true regard,
My Lord, Your Lordship's obedient servant.

## 'I have . . . Silver Tea-spoons.'

Wesley's famous reply to the Commissioners of Excise must surely be among the most striking of the curious replies which such officers receive. In 1776 the House of Lords ordered that circular letters should be sent to all persons who, having silver-plate, had made no return of it or had failed to pay duty. Among the former, Wesley was addressed. A special letter to him, dated September 2, accompanied the circular. It stated that the Commissioners could not doubt he had plate, and they required an immediate answer concerning it. This was sent a week later, when Wesley had reached his Bristol lodgings, in the New Room in the Horsefair, and could see what plate he had there. With his usual carefulness of paper, significant in this instance, he wrote the following reply on the back of the circular of inquiry. As ever, Wesley points a moral with his reply. It is also interesting to note that he did not part with the four silver spoons he had. He liked the refinements of life.

*To His Majesty's Officer of Excise.*

BRISTOL, *September* 9, 1776.

SIR,—I have two silver tea-spoons at London and two at Bristol. This is all the plate which I have at present. And I shall not buy any more while so many round me want bread.—I am, Sir, your most humble servant.

## On Voltaire.

Wesley and Voltaire had nothing in common, as these two letters show. The life of each of them almost covered the eighteenth century and was profoundly influential; but they were as sharply contrasted in conduct and character[1] as the result of their life and labour—the Reign of Terror

[1] Dr. W. J. Townsend points out features of this contrast in *A New History of Methodism*, i. 367-8.

in France and the peaceful revolution in England. Wesley speaks elsewhere of the 'infernal subtlety' of Voltaire. He puts Rousseau and Voltaire together, and describes the former as 'a shallow yet supercilious infidel, two degrees below Voltaire. He is a mere misanthrope; a cynic all over. So indeed is his brother-infidel, Voltaire, and well-nigh as great a coxcomb.' Our first letter is given by Tyerman,[1] but without the name of its recipient. Wesley's reference to the dying hours of 'that wretched infidel,' Voltaire, was published in his *Journal* under date September, 1778. He had just copied it from Fletcher's letter to James Ireland of Bristol. Our second letter,[2] from the original in the United Methodist Theological College, Sheffield, names the royal chaplain with whom Wesley is so indignant. Delamotte, to whom this letter was sent, was then at Barrow, Lincolnshire. He was Wesley's companion to Georgia in 1735.

## 'Voltaire . . . to whom a crowned Head pays such a violent Compliment.'

*To an Unknown Correspondent.*

[London], *January* 4, 1779.

Sir,—In September last, a gentleman, near Bristol, showed me a letter which he had received from the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, at Paris. I desired him to give a transcript of one part of it, which he immediately did. It was as follows:—

'Mr. Voltaire sent for Monsieur Tronchin,[3] first physician

[1] Wesley's *Life*, iii. 288.

[2] Published in the Wesley Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, vol. vii. 19, from contribution to MS. Journal by the present writer.

[3] Dr. Tronchin is wrongly named in Wesley's *Journal* (September 1778) as Fronchin, and by Tyerman (*Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 289) as Tronchils. Tallentyre says that Tronchin was a sincere Christian, and that he wrote bitterly of Voltaire's deathbed. He adds, 'for three hours Voltaire was dying—calmly and peacefully say some; in all the horrors of the damned, say others. But the truth, who knows?'—*Life of Voltaire*, 3rd ed. (1905), pp. 516-519.

to the Duke of Orleans (one of his converts to infidelity), and said to him, "Sir, I desire you will save my life. I will give you half my fortune if you will lengthen out my days only six months. If not, I shall go to the devil, and carry you with me."'

This is the man to whom a crowned head pays such a violent compliment! Nay, this is the man whose works are now publishing by a divine of our own Church; yea, a chaplain to His Majesty. Pity but the King should know it. If the publisher of that poor wretch's works writes a panegyric upon him or them, I shall think it my duty to show the real value of those writings.—I am, Sir, your humble servant.

## 'That wretched Infidel.'

*To Charles Delamotte.*

LONDON, *February* 11, 1779.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am agreeably surprised with a letter from my old friend whom I long desired to see, and how I missed of seeing you when I was last at Barrow I cannot comprehend.

It is very probable I shall have some more work to do with regard to that wretched infidel. For if Dr. Bealey, the publisher of his *Works*, prefixes to them a flaming Panegyric, I shall think it my duty to deal exceeding plainly both with the author and the translator.

I am now in my seventy-sixth year, and am by the wonderful mercy of God in at least as good health as I was in my twenty-sixth, and in some respects better. So when it pleases Him,

> 'He bids the sun of Life stand still,
> And stops the panting soul.'

I am glad you speak a word to your brethren on behalf

of your good Master. This is worth living for.—Believe me to be, as ever, dear Charles, your affectionate brother.

## 'A Motion in Parliament for raising the Militia and exercising them on Sunday.'

This skilful letter, often given without the name of the nobleman and minister of the Crown to whom it was addressed, was sent to Lord Shelburne,[1] afterwards first Marquis of Lansdowne. He was now Home Secretary under Chatham, and next year First Lord of the Treasury. The 'No Popery' Riots led by Lord George Gordon[2] two years before, the war with America, still proceeding, and continental attacks on Britain showed the need for efficient soldiers. But Wesley thought that conditions could not arise which would justify the training of soldiers on the Lord's Day.[3] His Conference in the August of this year adopted regulations under which any Methodist who practised military exercises on Sundays, or witnessed them after warning, was to be expelled from membership.

*To Lord Shelburne.*

LONDON (?), *December* 7, 1782.

MY LORD,—If I wrong your lordship, I am sorry for it; but I really believe your lordship fears God, and I hope your lordship has no unfavourable opinion of the Christian revelation. This encourages me to trouble your lordship with a few lines, which otherwise I should not take upon me to do.

About thirty years ago a motion was made in Parliament for raising and embodying the Militia, and for exercising them, to save time, on Sunday. When the motion was like

[1] See Whitehead's *Life of Wesley* (1796), vol. ii. p. 399, and its unpaged index under 'Wesley, John.'

[2] As a prominent Protestant Wesley visited Lord George Gordon while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London for high treason and insurrection.

[3] See above, p. 227.

to pass an old gentleman stood up and said, 'Mr. Speaker, I have one objection to this: I believe an old book called the Bible.' The members looked at one another and the motion was dropped.

Must not all others who believe the Bible have the same objection? And, from what I have seen, I cannot but think these are still three-fourths of the nation. Now, setting religion out of the question, is it expedient to give such a shock to so many millions of people at once? And certainly it would shock them extremely: it would wound them in a very tender part. For would not they, would not all England, would not all Europe, consider this as a virtual repeal of the Bible? And would not all serious persons say, 'We have little religion in the land now, but by this step we shall have less still. For wherever this pretty show is to be seen, the people will flock together, and will lounge away so much time before and after it that the churches will be emptier than they are already.'

My lord, I am concerned for this on a double account: First, because I have personal obligations to your lordship, and would fain, even for this reason, recommend your lordship to the love and esteem of all over whom I have any influence. Secondly, because I now reverence your lordship for your office' sake, and believe it to be my bounden duty to do all that is in my little power to advance your lordship's influence and reputation.

Will your lordship permit me to add a word in my old-fashioned way? I pray Him that has all power in heaven and earth to prosper all your endeavours for the public good, and am, my lord, your lordship's willing servant.

## To the Prime Minister, William Pitt.

Though only twenty-five years of age, William Pitt was British Prime Minister, and would be interested by this

letter from such an eminent venerable supporter, Wesley, then eighty-one. The original[1] of this famous letter is in the Colman Collection, from which our text of it is given, with interesting corrections and additions to that usually given. Any public man would welcome such a message—informing, shrewd, solicitous, tactful, but faithful, as from an ambassador of the King of Kings.

'New Taxes . . . smuggling Villains . . . the Distillery . . . that Scandal of the English Nation, Suicide.'

Thomas Ellison was Wesley's nephew, to whom Pitt, at Wesley's instance, had given an appointment in the Excise. Webb is Captain Thomas Webb,[2] now back from the United States to end his days in England. Wesley felt that the old servant of the Crown and of Christ deserved comfort.

Paragraph 5 recalls Wesley's vigorous pamphlet published eleven years earlier, *Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions.* Bread corn was dear, he contended, because such immense quantities were wasted in '*distilling*, . . . that bane of health, that destroyer of strength, of life and virtue.'

What did Pitt with his 'benevolent heart' feel as to Wesley's proposed deterrent to the crime of suicide? In his *Arminian Magazine* for 1790 Wesley republished his proposal, since 'there is no country in Europe, or perhaps in the habitable world, where the horrid crime of self-murder is so common as in England.' The spread of Wesley's gospel of hope helped to reduce the number of cases of this sad crime and of other crimes.

*To the Right Honourable William Pitt, M.P.*

BATH, *September* 6, 1784.

SIR,—Your former goodness, shown to one of my relations, Mr. Thomas Ellison, emboldens me to take the liberty of recommending to your notice an old friend, Lieutenant

[1] It was written by an amanuensis and is endorsed in Wesley's own handwriting, *To Mr. Pitt, Sept. 6, 1784.*

[2] See p. 244.

Webb. On my mentioning formerly some of his services to Lord North, his lordship was pleased to order him £100 a year. But as it has since been reduced, it is hardly a maintenance for him and his family. If you would be so good as to remember him in this or any other way, I should esteem it a particular favour.

Will you excuse me, Sir, for going out of my province by hinting a few things which have been long upon my mind? If those hints do not deserve any further notice they may be forgiven and forgotten.

New taxes must undoubtedly be imposed. But may not more money be produced by the old ones? For instance:

1. When the Land tax is four shillings in the pound, I know some towns which pay regularly seven or five pence! Nay, I know one town where they pay one penny in the pound! Is there no help for this?

2. As to the Window tax: I know a gentleman who has near a hundred windows in his house, and he told me he paid for twenty.

3. The same gentleman told me: 'We have above a hundred men servants in this house, but not above ten are paid for.'

4. I firmly believe that, in Cornwall alone, the King is defrauded of half a million yearly in customs. What does this amount to in all Great Britain? Surely not so little as five millions.[1]

5. Servants of distillers inform me that their masters do not pay for a fortieth part of what they distil. And this duty last year (if I am rightly informed) amounted only to twenty thousand pounds. But have not the spirits distilled this year cost twenty thousand lives of His Majesty's liege subjects? Is it not then the blood of these men? Vilely

[1] Is there no way of extirpating these smuggling villains, notwithstanding their Honourable or Right Honourable abetters?

bartered for twenty thousand pounds, not to say anything of the enormous wickedness which has been occasioned thereby. And not to suppose that these poor wretches have any souls. But to consider money alone. Is the king a gainer, or an immense loser by the Distillery? To say nothing of many millions of quarters of corn destroyed, which, if exported, would have added more than twenty thousand pounds to the revenue. Be it considered, 'Dead men pay no taxes.' So that, by the death of twenty thousand persons yearly (and this computation is far under the mark), the revenue loses far more than it gains.

But I may urge another consideration to YOU. You are *a man*. You have not lost human feelings. You do not love to drink human blood. You are a son of Lord Chatham. Nay, if I mistake not, you are a Christian. Dare you then sustain a sinking nation? Is the God whom you serve able to deliver from ten thousand enemies? I believe He is. Nay, and *you* believe it. O, may you fear nothing but displeasing Him!

May I add a word on another head? How would your benevolent heart rejoice if a stop could be put to that scandal of the English nation, suicide? The present laws against it avail nothing, for every such *murderer* is brought in *non compos*. If he was poor, the jurors forswear themselves from pity. If he was rich, they hope to be well paid for it. So no ignominy pursues either the living or the dead, and self-murder increases daily. But what help?

I conceive this horrid crime might be totally prevented, and that without doing the least hurt either to the living or the dead. Do you not remember, Sir, how the rage for self-murder among the Spartan matrons was stopped at once?[1] Would it not have the same effect in England, if

[1] By ordering that every woman that killed herself should be dragged naked through the streets of the city.

an Act of Parliament were passed, repealing all other Acts, and appointing that every self-murderer, lunatic or not, should be hanged in chains?

Suppose your influence could prevent suicide by this means, and distilling by making it a felony, you would do more service to your country than any Prime Minister has done this hundred years. Your name would be precious to all true Englishmen as long as England continued a nation. And, what is infinitely more, a greater Monarch than King George would say to you, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

I earnestly commit you to His care, and am, Sir, your willing servant.

## 'If this is not Oppression, what is? . . . Speak a Word to Mr. Pitt.'

Nothing but wilful ignorance and cruel animus can explain this persecution of the Methodists which moved Wesley to write to this member of Parliament. His name has not been traced. They had now been at work more than half a century, and by common consent their influence was wholly for good. If the member 'will speak a word to Mr. Pitt,' who was still Premier, 'on that head,' he will learn that. But miserable jacks-in-office still continued, and long after this period, to torment the Methodists where and when they dare do so. As we have shown (page 133), Wesley and some Methodists played into their hands. This letter was written ten years later than the painful one to a Bishop there given. The present harrying of the Methodists in Somersetshire was headed by a lawyer who boasted that he would drive Methodism out of the county. Wesley calmly remarked, 'Yes, when he can drive God out of it.'[1] The veteran leader spent six weeks of the autumn there,

[1] Tyerman, *Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 512.

incessantly travelling and preaching, although he was now eighty-seven.[1]

*To a Member of Parliament.*

*Autumn*, 1790.

SIR,—Last month a few people met together in Somersetshire, to pray, and praise God, in a friend's house. There was no preaching at all. Two neighbouring justices fined the man of the house twenty pounds. I suppose he was not worth twenty shillings. Upon this, his household goods were distrained and sold, to pay the fine. He appealed to the Quarter-Sessions; but all the justices averred the Methodists could have no relief from the Act of Toleration because they went to church; and that, so long as they did so, the Conventicle Act should be executed upon them.

Last Sunday, when one of our preachers was beginning to speak to a quiet congregation, a neighbouring justice sent a constable to seize him, though he was licensed, and would not release him until he had paid twenty pounds, telling him his licence was good for nothing, because he was a churchman.

Now, Sir, what can the Methodists do? They are liable to be ruined by the Conventicle Act, and they have no relief from the Act of Toleration! If this is not oppression, what is? Where, then, is English liberty? the liberty of Christians? yea, of every rational creature, who, as such, has a right to worship God according to his conscience? But, waiving the question of right and wrong, what prudence is there in oppressing such a body of loyal subjects? If these good magistrates could drive them not only out of Somersetshire but out of England, who would be gainers thereby?

[1] But while at Bath on Sunday, September 5, he says, 'I cut off that vile custom, I know not how or when it began, of preaching three times a day by the same preacher to the same congregation; enough to weary out both the bodies and minds of the speaker, as well as his hearers.'

Not His Majesty, whom we honour and love; not his Ministers, whom we love and serve for his sake. Do they wish to throw away so many thousand friends, who are now bound to them by stronger ties than that of interest? If you will speak a word to Mr. Pitt on that head, you will oblige, etc.

## To William Wilberforce, M.P.

This selection of letters from those written by Wesley may be appropriately closed with the last letter which he wrote. It was to a public man. Its date is six days before that of Wesley's death. He wrote it at the house of his friend and executor, George Wolff of Balham. The fact that it was his last letter, the subject of the letter—the abolition of the trade in slaves, and the undying fame of Wilberforce, to whom the letter was sent, all give it unique interest. It is one of the notable letters of the world.

## 'Opposing that execrable Villainy, which is the Scandal of Religion, of England, and of Human Nature.'

Four years earlier Wesley met John Howard, and sent him forward greatly heartened to cleanse the prisons of Europe. Here he is seen locking his shield with that of Wilberforce over the trembling form of the negro slave, for whom he must fight *contra mundum*, against the world. As early as 1758 Wesley gave Christian baptism to Gilbert's negro slaves.[1] In 1774 he issued his *Thoughts upon Slavery*,[2] a booklet of twenty pages, compact of history, argument, passion, and compassion, which ought to be reprinted whenever and wherever this horrible crime and sin reappears. 'Away with all whips, all chains and compulsion,' cried Wesley. He rejoiced greatly when his American followers,

[1] See above, p. 237.
[2] *Works*, vol. xi. pp. 59-79.

Freeborn Garrettson and Philip Gatch,[1] voluntarily set free their slaves. He wrote twice to encourage Thomas Clarkson and the committee for the abolition of the slave trade, and promised to reprint and circulate his pamphlet. Wilberforce called on him in 1789 and found him 'a fine old fellow.' Wesley wrote, 'We had an agreeable and useful conversation. What a blessing it is to Mr. Pitt to have such a friend as this.' As Wesley foresaw, Wilberforce and his helpers needed such divine resources as this letter claims for them. Sixteen years elapsed before this infamous trade was made illegal (January 1, 1808). Slavery lingered much longer.[2]

*To William Wilberforce.*

LONDON, *February* 24, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,—Unless the divine Power has raised you up to be as Athanasius *contra mundum*, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but, *if God be for you, who can be against you?* Are all of them together stronger than God? O! '*be not weary in well doing.*' Go on, in the name of God, and in the power of His might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish before it.

Reading, this morning, a tract, written by a poor African, I was particularly struck by that circumstance—that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white

[1] *A New History of Methodism*, vol. p. ii. 80. On American Methodists and Slavery, see *ibid.*, pp. 119, 127, 175 *et seq.*

[2] 'Methodists put all their strength into the battle for freedom. Out of 352,404 Nonconformist signatures to petitions to Parliament on that behalf, 229,426 were those of Methodists.'—Rev. J. Telford's *A Sect that Moved the World*, Chapter iv. J. R. Green connects the abolition of slavery with the Methodist Revival.

man, can have no redress; it being a *law*, in our colonies, that the *oath* of a black, against a white, goes for nothing. What villainy is this?

That He who has guided you, from your youth up, may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of, dear sir, your affectionate servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

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NOTE.—*The name of John Wesley is seldom used in this Index, except in references to his Works, and where it occurs in the alphabetical order. The name is assumed as the basis of many entries. So expanded, the first entry would read*—Aberdeen, *John Wesley's* visits to. *Under* Wesley, John, *and some other entries where the references are numerous, an inner Index is given in alphabetical order.*

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Gillie [illegible]
"I am sick of dispute
By Mean marks -

Wesley standing by
Not Joy primary