

A

PLAIN ACCOUNT  
OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION,

AS BELIEVED AND TAUGHT

BY THE REVEREND MR. JOHN WESLEY,

FROM THE YEAR 1725, TO THE YEAR 1777.\*

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1. WHAT I purpose in the following papers is, to give a plain and distinct account of the steps by which I was led, during a course of many years, to embrace the doctrine of Christian perfection. This I owe to the serious part of mankind, those who desire to know all "the truth as it is in Jesus." And these only are concerned in questions of this kind. To these I would nakedly declare the thing as it is, endeavouring all along to show, from one period to another, both what I thought, and why I thought so.

2. In the year 1725, being in the twenty-third year of my age, I met with Bishop Taylor's "Rule and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying." In reading several parts of this book, I was exceedingly affected; that part in particular which relates to purity of intention. Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts, and words, and actions; being thoroughly convinced, there was no medium; but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself, that is, in effect, to the devil.

Can any serious person doubt of this, or find a medium between serving God and serving the devil?

3. In the year 1726, I met with Kempis's "Christian's Pattern." The nature and extent of inward religion, the religion of the heart, now appeared to me in a stronger light than ever it had done before. I saw, that giving even all my life to God (supposing it possible to do this, and go no

\* It is not to be understood, that Mr. Wesley's sentiments concerning Christian Perfection were in any measure changed after the year 1777. This tract underwent several revisions and enlargements during his life-time; and in every successive edition the date of the most recent revision was specified. The last revision appears to have been made in the year 1777; and since that period, this date has been generally continued on the title-page of the several editions of the pamphlet.—EDIT.



farther) would profit me nothing, unless I gave my heart, yea, all my heart, to him.

I saw, that "simplicity of intention, and purity of affection," one design in all we speak or do, and one desire ruling all our tempers, are indeed "the wings of the soul," without which she can never ascend to the mount of God.

4. A year or two after, Mr. Law's "Christian Perfection" and "Serious Call" were put into my hands. These convinced me, more than ever, of the absolute impossibility of being half a Christian; and I determined, through his grace, (the absolute necessity of which I was deeply sensible of,) to be all-devoted to God, to give him all my soul, my body, and my substance.

Will any considerate man say, that this is carrying matters too far? or that anything less is due to Him who has given himself for us, than to give him ourselves, all we have, and all we are?

5. In the year 1729, I began not only to read, but to study, the Bible, as the one, the only standard of truth, and the only model of pure religion. Hence I saw, in a clearer and clearer light, the indispensable necessity of having "the mind which was in Christ," and of "walking as Christ also walked;" even of having, not some part only, but all the mind which was in him; and of walking as he walked, not only in many or in most respects, but in all things. And this was the light, wherein at this time I generally considered religion, as an uniform following of Christ, an entire inward and outward conformity to our Master. Nor was I afraid of anything more, than of bending this rule to the experience of myself, or of other men; of allowing myself in any the least disconformity to our grand Exemplar.

6. On January 1, 1733, I preached before the University, in St. Mary's church, on "the Circumcision of the Heart;" an account of which I gave in these words: ["It is that habitual disposition of soul which, in the sacred writings, is termed holiness; and which directly implies, the being cleansed from sin, 'from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit;' and, by consequence, the being endued with those virtues which were in Christ Jesus; the being so 'renewed in the image of our mind,' as to be 'perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.'"] (Vol. V., p. 203.)

In the same sermon I observed, "'Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment.' It is not only 'the first and great' command, but all the commandments in one. 'What-



soever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, they are all comprised in this one word, love. In this is perfection, and glory, and happiness: The royal law of heaven and earth is this, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' The one perfect good shall be your one ultimate end. One thing shall ye desire for its own sake,—the fruition of Him who is all in all. One happiness shall ye propose to your souls, even an union with Him that made them, the having 'fellowship with the Father and the Son,' the being 'joined to the Lord in one spirit.' One design ye are to pursue to the end of time,—the enjoyment of God in time and in eternity. Desire other things, so far as they tend to this; love the creature, as it leads to the Creator. But in every step you take, be this the glorious point that terminates your view. Let every affection, and thought, and word, and action, be subordinate to this. Whatever ye desire or fear, whatever ye seek or shun, whatever ye think, speak, or do, be it in order to your happiness in God, the sole end, as well as source, of your being." (*Ibid.*, pp. 207, 208.)

I concluded in these words: 'Here is the sum of the perfect law, the circumcision of the heart. Let the spirit return to God that gave it, with the whole train of its affections.—Other sacrifices from us he would not, but the living sacrifice of the heart hath he chosen. Let it be continually offered up to God through Christ, in flames of holy love. And let no creature be suffered to share with him; for he is a jealous God. His throne will he not divide with another; he will reign without a rival. Be no design, no desire admitted there, but what has Him for its ultimate object. This is the way wherein those children of God once walked, who being dead still speak to us: 'Desire not to live but to praise his name; let all your thoughts, words, and works tend to his glory.' Let your soul be filled with so entire a love to Him, that you may love nothing but for his sake.' 'Have a pure intention of heart, a steadfast regard to his glory in all your actions.' For then, and not till then, is that 'mind in us, which was also in Christ Jesus,' when in every motion of our heart, in every word of our tongue, in every work of our hands, we 'pursue nothing but in relation to him, and in subordination to his pleasure;' when we too neither think, nor speak, nor act, to fulfil 'our own will, but the will of Him that sent us;' when, 'whe-



ther we eat or drink, or whatever we do,' we do it all 'to the glory of God.' " *Ibid.*, p. 211.)

It may be observed, this sermon was composed the first of all my writings which have been published. This was the view of religion I then had, which even then I scrupled not to term *perfection*. This is the view I have of it now, without any material addition or diminution. And what is there here, which any man of understanding, who believes the Bible, can object to? What can he deny, without flatly contradicting the Scripture? what retrench, without taking from the word of God?

7. In the same sentiment did my brother and I remain (with all those young gentlemen in derision termed *Methodists*) till we embarked for America, in the latter end of 1735. It was the next year, while I was at Savannah, that I wrote the following lines:—

Is there a thing beneath the sun,  
That strives with thee my heart to share?  
Ah! tear it thence, and reign alone,  
The Lord of every motion there!

In the beginning of the year 1738, as I was returning from thence, the cry of my heart was,

O grant that nothing in my soul  
May dwell, but thy pure love alone!  
O may thy love possess me whole,  
My joy, my treasure, and my crown!  
Strange fires far from my heart remove;  
My every act, word, thought, be love!

I never heard that any one objected to this. And indeed who can object? Is not this the language, not only of every believer, but of every one that is truly awakened? But what have I wrote, to this day, which is either stronger or plainer?

8. In August following, I had a long conversation with Arvid Gradin, in Germany. After he had given me an account of his experience, I desired him to give me, in writing, a definition of "the full assurance of faith," which he did in the following words:—

*Requies in sanguine Christi; firma fiducia in Deum, et persuasio de gratiâ divinâ; tranquillitas mentis summa, atque serenitas et pax; cum absentia omnis desiderii carnalis, et cessatione peccatorum etiam interiorum.*

"Repose in the blood of Christ; a firm confidence in God,



and persuasion of his favour ; the highest tranquillity, serenity, and peace of mind, with a deliverance from every fleshly desire, and a cessation of all, even inward sins."

This was the first account I ever heard from any living man, of what I had before learned myself from the oracles of God, and had been praying for, (with the little company of my friends,) and expecting, for several years.

9. In 1739, my brother and I published a volume of "Hymns and Sacred Poems." In many of these we declared our sentiments strongly and explicitly. So, page 24,—

Turn the full stream of nature's tide ;  
Let all our actions tend  
To thee, their source ; thy love the guide,  
Thy glory be the end.

Earth then a scale to heaven shall be ;  
Sense shall point out the road ;  
The creatures all shall lead to thee,  
And all we taste be God.

Again,—

Lord, arm me with thy Spirit's might,  
Since I am call'd by thy great name :  
In thee my wand'ring thoughts unite,  
Of all my works be thou the aim :  
Thy love attend me all my days,  
And my sole business be thy praise. (Page 122.)

Again,—

Eager for thee I ask and pant,  
So strong the principle divine,  
Carries me out with sweet constraint,  
Till all my hallow'd soul be thine ;  
Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,  
And lost in thine immensity ! (Page 125.)

Once more,—

Heavenly Adam, life divine,  
Change my nature into thine ;  
Move and spread throughout my soul,  
Actuate and fill the whole. (Page 153.)

It would be easy to cite many more passages to the same effect. But these are sufficient to show, beyond contradiction, what our sentiments then were.

10. The first tract I ever wrote expressly on this subject was published in the latter end of this year. That none might be prejudiced before they read it, I gave it the indifferent title of "The Character of a Methodist." In this



I described a perfect Christian, placing in the front, "Not as though I had already attained." Part of it I subjoin without any alteration:—

[ "A Methodist is one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength. God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul, which is continually crying, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth whom I desire besides thee.' ] My God and my all! 'Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' He is therefore happy in God; yea, always happy, as having in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, and overflowing his soul with peace and joy. Perfect love having now cast out fear, he rejoices evermore. Yea, his joy is full, and all his bones cry out, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again unto a living hope of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for me.'

[ "And he, who hath this hope, thus full of immortality, in everything giveth thanks, as knowing this (whatsoever it is) is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning him." ] From him therefore he cheerfully receives all, saying, 'Good is the will of the Lord;' and whether he giveth or taketh away, equally blessing the name of the Lord. Whether in ease or pain, whether in sickness or health, whether in life or death, he giveth thanks from the ground of the heart to Him who orders it for good; into whose hands he hath wholly committed his body and soul, 'as into the hands of a faithful Creator.' [He is therefore anxiously 'careful for nothing,' as having 'cast all his care on Him that careth for him;' and 'in all things' resting on him, after 'making' his 'request known to him with thanksgiving.'

"For indeed he 'prays without ceasing;' at all times the language of his heart is this, 'Unto thee is my mouth, though without a voice; and my silence speaketh unto thee.' His heart is lifted up to God at all times, and in all places. In this he is never hindered, much less interrupted, by any person or thing.] In retirement or company, in leisure, business, or conversation, his heart is ever with the Lord. Whether he lie down, or rise up, 'God is in all his thoughts:' He walks with God continually; having the loving eye of his soul fixed on him, and everywhere 'seeing Him that is invisible.'



✓ [“And loving God, he ‘loves his neighbour as himself;’ he loves every man as his own soul.”] He loves his enemies, yea, and the enemies of God. And if it be not in his power to ‘do good to them that hate’ him, yet he ceases not to ‘pray for them,’ though they spurn his love, and still ‘despitefully use him, and persecute him.’

✓ [“For he is ‘pure in heart.’ Love has purified his heart from envy, malice, wrath, and every unkind temper.”] It has cleansed him from pride, whereof ‘only cometh contention;’ and he hath now ‘put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.’ And indeed all possible ground for contention, on his part, is cut off. For none can take from him what he desires, seeing he ‘loves not the world, nor any of the things of the world;’ but ‘all his desire is unto God, and to the remembrance of his name.’

✓ [“Agreeable to this his one desire, is the one design of his life; namely, ‘to do, not his own will, but the will of Him that sent him.’”] His one intention at all times and in all places is, not to please himself, but Him whom his soul loveth. He hath a single eye; and because his ‘eye is single, his whole body is full of light. The whole is light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth enlighten the house.’ God reigns alone; all that is in the soul is ‘holiness to the Lord.’ There is not a motion in his heart but is according to his will. Every thought that arises points to him, and is in ‘obedience to the law of Christ.’

✓ [“And the tree is known by its fruits. For, as he loves God, so he ‘keeps his commandments;’ not only some, or most of them, but all, from the least to the greatest. He is not content to ‘keep the whole law and offend in one point,’ but has in all points ‘a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards man.’ Whatever God has forbidden, he avoids; whatever God has enjoined, he does. ‘He runs the way of God’s commandments,’ now He hath set his heart at liberty. It is his glory and joy so to do; it is his daily crown of rejoicing, to ‘do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven.’”]

“All the commandments of God he accordingly keeps, and that with all his might; for his obedience is in proportion to his love, the source from whence it flows. And therefore, loving God with all his heart, he serves him with all his strength; he continually presents his soul and ‘body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God;’ entirely and without reserve devoting



himself, all he has, all he is, to his glory. All the talents he has, he constantly employs according to his Master's will; every power and faculty of his soul, every member of his body.

["By consequence, 'whatsoever he doeth, it is all to the glory of God.'] In all his employments of every kind, he not only aims at this, which is implied in having a single eye, but actually attains it; his business and his refreshments, as well as his prayers, all serve to this great end. Whether he 'sit in the house, or walk by the way,' whether he lie down, or rise up, he is promoting, in all he speaks or does, the one business of his life. Whether he put on his apparel, or labour, or eat and drink, or divert himself from too wasting labour, it all tends to advance the glory of God, by peace and good-will among men. His one invariable rule is this: 'Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, even the Father, through him.'

["Nor do the customs of the world at all hinder his 'running the race which is set before him.' He cannot therefore 'lay up treasures upon earth,' no more than he can take fire into his bosom. He cannot speak evil of his neighbour, any more than he can lie either for God or man. He cannot utter an unkind word of any one; for love keeps the door of his lips. He cannot 'speak idle words; no corrupt conversation' ever 'comes out of his mouth;' as is all that is not 'good to the use of edifying,' not fit to 'minister grace to the hearers.' But 'whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are' justly 'of good report,' he thinks, speaks, and acts, 'adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.'"]

These are the very words wherein I largely declared, for the first time, my sentiments of Christian perfection. And is it not easy to see, (1.) That this is the very point at which I aimed all along from the year 1725; and more determinately from the year 1730, when I began to be *homo unius libri*, "a man of one book," regarding none, comparatively, but the Bible? Is it not easy to see, (2.) That this is the very same doctrine which I believe and teach at this day; not adding one point, either to that inward or outward holiness which I maintained eight-and-thirty years ago? And it is the same which, by the grace of God, I have continued to teach from that time till now; as will appear to every impartial person from the extracts subjoined below.



11. I do not know that any writer has made any objection against that tract to this day; and for some time, I did not find much opposition upon the head, at least, not from serious persons. But after a time, a cry arose, and, what a little surprised me, among religious men, who affirmed, not that I stated perfection wrong, but that "there is no perfection on earth;" nay, and fell vehemently on my brother and me for affirming the contrary. We scarce expected so rough an attack from these; especially as we were clear on justification by faith, and careful to ascribe the whole of salvation to the mere grace of God. But what most surprised us, was, that we were said to "dishonour Christ," by asserting that he "saveth to the uttermost;" by maintaining he will reign in our hearts alone, and subdue all things to himself.

12. I think it was in the latter end of the year 1740, that I had a conversation with Dr. Gibson, then Bishop of London, at Whitehall. He asked me what I meant by perfection. I told him without any disguise or reserve. When I ceased speaking, he said, "Mr. Wesley, if this be all you mean, publish it to all the world. If any one then can confute what you say, he may have free leave." I answered, "My Lord, I will;" and accordingly wrote and published the sermon on Christian perfection.

In this I endeavoured to show, (1.) In what sense Christians are not, (2.) In what sense they are, perfect.

X " (1.) In what sense they are not. They are not perfect in knowledge. They are not free from ignorance, no, nor from mistake. We are no more to expect any living man to be infallible, than to be omniscient. They are not free from infirmities, such as weakness or slowness of understanding, irregular quickness or heaviness of imagination. Such in another kind are impropriety of language, ungracefulness of pronunciation; to which one might add a thousand nameless defects, either in conversation or behaviour. From such infirmities as these none are perfectly freed till their spirits return to God; neither can we expect till then to be wholly freed from temptation; for 'the servant is not above his master.' But neither in this sense is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no perfection of degrees, none which does not admit of a continual increase.

" (2.) In what sense then are they perfect? Observe, we are not now speaking of babes in Christ, but adult Christians.



But even babes in Christ are so far perfect as not to commit sin. This St. John affirms expressly; and it cannot be disproved by the examples of the Old Testament. For what, if the holiest of the ancient Jews did sometimes commit sin? We cannot infer from hence, that 'all Christians do and must commit sin as long as they live.'

"But does not the Scripture say, 'A just man sinneth seven times a day?' It does not. Indeed it says, 'A just man falleth seven times.' But this is quite another thing; for, First, the words, *a day*, are not in the text. Secondly, here is no mention of *falling into sin* at all. What is here mentioned, is, *falling into temporal affliction*.

"But elsewhere Solomon says, 'There is no man that sinneth not.' Doubtless thus it was in the days of Solomon; yea, and from Solomon to Christ there was then no man that sinned not. But whatever was the case of those under the law, we may safely affirm, with St. John, that, since the gospel was given, 'he that is born of God sinneth not.'

"The privileges of Christians are in nowise to be measured by what the Old Testament records concerning those who were under the Jewish dispensation; seeing the fulness of time is now come, the Holy Ghost is now given, the great salvation of God is now brought to men by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The kingdom of heaven is now set up on earth, concerning which the Spirit of God declared of old time, (so far is David from being the pattern or standard of Christian perfection,) 'He that is feeble among them, at that day, shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as the angel of the Lord before them.' (Zech. xii. 8.)

"But the Apostles themselves committed sin; Peter by dissembling, Paul by his sharp contention with Barnabas. Suppose they did, will you argue thus: 'If two of the Apostles once committed sin, then all other Christians, in all ages, do and must commit sin as long as they live?' Nay, God forbid we should thus speak. No necessity of sin was laid upon them; the grace of God was surely sufficient for them. And it is sufficient for us at this day.

"But St. James says, 'In many things we offend all.' True; but who are the persons here spoken of? Why, those 'many masters' or teachers whom God had not sent; not the Apostle himself, nor any real Christian. That in the word *we*, used by a figure of speech, common in all other as well as the



inspired writings, the Apostle could not possibly include himself, or any other true believer, appears, First, from the ninth verse, 'Therewith bless we God, and therewith curse we men.' Surely not we Apostles! not we believers! Secondly, from the words preceding the text: 'My brethren, be not many masters,' or teachers, 'knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all.' *We!* Who? Not the Apostles nor true believers, but they who were to 'receive the greater condemnation,' because of those many offences. Nay, Thirdly, the verse itself proves, that 'we offend all,' cannot be spoken either of all men or all Christians. For in it immediately follows the mention of a man who 'offends not,' as the *we* first mentioned did; from whom therefore he is professedly contradistinguished, and pronounced a 'perfect man.'

"But St. John himself says, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves;' and, 'If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.'

"I answer, (1.) The tenth verse fixes the sense of the eighth: 'If we say we have no sin,' in the former, being explained by, 'If we say we have not sinned,' in the latter, verse. (2.) The point under consideration is not, whether we have or have not sinned heretofore; and neither of these verses asserts that we do sin, or commit sin now. (3.) The ninth verse explains both the eighth and tenth: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' As if he had said, 'I have before affirmed, The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.' And no man can say, 'I need it not; I have no sin to be cleansed from.' 'If we say, we have no sin,' that 'we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves,' and make God a liar: But 'if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just,' not only 'to forgive us our sins,' but also 'to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,' that we may 'go and sin no more.' In conformity, therefore, both to the doctrine of St. John, and the whole tenor of the New Testament, we fix this conclusion: A Christian is so far perfect, as not to commit sin.

"This is the glorious privilege of every Christian, yea, though he be but a babe in Christ. But it is only of grown Christians it can be affirmed, they are in such a sense perfect, as, Secondly, to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers. First, from evil or sinful thoughts. Indeed, whence should



they spring? 'Out of the heart of man,' if at all, 'proceed evil thoughts.' If, therefore, the heart be no longer evil, then evil thoughts no longer proceed out of it: For 'a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.'

"And as they are freed from evil thoughts, so likewise from evil tempers. Every one of these can say, with St. Paul, 'I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;'—words that manifestly describe a deliverance from inward as well as from outward sin. This is expressed both negatively, 'I live not,' my evil nature, the body of sin, is destroyed; and positively, 'Christ liveth in me,' and therefore all that is holy, and just, and good. Indeed, both these, 'Christ liveth in me,' and, 'I live not,' are inseparably connected. For what communion hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial?

"He, therefore, who liveth in these Christians hath 'purified their hearts by faith;' insomuch that every one that has Christ in him, 'the hope of glory, purifieth himself even as he is pure.' He is purified from pride; for Christ was lowly in heart: He is pure from desire and self-will; for Christ desired only to do the will of his Father: And he is pure from anger, in the common sense of the word; for Christ was meek and gentle. I say, *in the common sense of the word*; for he is angry at sin, while he is grieved for the sinner. He feels a displacency at every offence against God, but only tender compassion to the offender.

"Thus doth Jesus save his people from their sins, not only from outward sins, but from the sins of their hearts. 'True,' say some, 'but not till death, not in this world.' Nay, St. John says, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because, as he is, so are we in this world.' The Apostle here, beyond all contradiction, speaks of himself and other living Christians, of whom he flatly affirms, that, not only at or after death, but 'in this world,' they are 'as their Master.'

"Exactly agreeable to this are his words in the first chapter: 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' And again: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Now, it is evident, the Apostle here



speaks of a deliverance wrought in this world: For he saith not, The blood of Christ *will* cleanse, (at the hour of death, or in the day of judgment,) but it 'cleanseth,' at the time present, us living Christians 'from all sin.' And it is equally evident, that if *any* sin remain, we are not cleansed from 'all' sin. If *any* unrighteousness remain in the soul, it is not cleansed from 'all' unrighteousness. Neither let any say that this relates to justification only, or the cleansing us from the guilt of sin: First, because this is confounding together what the Apostle clearly distinguishes, who mentions, first, 'to forgive us our sins,' and then 'to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Secondly, because this is asserting justification by works, in the strongest sense possible; it is making all inward, as well as all outward, holiness, necessarily previous to justification. For if the cleansing here spoken of is no other than the cleansing us from the guilt of sin, then we are not cleansed from guilt, that is, not justified, unless on condition of walking 'in the light, as he is in the light.' It remains, then, that Christians are *saved* in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness; that they are now in such a sense perfect, as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers."

It could not be, but that a discourse of this kind, which directly contradicted the favourite opinion of many, who were esteemed by others, and possibly esteemed themselves, some of the best of Christians, (whereas, if these things were so, they were not Christians at all,) should give no small offence. Many answers or animadversions, therefore, were expected; but I was agreeably disappointed. I do not know that any appeared; so I went quietly on my way.

13. Not long after, I think in the spring, 1741, we published a second volume of Hymns. As the doctrine was still much misunderstood, and consequently misrepresented, I judged it needful to explain yet farther upon the head; which was done in the preface to it as follows:—

"This great gift of God, the salvation of our souls, is no other than the image of God fresh stamped on our hearts. It is a 'renewal of believers in the spirit of their minds, after the likeness of Him that created them.' God hath now laid 'the axe unto the root of the tree, purifying their hearts by faith,' and 'cleansing all the thoughts of their hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.' Having this hope, that they shall see God as he is, they 'purify themselves even as he is pure,' and are 'holy,

as he that hath called them is holy, in all manner of conversation.' Not that they have already attained all that they shall attain, either are already in this sense perfect. But they daily 'go on from strength to strength; beholding' now, 'as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.'

"And 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;' such liberty 'from the law of sin and death,' as the children of this world will not believe, though a man declare it unto them. 'The Son hath made them free' who are thus 'born of God,' from that great root of sin and bitterness, pride. They feel that all their 'sufficiency is of God,' that it is He alone who 'is in all their thoughts,' and 'worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' They feel that 'it is not they' that 'speak, but the Spirit of' their 'Father who speaketh' in them, and that whatsoever is done by their hands, 'the Father who is in them, he doeth the works.' So that God is to them all in all, and they are nothing in his sight. They are freed from self-will, as desiring nothing but the holy and perfect will of God; not supplies in want, not ease in pain,\* nor life, or death, or any creature; but continually crying in their inmost soul, 'Father, thy will be done.' They are freed from evil thoughts, so that they cannot enter into them, no, not for a moment. Aforetime, when an evil thought came in, they looked up, and it vanished away. But now it does not come in, there being no room for this, in a soul which is full of God. They are free from wanderings in prayer. Whensoever they pour out their hearts in a more immediate manner before God, they have no thought of anything past,† or absent, or to come, but of God alone. In times past, they had wandering thoughts darted in, which yet fled away like smoke; but now that smoke does not rise at all. They have no fear or doubt, either as to their state in general, or as to any particular action.‡ The 'unction from the Holy One' teacheth them every hour what they shall do, and what they shall speak; § nor therefore have they any need to reason concerning it. || They are in one sense freed from temptations; for though

\* This is too strong. Our Lord himself desired ease in pain. He asked for it, only with resignation: "Not as I will," I desire, "but as thou wilt."

† This is far too strong. See the sermon "On Wandering Thoughts."

‡ Frequently this is the case; but only for a time.

§ For a time it may be so; but not always.

|| Sometimes they have no need; at other times they have.



numberless temptations fly about them, yet they trouble them not.\* At all times their souls are even and calm, their hearts are steadfast and unmovable. Their peace, flowing as a river, 'passeth all understanding,' and they 'rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' For they 'are sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption,' having the witness in themselves, that 'there is laid up for' them a 'crown of righteousness, which the Lord will give' them 'in that day.'†

"Not that every one is a child of the devil, till he is thus renewed in love: On the contrary, whoever has 'a sure confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven,' he is a child of God, and, if he abide in him, an heir of all the promises. Neither ought he in anywise to cast away his confidence, or to deny the faith he has received, because it is weak, or because it is 'tried with fire,' so that his soul is 'in heaviness through manifold temptations.'

"Neither dare we affirm, as some have done, that all this salvation is given at once. There is indeed an instantaneous, as well as a gradual, work of God in his children; and there wants not, we know, a cloud of witnesses, who have received, in one moment, either a clear sense of the forgiveness of their sins, or the abiding witness of the Holy Spirit. But we do not know a single instance, in any place, of a person's receiving, in one and the same moment, remission of sins, the abiding witness of the Spirit, and a new, a clean heart.

"Indeed, how God may work, we cannot tell; but the general manner wherein he does work is this: Those who once trusted in themselves that they were righteous, that they were rich, and increased in goods, and had need of nothing, are, by the Spirit of God applying his word, convinced that they are poor and naked. All the things that they have done are brought to their remembrance and set in array before them, so that they see the wrath of God hanging over their heads, and feel that they deserve the damnation of hell. In their trouble they cry unto the Lord, and he shows them that he hath taken away their sins, and opens the kingdom of heaven in their hearts, 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Sorrow and pain are fled away, and 'sin has no more dominion over' them. Knowing they are justified freely through faith in his blood, they 'have peace with God

\* Sometimes they do not; at other times they do, and that grievously.

† Not all who are saved from sin; many of them have not attained it yet.



through Jesus Christ ;' they ' rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' and ' the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts.'

" In this peace they remain for days, or weeks, or months, and commonly suppose they shall not know war any more ; till some of their old enemies, their bosom sins, or the sin which did most easily beset them, (perhaps anger or desire,) assault them again, and thrust sore at them, that they may fall. Then arises fear, that they shall not endure to the end ; and often doubt, whether God has not forgotten them, or whether they did not deceive themselves in thinking their sins were forgiven. Under these clouds, especially if they reason with the devil, they go mourning all the day long. But it is seldom long before their Lord answers for himself, sending them the Holy Ghost to comfort them, to bear witness continually with their spirits that they are the children of God. Then they are indeed meek and gentle and teachable, even as a little child. And now first do they see the ground of their heart ;\* which God before would not disclose unto them, lest the soul should fail before him, and the spirit which he had made. Now they see all the hidden abominations there, the depths of pride, self-will, and hell ; yet having the witness in themselves, ' Thou art an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ, even in the midst of this fiery trial ;' which continually heightens both the strong sense they then have of their inability to help themselves, and the inexpressible hunger they feel after a full renewal in his image, in ' righteousness and true holiness.' Then God is mindful of the desire of them that fear him, and gives them a single eye, and a pure heart ; He stamps upon them his own image and superscription ; He createth them anew in Christ Jesus ; He cometh unto them with his Son and blessed Spirit, and, fixing his abode in their souls, bringeth them into the ' rest which remaineth for the people of God.' "

Here I cannot but remark, (1.) That this is the strongest account we ever gave of Christian perfection ; indeed too strong in more than one particular, as is observed in the notes annexed. (2.) That there is nothing which we have since advanced upon the subject, either in verse or prose, which is not either directly or indirectly contained in this preface.

\* Is it not astonishing, that while this book is extant, which was published four-and-twenty years ago, any one should face me down, that this is a new doctrine, and what I never taught before ?—[This note was first published in the year 1765.—EDIT.]



So that whether our present doctrine be right or wrong, it is however the same which we taught from the beginning.

14. I need not give additional proofs of this, by multiplying quotations from the volume itself. It may suffice, to cite part of one hymn only, the last in that volume:—

Lord, I believe a rest remains,  
To all thy people known ;  
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,  
And thou art loved alone ;  
  
A rest where all our soul's desire  
Is fix'd on things above ;  
Where doubt and pain and fear expire,  
Cast out by perfect love.  
  
From every evil motion freed,  
(The Son hath made us free,)  
On all the powers of hell we tread,  
In glorious liberty.  
  
Safe in the way of life, above  
Death, earth, and hell we rise ;  
We find, when perfected in love,  
Our long-sought paradise.  
  
O that I now the rest might know,  
Believe, and enter in !  
Now, Saviour, now the power bestow,  
And let me cease from sin !  
  
Remove this hardness from my heart,  
This unbelief remove :  
To me the rest of faith impart,  
The sabbath of thy love.  
  
Come, O my Saviour, come away  
Into my soul descend !  
No longer from thy creature stay,  
My author and my end.  
  
The bliss thou hast for me prepared,  
No longer be delay'd :  
Come, my exceeding great reward,  
For whom I first was made.  
  
Come, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
And seal me thine abode !  
Let all I am in thee be lost :  
Let all be lost in God !

Can anything be more clear, than, (1.) That here also is as full and high a salvation as we have ever spoken of? (2.) That this is spoken of as receivable by mere faith, and as hindered only by unbelief? (3.) That this faith, and consequently the salvation which it brings, is spoken of as given in an

instant? (4.) That it is supposed that instant may be now? that we need not stay another moment? that "now," the very "now," is the accepted time? now is the day of "this full "salvation?" And, Lastly, that, if any speak otherwise, he is the person that brings new doctrine among us?

15. About a year after, namely, in the year 1742, we published another volume of Hymns. The dispute being now at the height, we spoke upon the head more largely than ever before. Accordingly abundance of the hymns in this volume treat expressly on this subject. And so does the preface, which, as it is short, it may not be amiss to insert entire:—

"(1.) Perhaps the general prejudice against Christian perfection may chiefly arise from a misapprehension of the nature of it. We willingly allow, and continually declare, there is no such perfection in this life, as implies either a dispensation from doing good, and attending all the ordinances of God, or a freedom from ignorance, mistake, temptation, and a thousand infirmities necessarily connected with flesh and blood.

"(2.) First. We not only allow, but earnestly contend, that there is no perfection in this life, which implies any dispensation from attending all the ordinances of God, or from doing good unto all men while we have time, though 'especially unto the household of faith.' We believe, that not only the babes in Christ, who have newly found redemption in his blood, but those also who are 'grown up into perfect men,' are indispensably obliged, as often as they have opportunity, 'to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him,' and to 'search the Scriptures;' by fasting, as well as temperance, to 'keep their bodies under, and bring them into subjection;' and, above all, to pour out their souls in prayer, both secretly, and in the great congregation.

"(3.) We Secondly believe, that there is no such perfection in this life, as implies an entire deliverance, either from ignorance, or mistake, in things not essential to salvation, or from manifold temptations, or from numberless infirmities, wherewith the corruptible body more or less presses down the soul. We cannot find any ground in Scripture to suppose, that any inhabitant of a house of clay is wholly exempt either from bodily infirmities, or from ignorance of many things; or to imagine any is incapable of mistake, or falling into divers temptations.

"(4.) But whom then do you mean by 'one that is perfect?'



We mean one in whom is 'the mind which was in Christ,' and who so 'walketh as Christ also walked;' a man 'that hath clean hands and a pure heart,' or that is 'cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit;' one in whom is 'no occasion of stumbling,' and who, accordingly, 'does not commit sin.' To declare this a little more particularly: We understand by that scriptural expression, 'a perfect man,' one in whom God hath fulfilled his faithful word, 'From all your filthiness and from all your idols I will cleanse you: I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.' We understand hereby, one whom God hath 'sanctified throughout in body, soul, and spirit;' one who 'walketh in the light as He is in the light, in whom is no darkness at all; the blood of Jesus Christ his Son having cleansed him from all sin.'

"(5.) This man can now testify to all mankind, 'I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' He is 'holy as God who called' him 'is holy,' both in heart and 'in all manner of conversation.' He 'loveth the Lord his God with all his heart,' and serveth him 'with all his strength.' He 'loveth his neighbour,' every man, 'as himself;' yea, 'as Christ loveth us;' them, in particular, that 'despitefully use him and persecute him, because they know not the Son, neither the Father.' Indeed his soul is all love, filled with 'bowels of mercies, kindness, meekness, gentleness, longsuffering.' And his life agreeth thereto, full of 'the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love.' 'And whatsoever' he 'doeth either in word or deed,' he 'doeth it all in the name,' in the love and power, 'of the Lord Jesus.' In a word, he doeth 'the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven.'

② "(6.) This it is to be a perfect man, to be 'sanctified throughout;' even 'to have a heart so all-flaming with the love of God,' (to use Archbishop Usher's words,) 'as continually to offer up every thought, word, and work, as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ.' In every thought of our hearts, in every word of our tongues, in every work of our hands, to 'show forth his praise, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' O that both we, and all who seek the Lord Jesus in sincerity, may thus 'be made perfect in one!'"

This is the doctrine which we preached from the beginning, and which we preach at this day. Indeed, by viewing it in every



point of light, and comparing it again and again with the word of God on the one hand, and the experience of the children of God on the other, we saw farther into the nature and properties of Christian perfection. But still there is no contrariety at all between our first and our last sentiments. Our first conception of it was, It is to have "the mind which was in Christ," and to "walk as He walked;" to have all the mind that was in Him, and always to walk as he walked: In other words, to be inwardly and outwardly devoted to God; all devoted in heart and life. And we have the same conception of it now, without either addition or diminution.

16. The hymns concerning it in this volume are too numerous to transcribe. I shall only cite a part of three:—

SAVIOUR from sin, I wait to prove  
That Jesus is thy healing name;  
To lose, when perfected in love,  
Whate'er I have, or can, or am;  
I stay me on thy faithful word,  
"The servant shall be as his Lord."

Answer that gracious end in me  
For which thy precious life was given;  
Redeem from all iniquity,  
Restore, and make me meet for heaven.  
Unless thou purge my every stain,  
Thy suffering and my faith is vain.

Didst thou not die, that I might live,  
No longer to myself but thee?  
Might body, soul, and spirit give  
To Him who gave himself for me?  
Come then, my Master and my God,  
Take the dear purchase of thy blood.

Thy own peculiar servant claim,  
For thy own truth and mercy's sake;  
Hallow in me thy glorious name;  
Me for thine own this moment take;  
And change and thoroughly purify;  
Thine only may I live and die. (Page 80.)

CHOSE from the world, if now I stand,  
Adorn'd with righteousness divine;  
If, brought into the promised land,  
I justly call the Saviour mine;

The sanctifying Spirit pour,  
To quench my thirst and wash me clean,



Now, Saviour, let the gracious shower  
Descend, and make me pure from sin.

Purge me from every sinful blot :  
My idols all be cast aside :  
Cleanse me from every evil thought,  
From all the filth of self and pride.

The hatred of the carnal mind  
Out of my flesh at once remove :  
Give me a tender heart, resign'd,  
And pure, and full of faith and love.

O that I now, from sin released,  
Thy word might to the utmost prove,  
Enter into thy promised rest ;  
The Canaan of thy perfect love !

Now let me gain perfection's height !  
Now let me into nothing fall ;  
Be less than nothing in my sight,  
And feel that Christ is all in all. (Page 258.)

LORD, I believe, thy work of grace  
Is perfect in the soul ;  
His heart is pure who sees thy face,  
His spirit is made whole.

From every sickness, by thy word,  
From every foul disease,  
Saved, and to perfect health restored,  
To perfect holiness :

He walks in glorious liberty,  
To sin entirely dead :  
The Truth, the Son hath made him free,  
And he is free indeed.

Throughout his soul thy glories shine,  
His soul is all renew'd,  
And deck'd in righteousness divine,  
And clothed and fill'd with God.

This is the rest, the life, the peace,  
Which all thy people prove ;  
Love is the bond of perfectness,  
And all their soul is love.

O joyful sound of gospel grace !  
Christ shall in me appear ;  
I, even I, shall see his face,  
I shall be holy here !

He visits now the house of clay,  
He shakes his future home ;—  
O would'st thou, Lord, on this glad day,  
Into thy temple come !



Come, O my God, thyself reveal.  
 Fill all this mighty void ;  
 Thou only canst my spirit fill :  
 Come, O my God, my God !

Fulfil, fulfil my large desires,  
 Large as infinity !  
 Give, give me all my soul requires,  
 All, all that is in thee ! (Page 298.)

17. On Monday, June 25, 1744, our First Conference began ; six Clergymen and all our Preachers being present. The next morning we seriously considered the doctrine of sanctification, or perfection. The questions asked concerning it, and the substance of the answers given, were as follows :—

“Q. What is it to be sanctified ?

“A. To be renewed in the image of God, ‘in righteousness and true holiness.’

“Q. What is implied in being a perfect Christian ?

“A. The loving God with all our heart, and mind, and soul. (Deut. vi. 5.)

“Q. Does this imply, that all inward sin is taken away ?

“A. Undoubtedly ; or how can we be said to be ‘saved from all our uncleannesses ?’ (Ezek. xxxvi. 29.)”

Our Second Conference began August 1, 1745. The next morning we spoke of sanctification as follows :—

“Q. When does inward sanctification begin ?

“A. In the moment a man is justified. (Yet sin remains in him, yea, the seed of all sin, till he is sanctified through-out.) From that time a believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace.

“Q. Is this ordinarily given till a little before death ?

“A. It is not, to those who expect it no sooner.

“Q. But may we expect it sooner ?

“A. Why not ? For, although we grant, (1.) That the generality of believers, whom we have hitherto known, were not so sanctified till near death ; (2.) That few of those to whom St. Paul wrote his Epistles were so at that time ; nor, (3.) He himself at the time of writing his former Epistles ; yet all this does not prove, that we may not be so to-day.

“Q. In what manner should we preach sanctification ?

“A. Scarce at all to those who are not pressing forward : To those who are, always by way of promise ; always drawing, rather than driving.”

Our Third Conference began Tuesday, May 13, 1746.

In this we carefully read over the Minutes of the two preceding Conferences, to observe whether anything contained therein might be retrenched or altered on more mature consideration. But we did not see cause to alter in any respect what we had agreed upon before.

Our Fourth Conference began on Tuesday, June the 16th, 1747. As several persons were present, who did not believe the doctrine of perfection, we agreed to examine it from the foundation.

In order to this, it was asked,

"How much is allowed by our brethren who differ from us with regard to entire sanctification?"

"A. They grant, (1.) That every one must be entirely sanctified in the article of death. (2.) That till then a believer daily grows in grace, comes nearer and nearer to perfection. (3.) That we ought to be continually pressing after it, and to exhort all others so to do.

"Q. What do we allow them?"

"A. We grant, (1.) That many of those who have died in the faith, yea, the greater part of those we have known, were not perfected in love till a little before their death. (2.) That the term *sanctified* is continually applied by St. Paul to all that were justified. (3.) That by this term alone, he rarely, if ever, means 'saved from all sin.' (4.) That, consequently, it is not proper to use it in that sense, without adding the word *wholly*, *entirely*, or the like. (5.) That the inspired writers almost continually speak of or to those who were justified, but very rarely of or to those who were wholly sanctified.\* (6.) That, consequently, it behoves us to speak almost continually of the state of justification; but more rarely,† 'at least in full and explicit terms, concerning entire sanctification.'

"Q. What then is the point where we divide?"

"A. It is this: Should we expect to be saved from all sin before the article of death?"

"Q. Is there any clear Scripture promise of this,—that God will save us from all sin?"

\* That is, unto those alone, exclusive of others; but they speak to them, jointly with others, almost continually.

† More rarely, I allow; but yet in some places very frequently, strongly, and explicitly.



"A. There is: 'He shall redeem Israel from all his sins.' (Psal'n cxxx. 8.)

"This is more largely expressed in the prophecy of Ezekiel: 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you: I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.' (xxxvi. 25, 29.) No promise can be more clear. And to this the Apostle plainly refers in that exhortation: 'Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' (2 Cor. vii. 1.) Equally clear and express is that ancient promise: 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.' (Deut. xxx. 6.)

"Q. But does any assertion answerable to this occur in the New Testament?

"A. There does, and that laid down in the plainest terms. So 1 John iii. 8: 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;' the works of the devil, without any limitation or restriction; but all sin is the work of the devil. Parallel to which is the assertion of St. Paul: 'Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it might be holy and without blemish.' (Eph. v. 25—27.)

"And to the same effect is his assertion in the eighth of the Romans, verses 3, 4: 'God sent his Son, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.'

"Q. Does the New Testament afford any farther ground for expecting to be saved from all sin?

"A. Undoubtedly it does; both in those prayers and commands, which are equivalent to the strongest assertions.

"Q. What prayers do you mean?

"A. Prayers for entire sanctification; which, were there no such thing, would be mere mockery of God. Such in particular are, (1.) 'Deliver us from evil.' Now, when this is done, when we are delivered from all evil, there can be no sin remaining. (2.) 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee,

that they also may be one in us ; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.' (John xvii. 2C—23.)

(3.) 'I bow my knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge ; that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.' (Eph. iii. 14, &c.) (4.) 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God, your whole spirit, soul, and body, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (1 Thess. v. 23.)

"Q. What command is there to the same effect?

"A. (1.) 'Be ye perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.' (Matt. v. 48.) (2.) 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' (Matt. xxii. 37.) But if the love of God fill all the heart, there can be no sin therein.

"Q. But how does it appear that this is to be done before the article of death?

"A. (1.) From the very nature of a command, which is not given to the dead, but to the living. Therefore, 'Thou shalt love God with all thy heart,' cannot mean, Thou shalt do this when thou diest ; but, while thou livest.

"(2.) From express texts of Scripture : (i.) 'The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men ; teaching us that, having renounced ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ; looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' (Titus ii. 11—14.) (ii.) 'He hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers ; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.' (Luke i. 69, &c.)

"Q. Is there any example in Scripture of persons who had attained to this?

"A. Yes ; St. John, and all those of whom he says, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness



in the day of judgment ; because, as he is, so are we in this world.' (1 John iv. 17.)

"Q. Can you show one such example now? Where is he that is thus perfect?

"A. To some that make this inquiry one might answer, If I knew one here, I would not tell you ; for you do not inquire out of love. You are like Herod ; you only seek the young child to slay it.

"But more directly we answer : There are many reasons why there should be few, if any, indisputable examples. What inconveniences would this bring on the person himself, set as a mark for all to shoot at ! And how unprofitable would it be to gainsayers ! 'For if they hear not Moses and the Prophets,' Christ and his Apostles, 'neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.'

"Q. Are we not apt to have a secret distaste to any who say they are saved from all sin?

"A. It is very possible we may, and that upon several grounds ; partly from a concern for the good of souls, who may be hurt if these are not what they profess ; partly from a kind of implicit envy at those who speak of higher attainments than our own ; and partly from our natural slowness and unreadiness of heart to believe the works of God.

"Q. Why may we not continue in the joy of faith till we are perfected in love?

"A. Why indeed ? since holy grief does not quench this joy ; since even while we are under the cross, while we deeply partake of the sufferings of Christ, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable."

From these extracts it undeniably appears, not only what was mine and my brother's judgment, but what was the judgment of all the Preachers in connexion with us, in the years 1744, 45, 46 and 47. Nor do I remember that, in any one of these Conferences, we had one dissenting voice ; but whatever doubts any one had when we met, they were all removed before we parted.

18. In the year 1749, my brother printed two volumes of "Hymns and Sacred Poems." As I did not see these before they were published, there were some things in them which I did not approve of. But I quite approved of the main of the hymns on this head ; a few verses of which are subjoined :—

COME, Lord, be manifested here,  
 And all the devil's works destroy ;  
 Now, without sin, in me appear,  
 And fill with everlasting joy :  
 Thy beatific face display ;  
 Thy presence is the perfect day. (Vol. I., p. 203.)

SWIFT to my rescue come,  
 Thy own this moment seize ;  
 Gather my wand'ring spirit home,  
 And keep in perfect peace.

Suffer'd no more to rove  
 O'er all the earth abroad,  
 Arrest the pris'ner of thy love,  
 And shut me up in God ! (Page 247.)

THY pris'ners release, Vouchsafe us thy peace ;  
 And our sorrows and sins in a moment shall cease.  
 That moment be now ! Our petition allow,  
 Our present Redeemer and Comforter thou ! (Vol. II., p. 124.)

FROM this inbred sin deliver ;  
 Let the yoke Now be broke ;  
 Make me thine for ever.

Partner of thy perfect nature,  
 Let me be Now in thee  
 A new, sinless creature. (Page 156.)

TURN me, Lord, and turn me now,  
 To thy yoke my spirit bow ;  
 Grant me now the pearl to find  
 Of a meek and quiet mind.

Calm, O calm my troubled breast ;  
 Let me gain that second rest :  
 From my works for ever cease,  
 Perfected in holiness. (Page 162.)

COME in this accepted hour,  
 Bring thy heavenly kingdom in !  
 Fill us with the glorious power,  
 Rooting out the seeds of sin. (Page 168.)

COME, thou dear Lamb, for sinners slain,  
 Bring in the cleansing flood ;  
 Apply, to wash out every stain,  
 Thine efficacious blood.

O let it sink into our soul  
 Deep as the inbred sin :  
 Make every wounded spirit whole,  
 And every leper clean ! (Page 171.)



PRIS'NERS of hope, arise,  
And see your Lord appear:  
Lo ! on the wings of love he flies,  
And brings redemption near.

Redemption in his blood  
He calls you to receive :  
"Come unto me, the pard'ning God :  
Believe," he cries, "believe !"

Jesus, to thee we look,  
Till saved from sin's remains,  
Reject the inbred tyrant's yoke,  
And cast away his chains.

Our nature shall no more  
O'er us dominion have :  
By faith we apprehend the power,  
Which shall for ever save. (Page 133.)

JESU, our life, in us appear,  
Who daily die thy death :  
Reveal thyself the finisher ;  
Thy quick'ning Spirit breathe !

Unfold the hidden mystery,  
The second gift impart ;  
Reveal thy glorious self in me,  
In every waiting heart. (Page 195.)

IN Him we have peace, In Him we have power !  
Preserved by his grace Throughout the dark hour,  
In all our temptation He keeps us, to prove  
His utmost salvation, His fulness of love.

Pronounce the glad word, And bid us be free !  
Ah, hast thou not, Lord, A blessing for me ?  
The peace thou hast given, This moment impart,  
And open thy heaven, O Love, in my heart ! (Page 324.)

A second edition of these hymns was published in the year 1752 ; and that without any other alteration, than that of a few literal mistakes.

I have been the more large in these extracts, because hence it appears, beyond all possibility of exception, that to this day both my brother and I maintained, (1.) That Christian perfection is that love of God and our neighbour, which implies deliverance from all sin. (2.) That this is received merely by faith. (3.) That it is given instantaneously, in one moment. (4.) That we are to expect it, not at death, but every moment ; that now is the accepted time, now is the day of this salvation.

19. At the Conference in the year 1759, perceiving some danger that a diversity of sentiments should insensibly steal in among us, we again largely considered this doctrine; and soon after I published "Thoughts on Christian Perfection," prefaced with the following advertisement:—

"The following tract is by no means designed to gratify the curiosity of any man. It is not intended to prove the doctrine at large, in opposition to those who explode and ridicule it; no, nor to answer the numerous objections against it, which may be raised even by serious men. All I intend here is, simply to declare what are my sentiments on this head; what Christian perfection does, according to my apprehension, include, and what it does not; and to add a few practical observations and directions relative to the subject.

"As these thoughts were at first thrown together by way of question and answer, I let them continue in the same form. They are just the same that I have entertained for above twenty years.

"QUESTION. What is Christian perfection?

"ANSWER. The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies, that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions, are governed by pure love.

"Q. Do you affirm, that this perfection excludes all infirmities, ignorance, and mistake?

"A. I continually affirm quite the contrary, and always have done so.

"Q. But how can every thought, word, and work, be governed by pure love, and the man be subject at the same time to ignorance and mistake?

"A. I see no contradiction here: 'A man may be filled with pure love, and still be liable to mistake.' Indeed I do not expect to be freed from actual mistakes, till this mortal puts on immortality. I believe this to be a natural consequence of the soul's dwelling in flesh and blood. For we cannot now think at all, but by the mediation of those bodily organs which have suffered equally with the rest of our frame. And hence we cannot avoid sometimes thinking wrong, till this corruptible shall have put on incorruption.

"But we may carry this thought farther yet. A mistake in judgment may possibly occasion a mistake in practice. For instance: Mr. De Renty's mistake touching the nature



of mortification, arising from prejudice of education, occasioned that practical mistake, his wearing an iron girdle. And a thousand such instances there may be, even in those who are in the highest state of grace. Yet, where every word and action springs from love, such a mistake is not properly a sin. However, it cannot bear the rigour of God's justice, but needs the atoning blood.

“Q. What was the judgment of all our brethren who met at Bristol in August, 1758, on this head?

“A. It was expressed in these words: (1.) Every one may mistake as long as he lives. (2.) A mistake in opinion may occasion a mistake in practice. (3.) Every such mistake is a transgression of the perfect law. Therefore, (4.) Every such mistake, were it not for the blood of atonement, would expose to eternal damnation. (5.) It follows, that the most perfect have continual need of the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions, and may say for themselves, as well as for their brethren, ‘Forgive us our trespasses.’

“This easily accounts for what might otherwise seem to be utterly unaccountable; namely, that those who are not offended when we speak of the highest degree of love, yet will not hear of living without sin. The reason is, they know all men are liable to mistake, and that in practice as well as in judgment. But they do not know, or do not observe, that this is not sin, if love is the sole principle of action.

“Q. But still, if they live without sin, does not this exclude the necessity of a Mediator? At least, is it not plain that they stand no longer in need of Christ in his priestly office?

“A. Far from it. None feel their need of Christ like these; none so entirely depend upon him. For Christ does not give life to the soul separate from, but in and with, himself. Hence his words are equally true of all men, in whatsoever 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.’

“In every state we need Christ in the following respects. (1.) Whatever grace we receive, it is a free gift from him. (2.) We receive it as his purchase, merely in consideration of the price he paid. (3.) We have this grace, not only from Christ, but in him. For our perfection is not like that of a tree, which flourishes by the sap derived from its own root,

but, as was said before, like that of a branch which, united to the vine, bears fruit; but, severed from it, is dried up and withered. (4.) All our blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, depend on his intercession for us, which is one branch of his priestly office, whereof therefore we have always equal need. (5.) The best of men still need Christ in his priestly office, to atone for their omissions, their short-comings, (as some not improperly speak,) their mistakes in judgment and practice, and their defects of various kinds. For these are all deviations from the perfect law, and consequently need an atonement. Yet that they are not properly sins, we apprehend may appear from the words of St. Paul, 'He that loveth, hath fulfilled the law; for love is the fulfilling of the law.' (Rom. xiii. 10.) Now, mistakes, and whatever infirmities necessarily flow from the corruptible state of the body, are noway contrary to love; nor therefore, in the Scripture sense, sin.

"To explain myself a little farther on this head: (1.) Not only sin, properly so called, (that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law,) but sin, improperly so called, (that is, an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown,) needs the atoning blood. (2.) I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality. (3.) Therefore *sinless perfection* is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself. (4.) I believe, a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions. (5.) Such transgressions you may call sins, if you please: I do not, for the reasons above-mentioned.

"Q. What advice would you give to those that do, and those that do not, call them so?

"A. Let those that do not call them sins, never think that themselves or any other persons are in such a state as that they can stand before infinite justice without a Mediator. This must argue either the deepest ignorance, or the highest arrogance and presumption.

"Let those who do call them so, beware how they confound these defects with sins, properly so called.

"But how will they avoid it? How will these be distinguished from those, if they are all promiscuously called sins? I am much afraid, if we should allow any sins to be consistent with



perfection, few would confine the idea to those defects concerning which only the assertion could be true.

“Q. But how can a liableness to mistake consist with perfect love? Is not a person who is perfected in love every moment under its influence? And can any mistake flow from pure love?

“A. I answer, (1.) Many mistakes may consist with pure love; (2.) Some may accidentally flow from it: I mean, love itself may incline us to mistake. The pure love of our neighbour, springing from the love of God, thinketh no evil, believeth and hopeth all things. Now, this very temper, unsuspicious, ready to believe and hope the best of all men, may occasion our thinking some men better than they really are. Here then is a manifest mistake, accidentally flowing from pure love.

“Q. How shall we avoid setting perfection too high or too low?

“A. By keeping to the Bible, and setting it just as high as the Scripture does. It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this,—the pure love of God and man; the loving God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves. It is love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers, words, and actions.

“Q. Suppose one had attained to this, would you advise him to speak of it?

“A. At first perhaps he would scarce be able to refrain, the fire would be so hot within him; his desire to declare the loving-kindness of the Lord carrying him away like a torrent. But afterwards he might; and then it would be advisable, not to speak of it to them that know not God; (it is most likely, it would only provoke them to contradict and blaspheme;) nor to others, without some particular reason, without some good in view. And then he should have especial care to avoid all appearance of boasting; to speak with the deepest humility and reverence, giving all the glory to God.

“Q. But would it not be better to be entirely silent, not to speak of it at all?

“A. By silence, he might avoid many crosses, which will naturally and necessarily ensue, if he simply declare, even among believers, what God has wrought in his soul. If, therefore, such a one were to confer with flesh and blood, he would be entirely silent. But this could not be done with a clear conscience; for undoubtedly he ought to speak. Men do not

light a candle to put it under a bushel; much less does the all-wise God. He does not raise such a monument of his power and love, to hide it from all mankind. Rather, he intends it as a general blessing to those who are simple of heart. He designs thereby, not barely the happiness of that individual person, but the animating and encouraging others to follow after the same blessing. His will is, 'that many shall see it' and rejoice, 'and put their trust in the Lord.' Nor does anything under heaven more quicken the desires of those who are justified, than to converse with those whom they believe to have experienced a still higher salvation. This places that salvation full in their view, and increases their hunger and thirst after it; an advantage which must have been entirely lost, had the person so saved buried himself in silence.

"Q. But is there no way to prevent these crosses which usually fall on those who speak of being thus saved?

"A. It seems they cannot be prevented altogether, while so much of nature remains even in believers. But something might be done, if the Preacher in every place would, (1.) Talk freely with all who speak thus; and, (2.) Labour to prevent the unjust or unkind treatment of those in favour of whom there is reasonable proof.

"Q. What is reasonable proof? How may we certainly know one that is saved from all sin?

"A. We cannot infallibly know one that is thus saved, (no, nor even one that is justified,) unless it should please God to endow us with the miraculous discernment of spirits. But we apprehend those would be sufficient proofs to any reasonable man, and such as would leave little room to doubt either the truth or depth of the work: (1.) If we had clear evidence of his exemplary behaviour for some time before this supposed change. This would give us reason to believe, he would not 'lie for God,' but speak neither more nor less than he felt; (2.) If he gave a distinct account of the time and manner wherein the change was wrought, with sound speech which could not be reproved; and, (3.) If it appeared that all his subsequent words and actions were holy and unblamable.

"The short of the matter is this: (1.) I have abundant reason to believe, this person will not lie; (2.) He testifies before God, 'I feel no sin, but all love; I pray, rejoice, and give thanks without ceasing; and I have as clear an inward



witness, that I am fully renewed, as that I am justified.' Now, if I have nothing to oppose to this plain testimony, I ought in reason to believe it.

"It avails nothing to object, 'But I know several things wherein he is quite mistaken.' For it has been allowed, that all who are in the body are liable to mistake; and that a mistake in judgment may sometimes occasion a mistake in practice; though great care is to be taken that no ill use be made of this concession. For instance: Even one that is perfected in love may mistake with regard to another person, and may think him, in a particular case, to be more or less faulty than he really is. And hence he may speak to him with more or less severity than the truth requires. And in this sense, (though that be not the primary meaning of St. James,) 'in many things we offend all.' This therefore is no proof at all, that the person so speaking is not perfect.

"Q. But is it not a proof, if he is surprised or fluttered by a noise, a fall, or some sudden danger?

"A. It is not; for one may start, tremble, change colour, or be otherwise disordered in body, while the soul is calmly stayed on God, and remains in perfect peace. Nay, the mind itself may be deeply distressed, may be exceeding sorrowful, may be perplexed and pressed down by heaviness and anguish, even to agony, while the heart cleaves to God by perfect love, and the will is wholly resigned to him. Was it not so with the Son of God himself? Does any child of man endure the distress, the anguish, the agony, which he sustained? And yet he knew no sin.

"Q. But can any one who has a pure heart prefer pleasing to unpleasing food; or use any pleasure of sense which is not strictly necessary? If so, how do they differ from others?

"A. The difference between these and others in taking pleasant food is, (1.) They need none of these things to make them happy; for they have a spring of happiness within. They see and love God. Hence they rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks. (2.) They may use them, but they do not seek them. (3.) They use them sparingly, and not for the sake of the thing itself. This being premised, we answer directly,—Such a one may use pleasing food, without the danger which attends those who are not saved from sin. He may prefer it to unpleasing, though equally wholesome, food, as a means of increasing thankfulness, with a single eye

to God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy : On the same principle, he may smell to a flower, or eat a bunch of grapes, or take any other pleasure which does not lessen but increase his delight in God. Therefore, neither can we say that one perfected in love would be incapable of marriage, and of worldly business : If he were called thereto, he would be more capable than ever ; as being able to do all things without hurry or carefulness, without any distraction of spirit.

“ Q. But if two perfect Christians had children, how could they be born in sin, since there was none in the parents ?

“ A. It is a possible, but not a probable, case ; I doubt whether it ever was or ever will be. But waving this, I answer, Sin is entailed upon me, not by immediate generation, but by my first parent. ‘ In Adam all died ; by the disobedience of one, all men were made sinners ; ’ all men, without exception, who were in his loins when he ate the forbidden fruit.

“ We have a remarkable illustration of this in gardening : Grafts on a crab-stock bear excellent fruit ; but sow the kernels of this fruit, and what will be the event ? They produce as mere crabs as ever were eaten.

“ Q. But what does the perfect one do more than others ? more than the common believers ?

“ A. Perhaps nothing ; so may the providence of God have hedged him in by outward circumstances. Perhaps not so much ; though he desires and longs to spend and be spent for God ; at least, not externally : He neither speaks so many words, nor does so many works. As neither did our Lord himself speak so many words, or do so many, no, nor so great works, as some of his Apostles. (John xiv. 12.) But what then ? This is no proof that he has not more grace ; and by this God measures the outward work. Hear ye Him : ‘ Verily, I say unto you, this poor widow has cast in more than them all.’ Verily, this poor man, with his few broken words, hath spoken more than them all. Verily, this poor woman, that hath given a cup of cold water, hath done more than them all. O cease to ‘ judge according to appearance,’ and learn to ‘ judge righteous judgment ! ’

“ Q. But is not this a proof against him,—I feel no power either in his words or prayer ?

“ A. It is not ; for perhaps that is your own fault. You are not likely to feel any power therein, if any of these hin-



derances lie in the way: (1.) Your own deadness of soul. The dead Pharisees felt no power even in His words who 'spake as never man spake.' (2.) The guilt of some unrepented sin lying upon the conscience. (3.) Prejudice toward him of any kind. (4.) Your not believing that state to be attainable wherein he professes to be. (5.) Unreadiness to think or own he has attained it. (6.) Overvaluing or idolizing him. (7.) Overvaluing yourself and your own judgment. If any of these is the case, what wonder is it that you feel no power in anything he says? But do not others feel it? If they do, your argument falls to the ground. And if they do not, do none of these hinderances lie in their way too? You must be certain of this before you can build any argument thereon; and even then your argument will prove no more than that grace and gifts do not always go together.

"'But he does not come up to my idea of a perfect Christian.' And perhaps no one ever did, or ever will. For your idea may go beyond, or at least beside, the scriptural account. It may include more than the Bible includes therein, or, however, something which that does not include. Scripture perfection is, pure love filling the heart, and governing all the words and actions. If your idea includes anything more or anything else, it is not scriptural; and then no wonder, that a scripturally perfect Christian does not come up to it.

"I fear many stumble on this stumbling-block. They include as many ingredients as they please, not according to Scripture, but their own imagination, in their idea of one that is perfect; and then readily deny any one to be such, who does not answer that imaginary idea.

"The more care should we take to keep the simple, scriptural account continually in our eye. Pure love reigning alone in the heart and life,—this is the whole of scriptural perfection.

"Q. When may a person judge himself to have attained this?

"A. When, after having been fully convinced of inbred sin, by a far deeper and clearer conviction than that he experienced before justification, and after having experienced a gradual mortification of it, he experiences a total death to sin, and an entire renewal in the love and image of God, so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. Not that 'to feel all love and no sin' is a sufficient proof. Several have experienced this for a time, before their souls

were fully renewed. None therefore ought to believe that the work is done, till there is added the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing his entire sanctification, as clearly as his justification.

“Q. But whence is it, that some imagine they are thus sanctified, when in reality they are not?

“A. It is hence; they do not judge by all the preceding marks, but either by part of them, or by others that are ambiguous. But I know no instance of a person attending to them all, and yet deceived in this matter. I believe, there can be none in the world. If a man be deeply and fully convinced, after justification, of inbred sin; if he then experience a gradual mortification of sin, and afterwards an entire renewal in the image of God; if to this change, immensely greater than that wrought when he was justified, be added a clear, direct witness of the renewal; I judge it as impossible this man should be deceived herein, as that God should lie. And if one whom I know to be a man of veracity testify these things to me, I ought not, without some sufficient reason, to reject his testimony.

“Q. Is this death to sin, and renewal in love, gradual or instantaneous?

“A. A man may be dying for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, die, till the instant the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant he lives the life of eternity. In like manner, he may be dying to sin for some time; yet he is not dead to sin, till sin is separated from his soul; and in that instant he lives the full life of love. And as the change undergone, when the body dies, is of a different kind, and infinitely greater than any we had known before, yea, such as till then it is impossible to conceive; so the change wrought, when the soul dies to sin, is of a different kind, and infinitely greater than any before, and than any can conceive till he experiences it. Yet he stills grows in grace, in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and image of God; and will do so, not only till death, but to all eternity.

“Q. How are we to wait for this change?

“A. Not in careless indifference, or indolent inactivity; but in vigorous, universal obedience, in a zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness, in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily; as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God. And if any man dream of attaining



it any other way, (yea, or of keeping it when it is attained, when he has received it even in the largest measure,) he deceiveth his own soul. It is true, we receive it by simple faith: But God does not, will not, give that faith, unless we seek it with all diligence, in the way which he hath ordained.

“This consideration may satisfy those who inquire, why so few have received the blessing. Inquire, how many are seeking it in this way; and you have a sufficient answer.

“Prayer especially is wanting. Who continues instant therein? Who wrestles with God for this very thing? So, ‘ye have not, because ye ask not; or because ye ask amiss,’ namely, that you may be renewed before you die. *Before you die!* Will that content you? Nay, but ask that it may be done now; to-day, while it is called to-day. Do not call this ‘setting God a time.’ Certainly, to-day is his time as well as to-morrow. Make haste, man, make haste! Let

Thy soul break out in strong desire

The perfect bliss to prove;

Thy longing heart be all on fire

To be dissolved in love!

“Q. But may we not continue in peace and joy till we are perfected in love?

“A. Certainly we may; for the kingdom of God is not divided against itself; therefore, let not believers be discouraged from ‘rejoicing in the Lord always.’ And yet we may be sensibly pained at the sinful nature that still remains in us. It is good for us to have a piercing sense of this, and a vehement desire to be delivered from it. But this should only incite us the more zealously to fly every moment to our strong Helper, the more earnestly to ‘press forward to the mark, the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.’ And when the sense of our sin most abounds, the sense of his love should much more abound.

“Q. How should we treat those who think they have attained?

“A. Examine them candidly, and exhort them to pray fervently, that God would show them all that is in their hearts. The most earnest exhortations to abound in every grace, and the strongest cautions to avoid all evil, are given throughout the New Testament, to those who are in the highest state of grace. But this should be done with the utmost tenderness; and without any harshness, sternness, or

sourness. We should carefully avoid the very appearance of anger, unkindness, or contempt. Leave it to Satan thus to tempt, and to his children to cry out, 'Let us examine him with despitefulness and torture, that we may know his meekness and prove his patience.' If they are faithful to the grace given, they are in no danger of perishing thereby; no, not if they remain in that mistake till their spirit is returning to God.

"Q. But what hurt can it do to deal harshly with them?

"A. Either they are mistaken, or they are not. If they are, it may destroy their souls. This is nothing impossible, no, nor improbable. It may so enrage or so discourage them, that they will sink and rise no more. If they are not mistaken, it may grieve those whom God has not grieved, and do much hurt unto our own souls. For undoubtedly he that toucheth them, toucheth, as it were, the apple of God's eye. If they are indeed full of his Spirit, to behave unkindly or contemptuously to them is doing no little despite to the Spirit of grace. Hereby, likewise, we feed and increase in ourselves evil surmising, and many wrong tempers. To instance only in one: What self-sufficiency is this, to set ourselves up for inquisitors-general, for peremptory judges in these deep things of God! Are we qualified for the office? Can we pronounce, in all cases, how far infirmity reaches? what may, and what may not, be resolved into it? what may in all circumstances, and what may not, consist with perfect love? Can we precisely determine, how it will influence the look, the gesture, the tone of voice? If we can, doubtless we are 'the men, and wisdom shall die with us.'

"Q. But if they are displeased at our not believing them, is not this a full proof against them?

"A. According as that displeasure is: If they are angry, it is a proof against them; if they are grieved, it is not. They ought to be grieved, if we disbelieve a real work of God, and thereby deprive ourselves of the advantage we might have received from it. And we may easily mistake this grief for anger, as the outward expressions of both are much alike.

"Q. But is it not well to find out those who fancy they have attained when they have not?

"A. It is well to do it by mild, loving examination. But it is not well to triumph even over these. It is extremely wrong, if we find such an instance, to rejoice as if we had



found great spoils. Ought we not rather to grieve, to be deeply concerned, to let our eyes run down with tears? Here is one who seemed to be a living proof of God's power to save to the uttermost; but, alas, it is not as we hoped. He is weighed in the balance, and found wanting! And is this matter of joy? Ought we not to rejoice a thousand times more, if we can find nothing but pure love?

“‘But he is deceived.’ What then? It is a harmless mistake, while he feels nothing but love in his heart. It is a mistake which generally argues great grace, an high degree both of holiness and happiness. This should be a matter of real joy to all that are simple of heart; not the mistake itself, but the height of grace which for a time occasions it. I rejoice that this soul is always happy in Christ, always full of prayer and thanksgiving. I rejoice that he feels no unholy temper, but the pure love of God continually. And I will rejoice, if sin is suspended till it is totally destroyed.

“Q. Is there no danger then in a man's being thus deceived?

“A. Not at the time that he feels no sin. There was danger before, and there will be again when he comes into fresh trials. But so long as he feels nothing but love animating all his thoughts, and words, and actions, he is in no danger; he is not only happy, but safe, ‘under the shadow of the Almighty;’ and, for God's sake, let him continue in that love as long as he can. Meantime, you may do well to warn him of the danger that will be, if his love grow cold and sin revive; even the danger of casting away hope, and supposing, that, because he hath not attained yet, therefore he never shall.

“Q. But what, if none have attained it yet? What, if all who think so are deceived?

“A. Convince me of this, and I will preach it no more. But understand me right: I do not build any doctrine on this or that person. This or any other man may be deceived, and I am not moved. But, if there are none made perfect yet, God has not sent me to preach perfection.

“Put a parallel case: For many years I have preached, ‘There is a peace of God which passeth all understanding.’ Convince me that this word has fallen to the ground; that in all these years none have attained this peace; that there is no living witness of it at this day; and I will preach it no more.

“‘O, but several persons have died in that peace.’ Per-

haps so; but I want living witnesses. I cannot indeed be infallibly certain that this or that person is a witness; but if I were certain there are none such, I must have done with this doctrine.

“ ‘ You misunderstand me. I believe some who died in this love, enjoyed it long before their death. But I was not certain that their former testimony was true till some hours before they died.’ ”

“ You had not an infallible certainty then: And a reasonable certainty you might have had before; such a certainty as might have quickened and comforted your own soul, and answered all other Christian purposes. Such a certainty as this, any candid person may have, suppose there be any living witness, by talking one hour with that person in the love and fear of God.

“ Q. But what does it signify, whether any have attained it or no, seeing so many scriptures witness for it?

“ A. If I were convinced that none in England had attained what has been so clearly and strongly preached by such a number of Preachers, in so many places, and for so long a time, I should be clearly convinced that we had all mistaken the meaning of those scriptures; and therefore, for the time to come, I too must teach that ‘ sin will remain till death.’ ”

20. In the year 1762, there was a great increase of the work of God in London. Many, who had hitherto cared for none of these things, were deeply convinced of their lost estate; many found redemption in the blood of Christ; not a few backsliders were healed; and a considerable number of persons believed that God had saved them from all sin. Easily foreseeing that Satan would be endeavouring to sow tares among the wheat, I took much pains to apprize them of the danger, particularly with regard to pride and enthusiasm. And while I stayed in town, I had reason to hope they continued both humble and sober-minded. But almost as soon as I was gone enthusiasm broke in. Two or three began to take their own imaginations for impressions from God, and thence to suppose that they should never die; and these, labouring to bring others into the same opinion, occasioned much noise and confusion. Soon after, the same persons, with a few more, ran into other extravagances; fancying they could not be tempted; that they should feel no more pain; and that they had the gift of prophecy, and of discerning of spirits. At my return to London, in autumn,



some of them stood reproved; but others were got above instruction. Meantime, a flood of reproach came upon me almost from every quarter; from themselves, because I was checking them on all occasions; and from others, because, they said, I did not check them. However, the hand of the Lord was not stayed, but more and more sinners were convinced; while some were almost daily converted to God, and others enabled to love him with all their heart.

21. About this time, a friend at some distance from London wrote to me as follows:—

“BE not over alarmed that Satan sows tares among the wheat of Christ. It ever has been so, especially on any remarkable outpouring of his Spirit; and ever will be so, till he is chained up for a thousand years. Till then he will always ape, and endeavour to counteract, the work of the Spirit of Christ.

“One melancholy effect of this has been, that a world, who is always asleep in the arms of the evil one, has ridiculed every work of the Holy Spirit.

“But what can real Christians do? Why, if they would act worthy of themselves, they should, (1.) Pray that every deluded soul may be delivered; (2.) Endeavour to reclaim them in the spirit of meekness; and, Lastly, take the utmost care, both by prayer and watchfulness, that the delusion of others may not lessen their zeal in seeking after that universal holiness of soul, body, and spirit, ‘without which no man shall see the Lord.’

“Indeed this complete new creature is mere madness to a mad world. But it is, notwithstanding, the will and wisdom of God. May we all seek after it!

“But some who maintain this doctrine in its full extent are too often guilty of limiting the Almighty. He dispenses his gifts just as he pleases; therefore, it is neither wise nor modest to affirm that a person must be a believer for any length of time before he is capable of receiving a high degree of the Spirit of holiness.

“God’s usual method is one thing, but his sovereign pleasure is another. He has wise reasons both for hastening and retarding his work. Sometimes he comes suddenly and unexpected; sometimes, not till we have long looked for him.

“Indeed it has been my opinion for many years, that one great cause why men make so little improvement in the

divine life is their own coldness, negligence, and unbelief. And yet I here speak of believers.

"May the Spirit of Christ give us a right judgment in all things, and 'fill us with all the fulness of God;' that so we may be 'perfect and entire, wanting nothing.'"

22. About the same time, five or six honest enthusiasts foretold the world was to end on the 28th of February. I immediately withstood them, by every possible means, both in public and private. I preached expressly upon the subject, both at West-Street and Spitalfields. I warned the society, again and again, and spoke severally to as many as I could; and I saw the fruit of my labour. They made exceeding few converts: I believe scarce thirty in our whole society. Nevertheless, they made abundance of noise, gave huge occasion of offence to those who took care to improve to the uttermost every occasion against me, and greatly increased both the number and courage of those who opposed Christian perfection.

23. Some questions, now published by one of these, induced a plain man to write the following—

"**QUERIES**, humbly proposed to those who deny perfection to be attainable in this life.

"(1.) Has there not been a larger measure of the Holy Spirit given under the Gospel, than under the Jewish dispensation? If not, in what sense was the Spirit not given before Christ was glorified? (John vii. 39.)

"(2.) Was that 'glory which followed the sufferings of Christ,' (1 Peter i. 11,) an external glory, or an internal, viz., the glory of holiness?

"(3.) Has God anywhere in Scripture commanded us more than he has promised to us?

"(4.) Are the promises of God respecting holiness to be fulfilled in this life, or only in the next?

"(5.) Is a Christian under any other laws than those which God promises to 'write in our hearts?' (Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.; Heb. viii. 10.)

"(6.) In what sense is 'the righteousness of the law fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit?' (Romans viii. 4.)

"(7.) Is it impossible for any one in this life to 'love God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength?' And is the Christian under any law which is not fulfilled in this love?



"(8.) Does the soul's going out of the body effect its purification from indwelling sin?

"(9.) If so, is it not something else, not 'the blood of Christ which cleanseth' it 'from all sin?'

"(10.) If his blood cleanseth us from all sin, while the soul and body are united, is it not in this life?

"(11.) If when that union ceases, is it not in the next? And is not this too late?

"(12.) If in the article of death; what situation is the soul in, when it is neither in the body nor out of it?

"(13.) Has Christ anywhere taught us to pray for what he never designs to give?

"(14.) Has he not taught us to pray, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven?' And is it not done perfectly in heaven?

"(15.) If so, has he not taught us to pray for perfection on earth? Does he not then design to give it?

"(16.) Did not St. Paul pray according to the will of God, when he prayed that the Thessalonians might be 'sanctified wholly, and preserved' (in this world, not the next, unless he was praying for the dead) 'blameless in body, soul, and spirit, unto the coming of Jesus Christ?'

"(17.) Do you sincerely desire to be freed from indwelling sin in this life?

"(18.) If you do, did not God give you that desire?

"(19.) If so, did he not give it you to mock you, since it is impossible it should ever be fulfilled?

"(20.) If you have not sincerity enough even to desire it, are you not disputing about matters too high for you?

"(21.) Do you ever pray God to 'cleanse the thoughts of your heart, that' you 'may perfectly love him?'

"(22.) If you neither desire what you ask, nor believe it attainable, pray you not as a fool prayeth?

"God help thee to consider these questions calmly and impartially!"

24. In the latter end of this year, God called to himself that burning and shining light, Jane Cooper. As she was both a living and a dying witness of Christian perfection, it will not be at all foreign to the subject to add a short account of her death; with one of her own letters, containing a plain and artless relation of the manner wherein it pleased God to work that great change in her soul:—

" May 2, 1761.

"I BELIEVE while memory remains in me, gratitude will continue. From the time you preached on Gal. v. 5, I saw clearly the true state of my soul. That sermon described my heart, and what it wanted to be; namely, truly happy. You read Mr. M—'s letter, and it described the religion which I desired. From that time the prize appeared in view, and I was enabled to follow hard after it. I was kept watching unto prayer, sometimes in much distress, at other times in patient expectation of the blessing. For some days before you left London, my soul was stayed on a promise I had applied to me in prayer: 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple.' I believed he would, and that he would sit there as a refiner's fire. The Tuesday after you went, I thought I could not sleep, unless he fulfilled his word that night. I never knew as I did then the force of these words: 'Be still, and know that I am God.' I became nothing before Him, and enjoyed perfect calmness in my soul. I knew not whether he had destroyed my sin; but I desired to know, that I might praise Him. Yet I soon found the return of unbelief, and groaned, being burdened. On Wednesday I went to London, and sought the Lord without ceasing. I promised, if he would save me from sin, I would praise him. I could part with all things, so I might win Christ. But I found all these pleas to be nothing worth; and that if He saved me, it must be freely, for his own name's sake. On Thursday I was so much tempted, that I thought of destroying myself, or never conversing more with the people of God: And yet I had no doubt of his pardoning love; but,—

'Twas worse than death my God to love,  
And not my God alone.

On Friday my distress was deepened. I endeavoured to pray, and could not. I went to Mrs. D., who prayed for me, and told me it was the death of nature. I opened the Bible, on, 'The fearful and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.' I could not bear it. I opened again, on Mark xvi. 6, 7: 'Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth. Go your way; tell his disciples he goeth before you into Galilee; there ye shall see him.' I was encouraged, and enabled to pray, believing I should see Jesus at home. I returned that night, and found Mrs. G. She



prayed for me; and the Predestinarian had no plea, but, 'Lord, thou art no respecter of persons.' He proved he was not, by blessing me. I was in a moment enabled to lay hold on Jesus Christ, and found salvation by simple faith. He assured me, the Lord, the King, was in the midst of me, and that I should see evil no more. I now blessed Him who had visited and redeemed me, and was become my 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' I saw Jesus altogether lovely; and knew he was mine in all his offices. And, glory be to Him, He now reigns in my heart without a rival. I find no will but his. I feel no pride; nor any affection but what is placed on Him. I know it is by faith I stand; and that watching unto prayer must be the guard of faith. I am happy in God this moment, and I believe for the next. I have often read the chapter you mention, (1 Cor. xiii.,) and compared my heart and life with it. In so doing, I feel my shortcomings, and the need I have of the atoning blood. Yet I dare not say, I do not feel a measure of the love there described, though I am not all I shall be. I desire to be lost in that 'love which passeth knowledge.' I see 'the just shall live by faith;' and unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given. If I were an archangel, I should veil my face before him, and let silence speak his praise!"

The following account is given by one who was an eye and ear witness of what she relates:—

"(1.) In the beginning of November, she seemed to have a foresight of what was coming upon her, and used frequently to sing these words:—

'When pain o'er this weak flesh prevails,  
With lamb-like patience arm my breast.'

And when she sent to me, to let me know she was ill, she wrote in her note, 'I suffer the will of Jesus. All he sends is sweetened by His love. I am as happy as if I heard a voice say,—

'For me my elder brethren stay,  
And angels beckon me away,  
And Jesus bids me come!'

"(2.) Upon my telling her, 'I cannot choose life or death for you,' she said, 'I asked the Lord, that, if it was His will, I might die first. And he told me, you should survive me, and that you should close my eyes.' When we perceived it

was the small-pox, I said to her, 'My dear, you will not be frightened if we tell you what is your distemper.' She said, 'I cannot be frightened at His will.'

"(3.) The distemper was soon very heavy upon her; but so much the more was her faith strengthened. Tuesday, November 16, she said to me, 'I have been worshipping before the throne in a glorious manner; my soul was so let into God!' I said, 'Did the Lord give you any particular promise?' 'No,' replied she; 'it was all

That sacred awe that dares not move,  
And all the silent heaven of love.'

"(4.) On Thursday, upon my asking, 'What have you to say to me?' she said, 'Nay, nothing but what you know already: God is love.' I asked, 'Have you any particular promise?' She replied, 'I do not seem to want any; I can live without. I shall die a lump of deformity, but shall meet you all-glorious: And, meantime, I shall still have fellowship with your spirit.'

"(5.) Mr. M. asked, what she thought the most excellent way to walk in, and what were its chief hinderances. She answered: 'The greatest hinderance is generally from the natural constitution. It was mine to be reserved, to be very quiet, to suffer much, and to say little. Some may think one way more excellent, and some another: But the thing is to live in the will of God. For some months past, when I have been particularly devoted to this, I have felt such a guidance of his Spirit, and the unction which I have received from the Holy One has so taught me of all things, that I needed not any man should teach me, save as this anointing teacheth.'

"(6.) On Friday morning she said, 'I believe I shall die.' She then sat up in her bed and said, 'Lord, I bless thee, that thou art ever with me, and all thou hast is mine. Thy love is greater than my weakness, greater than my helplessness, greater than my unworthiness. Lord, thou sayest *to corruption, Thou art my sister!* And glory be to thee, O Jesus, thou art my Brother. Let me comprehend, with all saints, the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of thy love! Bless these;' (some that were present;) 'let them be every moment exercised in all things as thou wouldest have them to be.'

"(7.) Some hours after, it seemed as if the agonies of death were just coming upon her; but her face was full of



smiles of triumph, and she clapped her hands for joy. Mrs. C. said, 'My dear, you are more than conqueror through the blood of the Lamb.' She answered: 'Yes, O yes, sweet Jesus! O death, where is thy sting?' She then lay as in a doze for some time. Afterwards, she strove to speak, but could not: However, she testified her love, by shaking hands with all in the room.

"(8.) Mr. W. then came. She said, 'Sir, I did not know that I should live to see you. But I am glad the Lord has given me this opportunity, and likewise power to speak to you. I love you. You have always preached the strictest doctrine; and I loved to follow it. Do so still, whoever is pleased or displeased.' He asked, 'Do you now believe you are saved from sin?' She said, 'Yes; I have had no doubt of it for many months. That I ever had, was, because I did not abide in the faith. I now feel I have kept the faith; and perfect love casteth out all fear. As to you, the Lord promised me, your latter works should exceed your former, though I do not live to see it. I have been a great enthusiast, as they term it, these six months; but never lived so near the heart of Christ in my life. You, Sir, desire to comfort the hearts of hundreds by following that simplicity your soul loves.'

"(9.) To one who had received the love of God under her prayer, she said, 'I feel I have not followed a cunningly-devised fable; for I am as happy as I can live. Do you press on, and stop not short of the mark.' To Miss M——s she said, 'Love Christ; he loves you. I believe I shall see you at the right hand of God: But *as one star differs from another star in glory, so shall it be in the resurrection.* I charge you, in the presence of God, meet me in that day all-glorious within. Avoid all conformity to the world. You are robbed of many of your privileges. I know I shall be found blameless. Do you labour to be found of him *in peace, without spot.*'

"(10.) Saturday morning, she prayed nearly as follows: 'I know, my Lord, my life is prolonged only to do thy will. And though I should never eat or drink more,' (she had not swallowed anything for near eight-and-twenty hours,) 'thy will be done. I am willing to be kept so a twelvemonth: *Man liveth not by bread alone.* I praise thee that there is not a shadow of complaining in our streets. In that sense we know not what sickness means. Indeed, Lord, *neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, no, nor*

*any creature, shall separate us from thy love* one moment. Bless these, that there may be no lack in their souls. I believe there shall not. I pray in faith.

"On Sunday and Monday she was light-headed, but sensible at times. It then plainly appeared, her heart was still in heaven. One said to her, 'Jesus is our mark.' She replied: 'I have but one mark; I am all spiritual.' Miss M. said to her, 'You dwell in God.' She answered: 'Altogether.' A person asked her: 'Do you love me?' She said, 'O, I love Christ; I love my Christ.' To another she said, 'I shall not long be here; Jesus is precious, very precious indeed.' She said to Miss M., 'The Lord is very good; he keeps my soul above all.' For fifteen hours before she died, she was in strong convulsions: Her sufferings were extreme. One said, 'You are made perfect through sufferings.' She said, 'More and more so.' After lying quiet some time, she said, 'Lord, thou art strong!' Then pausing a considerable space, she uttered her last words, 'My Jesus is all in all to me: Glory be to him through time and eternity.' After this, she lay still for about half an hour, and then expired without a sigh or groan."

25. The next year, the number of those who believed they were saved from sin still increasing, I judged it needful to publish, chiefly for their use, "Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection:"—

"QUESTION 1. How is 'Christ the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth?' (Rom. x. 4.)

"ANSWER. In order to understand this, you must understand what law is here spoken of; and this, I apprehend, is, (1.) The Mosaic law, the whole Mosaic dispensation; which St. Paul continually speaks of as one, though containing three parts, the political, moral, and ceremonial. (2.) The Adamic law, that given to Adam in innocence, properly called 'the law of works.' This is in substance the same with the angelic law, being common to angels and men. It required that man should use, to the glory of God, all the powers with which he was created. Now, he was created free from any defect, either in his understanding or his affections. His body was then no clog to the mind; it did not hinder his apprehending all things clearly, judging truly concerning them, and reasoning justly, if he reasoned at all. I say, *if he reasoned*; for possibly he did not. Perhaps he had no need of reasoning, till his



corruptible body pressed down the mind, and impaired its native faculties. Perhaps, till then, the mind saw every truth that offered as directly as the eye now sees the light.

"Consequently, this law, proportioned to his original powers, required that he should always think, always speak, and always act precisely right, in every point whatever. He was well able so to do : And God could not but require the service he was able to pay.

"But Adam fell ; and his incorruptible body became corruptible ; and ever since, it is a clog to the soul, and hinders its operations. Hence, at present, no child of man can at all times apprehend clearly, or judge truly. And where either the judgment or apprehension is wrong, it is impossible to reason justly. Therefore, it is as natural for a man to mistake as to breathe ; and he can no more live without the one than without the other : Consequently, no man is able to perform the service which the Adamic law requires.

"And no man is obliged to perform it ; God does not require it of any man : For Christ is the end of the Adamic, as well as the Mosaic, law. By his death, he hath put an end to both ; he hath abolished both the one and the other, with regard to man ; and the obligation to observe either the one or the other is vanished away. Nor is any man living bound to observe the Adamic more than the Mosaic law.\*

"In the room of this, Christ hath established another, namely, the law of faith. Not every one that doeth, but every one that believeth, now receiveth righteousness, in the full sense of the word ; that is, he is justified, sanctified, and glorified.

"Q. 2. Are we then dead to the law ?

"A. We are 'dead to the law, by the body of Christ' given for us ; (Rom. vii. 4 ;) to the Adamic as well as Mosaic law. We are wholly freed therefrom by his death ; that law expiring with him.

"Q. 3. How, then, are we 'not without law to God, but under the law to Christ?' (1 Cor. ix. 21.)

"A. We are without that law ; but it does not follow that we are without any law : For God has established another law in its place, even the law of faith : And we are all under this law to God and to Christ ; both our Creator and our Redeemer require us to observe it.

"Q. 4. Is love the fulfilling of this law ?

\* I mean, it is not the condition either of present or future salvation.

"A. Unquestionably it is. The whole law under which we now are, is fulfilled by love. (Rom. xiii. 9, 10.) Faith working or animated by love is all that God now requires of man. He has substituted (not sincerity, but) love, in the room of angelic perfection.

"Q. 5. How is 'love the end of the commandment?' (1 Tim. i. 5.)

"A. It is the end of every commandment of God. It is the point aimed at by the whole and every part of the Christian institution. The foundation is faith, purifying the heart; the end love, preserving a good conscience.

"Q. 6. What love is this?

"A. The loving the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength; and the loving our neighbour, every man, as ourselves, as our own souls.

"Q. 7. What are the fruits or properties of this love?

"A. St. Paul informs us at large, love is long-suffering. It suffers all the weaknesses of the children of God, all the wickedness of the children of the world; and that not for a little time only, but as long as God pleases. In all, it sees the hand of God, and willingly submits thereto. Meantime, it is kind. In all, and after all, it suffers, it is soft, mild, tender, benign. 'Love envieth not;' it excludes every kind and degree of envy out of the heart: 'love acteth not rashly,' in a violent, headstrong manner, nor passes any rash or severe judgment: It 'doth not behave itself indecently;' is not rude, does not act out of character: 'Seeketh not her own' ease, pleasure, honour, or profit: 'Is not provoked;' expels all anger from the heart: 'Thinketh no evil;' casteth out all jealousy, suspiciousness, and readiness to believe evil: 'Rejoiceth not in iniquity;' yea, weeps at the sin or folly of its bitterest enemies: 'But rejoiceth in the truth;' in the holiness and happiness of every child of man. 'Love covereth all things,' speaks evil of no man; 'believeth all things' that tend to the advantage of another's character. It 'hopeth all things,' whatever may extenuate the faults which cannot be denied; and it 'endureth all things' which God can permit, or men and devils inflict. This is 'the law of Christ, the perfect law, the law of liberty.'

"And this distinction between the 'law of faith' (or love) and 'the law of works,' is neither a subtle nor an unnecessary distinction. It is plain, easy, and intelligible to any common understanding. And it is absolutely necessary, to prevent a



thousand doubts and fears, even in those who do 'walk in love.'

"Q. 8. But do we not 'in many things offend all,' yea, the best of us, even against this law?

"A. In one sense we do not, while all our tempers, and thoughts, and words, and works, spring from love. But in another we do, and shall do, more or less, as long as we remain in the body. For neither love nor the 'unction of the Holy One' makes us infallible: Therefore, through unavoidable defect of understanding, we cannot but mistake in many things. And these mistakes will frequently occasion something wrong, both in our temper, and words, and actions. From mistaking his character, we may love a person less than he really deserves. And by the same mistake we are unavoidably led to speak or act, with regard to that person, in such a manner as is contrary to this law, in some or other of the preceding instances.

"Q. 9. Do we not then need Christ, even on this account?

"A. The holiest of men still need Christ, as their Prophet, as 'the light of the world.' For he does not give them light, but from moment to moment: The instant he withdraws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their King; for God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain. They still need Christ as their Priest, to make atonement for their holy things. Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ.

"Q. 10. May not, then, the very best of men adopt the dying Martyr's confession: 'I am in myself nothing but sin, darkness, hell; but thou art my light, my holiness, my heaven?'

"A. Not exactly. But the best of men may say, 'Thou art my light, my holiness, my heaven. Through my union with thee, I am full of light, of holiness, and happiness. But if I were left to myself, I should be nothing but sin, darkness, hell.'

"But to proceed: The best of men need Christ as their Priest, their Atonement, their Advocate with the Father; not only as the continuance of their every blessing depends on his death and intercession, but on account of their coming short of the law of love. For every man living does so. You who feel all love, compare yourselves with the preceding description. Weigh yourselves in this balance, and see if you are not wanting in many particulars.

"Q. 11. But if all this be consistent with Christian perfection, that perfection is not freedom from all sin; seeing 'sin is the transgression of the law:' And the perfect transgress the very law they are under. Besides, they need the atonement of Christ; and he is the atonement of nothing but sin. Is, then, the term *sinless perfection*, proper?

"A. It is not worth disputing about. But observe in what sense the persons in question need the atonement of Christ. They do not need him to reconcile them to God afresh; for they are reconciled. They do not need him to restore the favour of God, but to continue it. He does not procure pardon for them anew, but 'ever liveth to make intercession for them;' and 'by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' (Heb. x. 14.)

"For want of duly considering this, some deny that they need the atonement of Christ. Indeed, exceeding few; I do not remember to have found five of them in England. Of the two, I would sooner give up perfection; but we need not give up either one or the other. The perfection I hold, 'Love rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks,' is well consistent with it; if any hold a perfection which is not, they must look to it.

"Q. 12. Does then Christian perfection imply any more than sincerity?

"A. Not if you mean by that word, love filling the heart, expelling pride, anger, desire, self-will; rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks. But I doubt, few use sincerity in this sense. Therefore, I think the old word is best.

"A person may be sincere who has all his natural tempers, pride, anger, lust, self-will. But he is not perfect till his heart is cleansed from these, and all its other corruptions.

"To clear this point a little farther: I know many that love God with all their heart. He is their one desire, their one delight, and they are continually happy in him. They love their neighbour as themselves. They feel as sincere, fervent, constant a desire for the happiness of every man, good or bad, friend or enemy, as for their own. They rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks. Their souls are continually streaming up to God, in holy joy, prayer, and praise. This is a point of fact; and this is plain, sound, scriptural experience.



"But even these souls dwell in a shattered body, and are so pressed down thereby, that they cannot always exert themselves as they would, by thinking, speaking, and acting precisely right. For want of better bodily organs, they must at times think, speak, or act wrong; not indeed through a defect of love, but through a defect of knowledge. And while this is the case, notwithstanding that defect, and its consequences, they fulfil the law of love.

"Yet as, even in this case, there is not a full conformity to the perfect law, so the most perfect do, on this very account, need the blood of atonement, and may properly for themselves, as well as for their brethren, say, 'Forgive us our trespasses.'

"Q. 13. But if Christ has put an end to that law, what need of any atonement for their transgressing it?

"A. Observe in what sense he has put an end to it, and the difficulty vanishes. Were it not for the abiding merit of his death, and his continual intercession for us, that law would condemn us still. These, therefore, we still need for every transgression of it.

"Q. 14. But can one that is saved from sin be tempted?

"A. Yes; for Christ was tempted.

"Q. 15. However, what you call temptation, I call the corruption of my heart. And how will you distinguish one from the other?

"A. In some cases it is impossible to distinguish, without the direct witness of the Spirit. But in general one may distinguish thus:—

"One commends me. Here is a temptation to pride. But instantly my soul is humbled before God. And I feel no pride; of which I am as sure, as that pride is not humility.

"A man strikes me. Here is a temptation to anger. But my heart overflows with love. And I feel no anger at all; of which I can be as sure, as that love and anger are not the same.

"A woman solicits me. Here is a temptation to lust. But in the instant I shrink back. And I feel no desire or lust at all; of which I can be as sure, as that my hand is cold or hot.

"Thus it is, if I am tempted by a present object; and it is just the same, if, when it is absent, the devil recalls a commendation, an injury, or a woman, to my mind. In the instant the soul repels the temptation, and remains filled with pure love.

"And the difference is still plainer, when I compare my present state with my past, wherein I felt temptation and corruption too.

"Q. 16. But how do you know, that you are sanctified, saved from your inbred corruption?

"A. 'I can know it no otherwise than I know that I am justified. 'Hereby know we that we are of God,' in either sense, 'by the Spirit that he hath given us.'

"We know it by the witness and by the fruit of the Spirit. And, First, by the witness. As, when we were justified, the Spirit bore witness with our spirit, that our sins were forgiven; so, when we were sanctified, he bore witness, that they were taken away. Indeed, the witness of sanctification is not always clear at first; (as neither is that of justification;) neither is it afterward always the same, but, like that of justification, sometimes stronger and sometimes fainter. Yea, and sometimes it is withdrawn. Yet, in general, the latter testimony of the Spirit is both as clear and as steady as the former."

"Q. 17. But what need is there of it, seeing sanctification is a real change, not a relative only, like justification?

"A. But is the new birth a relative change only? Is not this a real change? Therefore, if we need no witness of our sanctification, because it is a real change, for the same reason we should need none, that we are born of or are the children of God.

"Q. 18. But does not sanctification shine by its own light?

"A. And does not the new birth too? Sometimes it does; and so does sanctification; at others it does not. In the hour of temptation Satan clouds the work of God, and injects various doubts and reasonings, especially in those who have either very weak or very strong understandings. At such times there is absolute need of that witness; without which the work of sanctification not only could not be discerned, but could no longer subsist. Were it not for this, the soul could not then abide in the love of God; much less could it rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks. In these circumstances, therefore, a direct testimony that we are sanctified is necessary in the highest degree.

"'But I have no witness that I am saved from sin. And yet I have no doubt of it.' Very well: As long as you have no doubt, it is enough; when you have, you will need that witness.



"Q. 19. But what scripture makes mention of any such thing, or gives any reason to expect it?

"A. That scripture, 'We have received, not the spirit that is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we may know the things which are freely given us of God.' (1 Corinthians ii. 12.)

"Now surely sanctification is one of 'the things which are freely given us of God.' And no possible reason can be assigned why this should be excepted, when the Apostle says, 'We receive the Spirit' for this very end, 'that we may know the things which are' thus 'freely given us.'

"Is not the same thing implied in that well-known scripture, 'The Spirit itself witnesseth with our spirit, that we are the children of God?' (Romans viii. 16.) Does he witness this only to those who are children of God in the lowest sense? Nay, but to those also who are such in the highest sense. And does he not witness, that they are such in the highest sense? What reason have we to doubt it?

"What, if a man were to affirm, (as indeed many do,) that this witness belongs only to the highest class of Christians? Would not you answer, 'The Apostle makes no restriction; therefore doubtless it belongs to all the children of God?' And will not the same answer hold, if any affirm, that it belongs only to the lowest class?

"Consider likewise 1 John v. 19: 'We know that we are of God.' How? 'By the Spirit that he hath given us.' Nay, 'hereby we know that He abideth in us.' And what ground have we, either from Scripture or reason, to exclude the witness, any more than the fruit, of the Spirit, from being here intended? By this then also 'we know that we are of God,' and in what sense we are so; whether we are babes, young men, or fathers, we know in the same manner.

"Not that I affirm that all young men, or even fathers, have this testimony every moment. There may be intermissions of the direct testimony that they are thus born of God; but those intermissions are fewer and shorter as they grow up in Christ; and some have the testimony both of their justification and sanctification, without any intermission at all; which I presume more might have, did they walk humbly and closely with God.

"Q. 20. May not some of them have a testimony from the Spirit, that they shall not finally fall from God?

"A. They may. And this persuasion, that neither life nor death shall separate them from Him, far from being hurtful, may in some circumstances be extremely useful. These therefore we should in nowise grieve, but earnestly encourage them to 'hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast to the end.'

"Q. 21. But have any a testimony from the Spirit that they shall never sin?

"A. We know not what God may vouchsafe to some particular persons; but we do not find any general state described in Scripture, from which a man cannot draw back to sin. If there were any state wherein this was impossible, it would be that of these who are sanctified, who are 'fathers in Christ, who rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks;' but it is not impossible for these to draw back. They who are sanctified, yet may fall and perish. (Heb. x. 29.) Even fathers in Christ need that warning: 'Love not the world.' (1 John ii. 15.) They who 'rejoice, pray,' and 'give thanks without ceasing,' may, nevertheless, 'quench the Spirit.' (1 Thess. v. 16, &c.) Nay, even they who are 'sealed unto the day of redemption,' may yet 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God.' (Ephesians iv. 30.)

"Although, therefore, God may give such a witness to some particular persons, yet it is not to be expected by Christians in general; there being no scripture whereon to ground such an expectation.

"Q. 22. By what 'fruit of the Spirit' may we 'know that we are of God,' even in the highest sense?

"A. By love, joy, peace, always abiding; by invariable long-suffering, patience, resignation; by gentleness, triumphing over all provocation; by goodness, mildness, sweetness, tenderness of spirit; by fidelity, simplicity, godly sincerity; by meekness, calmness, evenness of spirit; by temperance, not only in food and sleep, but in all things natural and spiritual.

"Q. 23. But what great matter is there in this? Have we not all this when we are justified?

"A. What, total resignation to the will of God, without any mixture of self-will? gentleness, without any touch of anger, even the moment we are provoked? love to God, without the least love to the creature, but in and for God, excluding all pride? love to man, excluding all envy, all jealousy, and rash judging? meekness, keeping the whole soul inviolably calm?"



and temperance in all things? Deny that any ever came up to this, if you please; but do not say, all who are justified do.

“Q. 24. But some who are newly justified do. What then will you say to these?”

“A. If they really do, I will say they are sanctified; saved from sin in that moment; and that they never need lose what God has given, or feel sin any more.

“But certainly this is an exempt case. It is otherwise with the generality of those that are justified: They feel in themselves more or less pride, anger, self-will, a heart bent to backsliding. And, till they have gradually mortified these, they are not fully renewed in love.

“Q. 25. But is not this the case of all that are justified? Do they not gradually die to sin and grow in grace, till at, or perhaps a little before, death God perfects them in love?”

“A. I believe this is the case of most, but not all. God usually gives a considerable time for men to receive light, to grow in grace, to do and suffer his will, before they are either justified or sanctified; but he does not invariably adhere to this; sometimes he ‘cuts short his work.’ He does the work of many years in a few weeks; perhaps in a week, a day, an hour. He justifies or sanctifies both those who have done or suffered nothing, and who have not had time for a gradual growth either in light or grace. And ‘may he not do what he will with his own? Is thine eye evil, because he is good?’

“It need not, therefore, be affirmed over and over, and proved by forty texts of Scripture, either that most men are perfected in love at last, that there is a gradual work of God in the soul, or that, generally speaking, it is a long time, even many years, before sin is destroyed. All this we know: But we know likewise, that God may, with man’s good leave, ‘cut short his work,’ in whatever degree he pleases, and do the usual work of many years in a moment. He does so in many instances; and yet there is a gradual work, both before and after that moment: So that one may affirm the work is gradual, another, it is instantaneous, without any manner of contradiction.

“Q. 26. Does St. Paul mean any more by being ‘sealed with the Spirit,’ than being ‘renewed in love?’

“A. Perhaps in one place, (2 Cor. i. 22,) he does not mean so much; but in another, (Eph. i. 13,) he seems to include

both the fruit and the witness; and that in a higher degree than we experience even when we are first 'renewed in love;' God 'sealeth us with the Spirit of promise,' by giving us 'the full assurance of hope;' such a confidence of receiving all the promises of God, as excludes the possibility of doubting; with that Holy Spirit, by universal holiness, stamping the whole image of God on our hearts.

"Q. 27. But how can those who are thus sealed 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God?'

"A. St. Paul tells you very particularly, (1.) By such conversation as is not profitable, not to the use of edifying, not apt to minister grace to the hearers. (2.) By relapsing into bitterness or want of kindness. (3.) By wrath, lasting displeasure, or want of tender-heartedness. (4.) By anger, however soon it is over; want of instantly forgiving one another. (5.) By clamour or bawling, loud, harsh, rough speaking. (6.) By evil-speaking, whispering, tale-bearing; needlessly mentioning the fault of an absent person, though in ever so soft a manner.

"Q. 28. What do you think of those in London, who seem to have been lately 'renewed in love?'

"A. There is something very peculiar in the experience of the greater part of them. One would expect that a believer should first be filled with love, and thereby emptied of sin; whereas these were emptied of sin first, and then filled with love. Perhaps it pleased God to work in this manner, to make his work more plain and undeniable; and to distinguish it more clearly from that overflowing love, which is often felt even in a justified state.

"It seems likewise most agreeable to the great promise: 'From all your filthiness I will cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you,' (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26.)

"But I do not think of them all alike: There is a wide difference between some of them and others. I think most of them with whom I have spoken, have much faith, love, joy, and peace. Some of these I believe are renewed in love, and have the direct witness of it; and they manifest the fruit above described, in all their words and actions. Now, let any man call this what he will; it is what I call perfection.

"But some who have much love, peace, and joy, yet have not the direct witness; and others who think they have, are,



nevertheless, manifestly wanting in the fruit. How many I will not say ; perhaps one in ten ; perhaps more or fewer. But some are undeniably wanting in longsuffering, Christian resignation. They do not see the hand of God in whatever occurs, and cheerfully embrace it. They do not in everything give thanks, and rejoice evermore. They are not happy ; at least, not always happy ; for sometimes they complain. They say, this or that is hard !

“Some are wanting in gentleness. They resist evil, instead of turning the other cheek. They do not receive reproach with gentleness ; no, nor even reproof. Nay, they are not able to bear contradiction, without the appearance, at least, of resentment. If they are reprovèd or contradicted, though mildly, they do not take it well ; they behave with more distance and reserve than they did before. If they are reprovèd or contradicted harshly, they answer it with harshness ; with a loud voice, or with an angry tone, or in a sharp and surly manner. They speak sharply or roughly, when they reprove others ; and behave roughly to their inferiors.

“Some are wanting in goodness. They are not kind, mild, sweet, amiable, soft, and loving at all times, in their spirit, in their words, in their look and air, in the whole tenor of their behaviour ; and that to all, high and low, rich and poor, without respect of persons ; particularly to them that are out of the way, to opposers, and to those of their own household. They do not long, study, endeavour by every means, to make all about them happy. They can see them uneasy, and not be concerned ; perhaps they make them so ; and then wipe their mouths and say, ‘Why, they deserve it ; it is their own fault.’

“Some are wanting in fidelity, a nice regard to truth, simplicity, and godly sincerity. Their love is hardly without dissimulation ; something like guile is found in their mouth. To avoid roughness, they lean to the other extreme. They are smooth to an excess, so as scarce to avoid a degree of fawning, or of seeming to mean what they do not.

“Some are wanting in meekness, quietness of spirit, composure, evenness of temper. They are up and down, sometimes high, sometimes low ; their mind is not well balanced. Their affections are either not in due proportion ; they have too much of one, too little of another ; or they are not duly mixed and tempered together, so as to counterpoise

each other. Hence there is often a jar. Their soul is out of tune, and cannot make the true harmony.

"Some are wanting in temperance. They do not steadily use that kind and degree of food, which they know, or might know, would most conduce to the health, strength, and vigour of the body: Or they are not temperate in sleep; they do not rigorously adhere to what is best both for body and mind; otherwise they would constantly go to bed and rise early, and at a fixed hour: Or they sup late, which is neither good for body nor soul: Or they use neither fasting nor abstinence: Or they prefer (which are so many sorts of intemperance) that preaching, reading, or conversation, which gives them transient joy and comfort, before that which brings godly sorrow, or instruction in righteousness. Such joy is not sanctified; it doth not tend to, and terminate in, the crucifixion of the heart. Such faith doth not centre in God, but rather in itself.

"So far all is plain. I believe you have faith, and love, and joy, and peace. Yet you who are particularly concerned know each for yourself, that you are wanting in the respects above-mentioned. You are wanting either in long-suffering, gentleness, or goodness; either in fidelity, meekness, or temperance. Let us not, then, on either hand, fight about words. In the thing we clearly agree.

"You have not what I call perfection; if others will call it so, they may. However, hold fast what you have, and earnestly pray for what you have not.

"Q. 29. Can those who are perfect grow in grace?

"A. Undoubtedly they can; and that not only while they are in the body, but to all eternity.

"Q. 30. Can they fall from it?

"A. I am well assured they can; matter of fact puts this beyond dispute. Formerly we thought, one saved from sin could not fall; now we know the contrary. We are surrounded with instances of those who lately experienced all that I mean by perfection. They had both the fruit of the Spirit, and the witness; but they have now lost both. Neither does any one stand by virtue of anything that is implied in the nature of the state. There is no such height or strength of holiness as it is impossible to fall from. If there be any that cannot fall, this wholly depends on the promise of God.

"Q. 31. Can those who fall from this state recover it?



"A. Why not? We have many instances of this also. Nay, it is an exceeding common thing for persons to lose it more than once, before they are established therein.

"It is therefore to guard them who are saved from sin, from every occasion of stumbling, that I give the following advices. But first I shall speak plainly concerning the work itself.

"I esteem this late work to be of God; probably the greatest now upon earth. Yet, like all others, this also is mixed with much human frailty. But these weaknesses are far less than might have been expected; and ought to have been joyfully borne by all that loved and followed after righteousness. That there have been a few weak, warm-headed men, is no reproach to the work itself, no just ground for accusing a multitude of sober-minded men, who are patterns of strict holiness. Yet (just the contrary to what ought to have been) the opposition is great; the helps few. Hereby many are hindered from seeking faith and holiness by the false zeal of others; and some who at first began to run well are turned out of the way.

"Q. 32. What is the First advice\* that you would give them?

"A. Watch and pray continually against pride. If God has cast it out, see that it enter no more: It is full as dangerous as desire. And you may slide back into it unawares; especially if you think there is no danger of it. 'Nay, but I ascribe all I have to God.' So you may, and be proud nevertheless. For it is pride, not only to ascribe anything we have to ourselves, but to think we have what we really have not. Mr. L——, for instance, ascribed all the light he had to God, and so far he was humble; but then he thought he had more light than any man living; and this was palpable pride. So you ascribe all the knowledge you have to God; and in this respect you are humble. But if you think you have more than you really have; or if you think you are so taught of God, as no longer to need

\* The advices which follow were published in a separate tract in the year 1762, under the title of "Cautions and Directions given to the Greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies," with the following motto:—

"Set the false witnesses aside,  
Yet hold the truth for ever fast."

It was evidently intended to guard the people against the mischievous extravagances of George Bell and his friends, a particular account of whom is given in Mr. Wesley's Journal about that period.—EDIT.

man's teaching ; pride lieth at the door. Yes, you have need to be taught, not only by Mr. Morgan, by one another, by Mr. Maxfield, or me, but by the weakest Preacher in London ; yea, by all men. For God sendeth by whom he will send.

"Do not therefore say to any who would advise or reprove you, 'You are blind ; you cannot teach me.' Do not say, 'This is your wisdom, your carnal reason ;' but calmly weigh the thing before God.

"Always remember, much grace does not imply much light. These do not always go together. As there may be much light where there is but little love, so there may be much love where there is little light. The heart has more heat than the eye ; yet it cannot see. And God has wisely tempered the members of the body together, that none may say to another, 'I have no need of thee.'

"To imagine none can teach you, but those who are themselves saved from sin, is a very great and dangerous mistake. Give not place to it for a moment ; it would lead you into a thousand other mistakes, and that irrecoverably. No ; dominion is not founded in grace, as the madmen of the last age talked. Obey and regard 'them that are over you in the Lord,' and do not think you know better than them. Know their place and your own ; always remembering, much love does not imply much light.

"The not observing this has led some into many mistakes, and into the appearance, at least, of pride. O beware of the appearance, and the thing ! Let there 'be in you that lowly mind which was in Christ Jesus.' And 'be ye likewise clothed with humility.' Let it not only fill, but cover you all over. Let modesty and self-diffidence appear in all your words and actions. Let all you speak and do show that you are little, and base, and mean, and vile in your own eyes.

"As one instance of this, be always ready to own any fault you have been in. If you have at any time thought, spoke, or acted wrong, be not backward to acknowledge it. Never dream that this will hurt the cause of God ; no, it will further it. Be therefore open and frank, when you are taxed with anything ; do not seek either to evade or disguise it ; but let it appear just as it is, and you will thereby not hinder, but adorn, the gospel.

"Q. 33. What is the Second advice which you would give them ?



“A. Beware of that daughter of pride, enthusiasm. O keep at the utmost distance from it! Give no place to a heated imagination. Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impressions, visions, or revelations to be from God. They may be from him. They may be from nature. They may be from the devil. Therefore, ‘believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God.’ Try all things by the written word, and let all bow down before it. You are in danger of enthusiasm every hour, if you depart ever so little from Scripture; yea, or from the plain, literal meaning of any text, taken in connexion with the context. And so you are, if you despise or lightly esteem reason, knowledge, or human learning; every one of which is an excellent gift of God, and may serve the noblest purposes.

“I advise you, never to use the words, wisdom, reason, or knowledge, by way of reproach. On the contrary, pray that you yourself may abound in them more and more. If you mean worldly wisdom, useless knowledge, false reasoning, say so; and throw away the chaff, but not the wheat.

“One general inlet to enthusiasm is, expecting the end without the means; the expecting knowledge, for instance, without searching the Scriptures, and consulting the children of God; the expecting spiritual strength without constant prayer, and steady watchfulness; the expecting any blessing without hearing the word of God at every opportunity.

“Some have been ignorant of this device of Satan. They have left off searching the Scriptures. They said, ‘God writes all the Scriptures on my heart. Therefore, I have no need to read it.’ Others thought they had not so much need of hearing, and so grew slack in attending the morning preaching. O take warning, you who are concerned herein! You have listened to the voice of a stranger. Fly back to Christ, and keep in the good old way, which was ‘once delivered to the saints;’ the way that even a Heathen bore testimony of: ‘That the Christians rose early every day to sing hymns to Christ as God.’

“The very desire of ‘growing in grace’ may sometimes be an inlet of enthusiasm. As it continually leads us to seek new grace, it may lead us unawares to seek something else new, beside new degrees of love to God and man. So it has led some to seek and fancy they had received gifts of a new kind, after a new heart, as, (1.) The loving God with all our mind; (2.) With

all our soul; (3.) With all our strength: (4.) Oneness with God: (5.) Oneness with Christ: (6.) Having our life hid with Christ in God: (7.) Being dead with Christ: (8.) Rising with him: (9.) The sitting with him in heavenly places: (10.) The being taken up into his throne: (11.) The being in the New Jerusalem: (12.) The seeing the tabernacle of God come down among men: (13.) The being dead to all works: (14.) The not being liable to death, pain, or grief, or temptation.

"One ground of many of these mistakes is, the taking every fresh, strong application of any of these scriptures to the heart, to be a gift of a new kind; not knowing that several of these scriptures are not fulfilled yet; that most of the others are fulfilled when we are justified; the rest, the moment we are sanctified. It remains only to experience them in higher degrees. This is all we have to expect.

"Another ground of these, and a thousand mistakes, is, the not considering deeply, that love is the highest gift of God; humble, gentle, patient love; that all visions, revelations, manifestations whatever, are little things compared to love; and that all the gifts above-mentioned are either the same with, or infinitely inferior to, it.

"It were well you should be thoroughly sensible of this,—‘the heaven of heavens is love.’ There is nothing higher in religion; there is, in effect, nothing else; if you look for anything but more love, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way. And when you are asking others, ‘Have you received this or that blessing?’ if you mean anything but more love, you mean wrong; you are leading them out of the way, and putting them upon a false scent. Settle it then in your heart, that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more, but more of that love described in the thirteenth of the Corinthians. You can go no higher than this, till you are carried into Abraham’s bosom.

"I say yet again, beware of enthusiasm. Such is, the imagining you have the gift of prophesying, or of discerning of spirits, which I do not believe one of you has; no, nor ever had yet. Beware of judging people to be either right or wrong by your own feelings. This is no scriptural way of judging. O keep close to ‘the law and to the testimony!’

"Q. 34. What is the Third?

"A. Beware of Antinomianism; ‘making void the law,’ or



any part of it, 'through faith.' Enthusiasm naturally leads to this; indeed they can scarce be separated. This may steal upon you in a thousand forms, so that you cannot be too watchful against it. Take heed of everything, whether in principle or practice, which has any tendency thereto.. Even that great truth, that 'Christ is the end of the law,' may betray us into it, if we do not consider that he has adopted every point of the moral law, and grafted it into the law of love. Beware of thinking, 'Because I am filled with love, I need not have so much holiness. Because I pray always, therefore I need no set time for private prayer. Because I watch always, therefore I need no particular self-examination.' Let us 'magnify the law,' the whole written word, 'and make it honourable.' Let this be our voice: 'I prize thy commandments above gold or precious stones. O what love have I unto thy law! all the day long is my study in it.' Beware of Antinomian books; particularly the works of Dr. Crisp and Mr. Saltmarsh. They contain many excellent things; and this makes them the more dangerous. O be warned in time! Do not play with fire. Do not put your hand on the hole of a cockatrice' den. I entreat you, beware of bigotry. Let not your love or beneficence be confined to Methodists, so called, only; much less to that very small part of them who seem to be renewed in love; or to those who believe yours and their report. O make not this your Shibboleth! Beware of stillness; ceasing in a wrong sense from your own works. To mention one instance out of many: 'You have received,' says one, 'a great blessing. But you began to talk of it. and to do this and that; so you lost it. You should have been still.'

"Beware of self-indulgence; yea, and making a virtue of it, laughing at self-denial, and taking up the cross daily, at fasting or abstinence. Beware of censoriousness; thinking or calling them that anyways oppose you, whether in judgment or practice, blind, dead, fallen, or 'enemies to the work.' Once more, beware of Solifidianism; crying nothing but, 'Believe, believe!' and condemning those as ignorant or legal who speak in a more scriptural way. At certain seasons, indeed, it may be right to treat of nothing but repentance, or merely of faith, or altogether of holiness; but, in general, our call is to declare the whole counsel of God, and to prophesy according to the analogy of faith. The written word treats of the whole and every parti-

cular branch of righteousness, descending to its minutest branches; as to be sober, courteous, diligent, patient, to honour all men. So, likewise, the Holy Spirit works the same in our hearts, not merely creating desires after holiness in general, but strongly inclining us to every particular grace, leading us to every individual part of 'whatsoever is lovely.' And this with the greatest propriety: For as 'by works faith is made perfect,' so the completing or destroying the work of faith, and enjoying the favour, or suffering the displeasure, of God, greatly depends on every single act of obedience or disobedience.

"Q. 35. What is the Fourth?

"A. Beware of sins of omission; lose no opportunity of doing good in any kind. Be zealous of good works; willingly omit no work, either of piety or mercy. Do all the good you possibly can to the bodies and souls of men. Particularly, 'thou shalt in anywise reprove thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.' Be active. Give no place to indolence or sloth; give no occasion to say, 'Ye are idle, ye are idle.' Many will say so still; but let your whole spirit and behaviour refute the slander. Be always employed; lose no shred of time; gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost. And whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Be 'slow to speak,' and wary in speaking. 'In a multitude of words there wanteth not sin.' Do not talk much; neither long at a time. Few can converse profitably above an hour. Keep at the utmost distance from pious chit-chat, from religious gossiping.

"Q. 36. What is the Fifth?

"A. Beware of desiring anything but God. Now you desire nothing else; every other desire is driven out; see that none enter again. 'Keep thyself pure;' let your 'eye' remain 'single, and your whole body shall be full of light.' Admit no desire of pleasing food, or any other pleasure of sense; no desire of pleasing the eye or the imagination, by anything grand, or new, or beautiful; no desire of money, of praise, or esteem; of happiness in any creature. You may bring these desires back; but you need not; you need feel them no more. O stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.

"Be patterns to all, of denying yourselves, and taking up your cross daily. Let them see that you make no account of any pleasure which does not bring you nearer to God, nor regard any pain which does; that you simply aim at pleasing



him, whether by doing or suffering ; that the constant language of your heart, with regard to pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour, riches or poverty, is,

‘ All’s alike to me, so I  
In my Lord may live and die ! ’

“ Q. 37. What is the Sixth ?

“ A. Beware of schism, of making a rent in the Church of Christ. That inward disunion, the members ceasing to have a reciprocal love ‘ one for another,’ (1 Cor. xii. 25,) is the very root of all contention, and every outward separation. Beware of everything tending thereto. Beware of a dividing spirit ; shun whatever has the least aspect that way. Therefore, say not, ‘ I am of Paul or of Apollos ;’ the very thing which occasioned the schism at Corinth. Say not, ‘ This is my Preacher ; the best Preacher in England. Give me him, and take all the rest.’ All this tends to breed or foment division, to disunite those whom God hath joined. Do not despise or run down any Preacher ; do not exalt any one above the rest, lest you hurt both him and the cause of God. On the other hand, do not bear hard upon any by reason of some incoherency or inaccuracy of expression ; no, nor for some mistakes, were they really such.

“ Likewise, if you would avoid schism, observe every rule of the Society, and of the Bands, for conscience’ sake. Never omit meeting your Class or Band ; never absent yourself from any public meeting. These are the very sinews of our Society ; and whatever weakens, or tends to weaken, our regard for these, or our exactness in attending them, strikes at the very root of our community. As one saith, ‘ That part of our economy, the private weekly meetings for prayer, examination, and particular exhortation, has been the greatest means of deepening and confirming every blessing that was received by the word preached, and of diffusing it to others, who could not attend the public ministry ; whereas, without this religious connexion and intercourse, the most ardent attempts, by mere preaching, have proved of no lasting use.’

“ Suffer not one thought of separating from your brethren, whether their opinions agree with yours or not. Do not dream that any man sins in not believing you, in not taking your word ; or that this or that opinion is essential to the work, and both must stand or fall together. Beware of impatience of contradiction. Do not condemn or think

hardly of those who cannot see just as you see, or who judge it their duty to contradict you, whether in a great thing or a small. I fear some of us have thought hardly of others, merely because they contradicted what we affirmed. All this tends to division; and, by everything of this kind, we are teaching them an evil lesson against ourselves.

“O beware of touchiness, of testiness, not bearing to be spoken to; starting at the least word; and flying from those who do not implicitly receive mine or another’s sayings!

“Expect contradiction and opposition, together with crosses of various kinds. Consider the words of St. Paul: ‘To you it is given, in the behalf of Christ,’—for his sake, as a fruit of his death and intercession for you,—‘not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake.’ (Phil. i. 29.) *It is given!* God gives you this opposition or reproach; it is a fresh token of his love. And will you disown the Giver; or spurn his gift, and count it a misfortune? Will you not rather say, ‘Father, the hour is come, that thou shouldest be glorified: Now thou givest thy child to suffer something for thee: Do with me according to thy will?’ Know that these things, far from being hinderances to the work of God, or to your soul, unless by your own fault, are not only unavoidable in the course of Providence, but profitable, yea, necessary, for you. Therefore, receive them from God (not from chance) with willingness, with thankfulness. Receive them from men with humility, meekness, yieldingness, gentleness, sweetness. Why should not even your outward appearance and manner be soft? Remember the character of Lady Cutts: ‘It was said of the Roman Emperor Titus, Never any one came displeased from him. But it might be said of her, Never any one went displeased to her: So secure were all of the kind and favourable reception which they would meet with from her.’

“Beware of tempting others to separate from you. Give no offence which can possibly be avoided; see that your practice be in all things suitable to your profession, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour. Be particularly careful in speaking of yourself: You may not, indeed, deny the work of God; but speak of it, when you are called thereto, in the most inoffensive manner possible. Avoid all magnificent, pompous words; indeed, you need give it no general name; neither perfection, sanctification, the second blessing, nor the having attained. Rather speak of the particulars which God has wrought for you. You



may say, 'At such a time I felt a change which I am not able to express; and since that time, I have not felt pride, or self-will, or anger, or unbelief; nor anything but a fulness of love to God and to all mankind.' And answer any other plain question that is asked with modesty and simplicity.

"And if any of you should at any time fall from what you now are, if you should again feel pride or unbelief, or any temper from which you are now delivered; do not deny, do not hide, do not disguise it at all, at the peril of your soul. At all events go to one in whom you can confide, and speak just what you feel. God will enable him to speak a word in season, which shall be health to your soul. And surely He will again lift up your head, and cause the bones that have been broken to rejoice.

"Q. 38. What is the last advice that you would give them?

"A. Be exemplary in all things; particularly in outward things, (as in dress,) in little things, in the laying out of your money, (avoiding every needless expense,) in deep, steady seriousness, and in the solidity and usefulness of all your conversation. So shall you be 'a light shining in a dark place.' So shall you daily 'grow in grace,' till 'an entrance be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"Most of the preceding advices are strongly enforced in the following reflections; which I recommend to your deep and frequent consideration, next to the holy Scriptures:—

"(1.) The sea is an excellent figure of the fulness of God, and that of the blessed Spirit. For as the rivers all return into the sea; so the bodies, the souls, and the good works of the righteous, return into God, to live there in his eternal repose.

"Although all the graces of God depend on his mere bounty, yet is He pleased generally to attach them to the prayers, the instructions, and the holiness of those with whom we are. By strong though invisible attractions He draws some souls through their intercourse with others.

"The sympathies formed by grace far surpass those formed by nature.

"The truly devout show that passions as naturally flow from true as from false love; so deeply sensible are they of the goods and evils of those whom they love for God's sake. But this can only be comprehended by those who understand the language of love.

"The bottom of the soul may be in repose, even while we are in many outward troubles; just as the bottom of the sea is calm, while the surface is strongly agitated.

"The best helps to growth in grace are the ill usage, the affronts, and the losses which befall us. We should receive them with all thankfulness, as preferable to all others, were it only on this account,—that our will has no part therein.

"The readiest way to escape from our sufferings is, to be willing they should endure as long as God pleases.

"If we suffer persecution and affliction in a right manner, we attain a larger measure of conformity to Christ, by a due improvement of one of these occasions, than we could have done merely by imitating his mercy, in abundance of good works.

"One of the greatest evidences of God's love to those that love him is, to send them afflictions, with grace to bear them.

"Even in the greatest afflictions, we ought to testify to God, that, in receiving them from his hand, we feel pleasure in the midst of the pain, from being afflicted by Him who loves us, and whom we love.

"The readiest way which God takes to draw a man to himself is, to afflict him in that he loves most, and with good reason; and to cause this affliction to arise from some good action done with a single eye; because nothing can more clearly show him the emptiness of what is most lovely and desirable in the world.

"(2.) True resignation consists in a thorough conformity to the whole will of God; who wills and does all (excepting sin) which comes to pass in the world. In order to this we have only to embrace all events, good and bad, as His will.

"In the greatest afflictions which can befall the just, either from heaven or earth, they remain immovable in peace, and perfectly submissive to God, by an inward, loving regard to Him, uniting in one all the powers of their souls.

"We ought quietly to suffer whatever befalls us, to bear the defects of others and our own, to confess them to God in secret prayer, or with groans which cannot be uttered; but never to speak a sharp or peevish word, nor to murmur or repine; but thoroughly willing that God should treat you in the manner that pleases him. We are his lambs, and therefore ought to be ready to suffer, even to the death, without complaining.

"We are to bear with those we cannot amend, and to be content with offering them to God. This is true resignation.



And since He has borne our infirmities, we may well bear those of each other for His sake.

“To abandon all, to strip one’s self of all, in order to seek and to follow Jesus Christ naked to Bethlehem, where he was born; naked to the hall where he was scourged; and naked to Calvary, where he died on the cross, is so great a mercy, that neither the thing, nor the knowledge of it, is given to any, but through faith in the Son of God.

“(3.) There is no love of God without patience, and no patience without lowliness and sweetness of spirit.

“Humility and patience are the surest proofs of the increase of love.

“Humility alone unites patience with love; without which it is impossible to draw profit from suffering; or indeed, to avoid complaint, especially when we think we have given no occasion for what men make us suffer.

“True humility is a kind of self-annihilation; and this is the centre of all virtues.

“A soul returned to God ought to be attentive to everything which is said to him, on the head of salvation, with a desire to profit thereby.

“Of the sins which God has pardoned, let nothing remain but a deeper humility in the heart, and a stricter regulation in our words, in our actions, and in our sufferings.

“(4.) The bearing men, and suffering evils in meekness and silence, is the sum of a Christian life.

“God is the first object of our love: Its next office is, to bear the defects of others. And we should begin the practice of this amidst our own household.

“We should chiefly exercise our love towards them who most shock either our way of thinking, or our temper, or our knowledge, or the desire we have that others should be as virtuous as we wish to be ourselves.

“(5.) God hardly gives his Spirit even to those whom he has established in grace, if they do not pray for it on all occasions, not only once, but many times.

“God does nothing but in answer to prayer; and even they who have been converted to God without praying for it themselves, (which is exceeding rare,) were not without the prayers of others. Every new victory which a soul gains is the effect of a new prayer.

“On every occasion of uneasiness, we should retire to

prayer, that we may give place to the grace and light of God, and then form our resolutions, without being in any pain about what success they may have.

"In the greatest temptations, a single look to Christ, and the barely pronouncing his name, suffices to overcome the wicked one, so it be done with confidence and calmness of spirit.

"God's command to 'pray without ceasing' is founded on the necessity we have of his grace to preserve the life of God in the soul, which can no more subsist one moment without it, than the body can without air.

"Whether we think of, or speak to, God, whether we act or suffer for him, all is prayer, when we have no other object than his love, and the desire of pleasing him.

"All that a Christian does, even in eating and sleeping, is prayer, when it is done in simplicity, according to the order of God, without either adding to or diminishing from it by his own choice.

"Prayer continues in the desire of the heart, though the understanding be employed on outward things.

"In souls filled with love, the desire to please God is a continual prayer.

"As the furious hate which the devil bears us is termed the roaring of a lion, so our vehement love may be termed crying after God.

"God only requires of his adult children, that their hearts be truly purified, and that they offer him continually the wishes and vows that naturally spring from perfect love. For these desires, being the genuine fruits of love, are the most perfect prayers that can spring from it.

"(6.) It is scarce conceivable how strait the way is wherein God leads them that follow him; and how dependent on him we must be, unless we are wanting in our faithfulness to him.

"It is hardly credible of how great consequence before God the smallest things are; and what great inconveniences sometimes follow those which appear to be light faults.

"As a very little dust will disorder a clock, and the least sand will obscure our sight, so the least grain of sin which is upon the heart will hinder its right motion towards God.

"We ought to be in the church as the saints are in heaven, and in the house as the holiest men are in the church; doing our work in the house as we pray in the church; worshipping God from the ground of the heart.



"We should be continually labouring to cut off all the useless things that surround us ; and God usually retrenches the superfluities of our souls in the same proportion as we do those of our bodies.

"The best means of resisting the devil is, to destroy whatever of the world remains in us, in order to raise for God, upon its ruins, a building all of love. Then shall we begin, in this fleeting life, to love God as we shall love him in eternity.

"We scarce conceive how easy it is to rob God of his due, in our friendship with the most virtuous persons, until they are torn from us by death. But if this loss produce lasting sorrow, that is a clear proof that we had before two treasures, between which we divided our heart.

"(7.) If, after having renounced all, we do not watch incessantly, and beseech God to accompany our vigilance with his, we shall be again entangled and overcome.

"As the most dangerous winds may enter at little openings, so the devil never enters more dangerously than by little unobserved incidents, which seem to be nothing, yet insensibly open the heart to great temptations.

"It is good to renew ourselves, from time to time, by closely examining the state of our souls, as if we had never done it before ; for nothing tends more to the full assurance of faith, than to keep ourselves by this means in humility, and the exercise of all good works.

"To continual watchfulness and prayer ought to be added continual employment. For grace flies a vacuum as well as nature ; and the devil fills whatever God does not fill.

"There is no faithfulness like that which ought to be between a guide of souls and the person directed by him. They ought continually to regard each other in God, and closely to examine themselves, whether all their thoughts are pure, and all their words directed with Christian discretion. Other affairs are only the things of men ; but these are peculiarly the things of God.

"(8.) The words of St. Paul, 'No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,' show us the necessity of eyeing God in our good works, and even in our minutest thoughts ; knowing that none are pleasing to him, but those which he forms in us and with us. From hence we learn that we cannot serve him, unless he use our tongue, hands, and heart, to do by himself and his Spirit whatever he would have us to do.

"If we were not utterly impotent, our good works would be our own property; whereas now they belong wholly to God, because they proceed from him and his grace: While raising our works, and making them all divine, he honours himself in us through them.

"One of the principal rules of religion is, to lose no occasion of serving God. And, since he is invisible to our eyes, we are to serve him in our neighbour; which he receives as if done to himself in person, standing visibly before us.

"God does not love men that are inconstant, nor good works that are intermitted. Nothing is pleasing to him, but what has a resemblance of his own immutability.

"A constant attention to the work which God entrusts us with is a mark of solid piety.

"Love fasts when it can, and as much as it can. It leads to all the ordinances of God, and employs itself in all the outward works whereof it is capable. It flies, as it were, like Elijah over the plain, to find God upon his holy mountain.

"God is so great, that he communicates greatness to the least thing that is done for his service.

"Happy are they who are sick, yea, or lose their life, for having done a good work.

"God frequently conceals the part which his children have in the conversion of other souls. Yet one may boldly say, that person who long groans before him for the conversion of another, whenever that soul is converted to God, is one of the chief causes of it.

"Charity cannot be practised right, unless, First, we exercise it the moment God gives the occasion; and, Secondly, retire the instant after to offer it to God by humble thanksgiving. And this for three reasons: First, to render him what we have received from him. The Second, to avoid the dangerous temptation which springs from the very goodness of these works. And the Third, to unite ourselves to God, in whom the soul expands itself in prayer, with all the graces we have received, and the good works we have done, to draw from him new strength against the bad effects which these very works may produce in us, if we do not make use of the antidotes which God has ordained against these poisons. The true means to be filled anew with the riches of grace is thus to strip ourselves of it; and without this it is extremely difficult not to grow faint in the practice of good works.



“ Good works do not receive their last perfection, till they, as it were, lose themselves in God. This is a kind of death to them, resembling that of our bodies, which will not attain their highest life, their immortality, till they lose themselves in the glory of our souls, or rather of God, wherewith they shall be filled. And it is only what they had of earthly and mortal, which good works lose by this spiritual death.

“ Fire is the symbol of love; and the love of God is the principle and the end of all our good works. But truth surpasses figure; and the fire of divine love has this advantage over material fire, that it can re-ascend to its source, and raise thither with it all the good works which it produces. And by this means it prevents their being corrupted by pride, vanity, or any evil mixture. But this cannot be done otherwise than by making these good works in a spiritual manner die in God, by a deep gratitude, which plunges the soul in him as in an abyss, with all that it is, and all the grace and works for which it is indebted to him; a gratitude, whereby the soul seems to empty itself of them, that they may return to their source, as rivers seem willing to empty themselves, when they pour themselves with all their waters into the sea.

“ When we have received any favour from God, we ought to retire, if not into our closets, into our hearts, and say, ‘ I come, Lord, to restore to thee what thou hast given; and I freely relinquish it, to enter again into my own nothingness. For what is the most perfect creature in heaven or earth in thy presence, but a void capable of being filled with thee and by thee; as the air, which is void and dark, is capable of being filled with the light of the sun, who withdraws it every day to restore it the next, there being nothing in the air that either appropriates this light or resists it? O give me the same facility of receiving and restoring thy grace and good works! I say, *thine*; for I acknowledge the root from which they spring is in thee, and not in me.’ ”

26. In the year 1764, upon a review of the whole subject, I wrote down the sum of what I had observed in the following short propositions:—

“ (1.) There is such a thing as perfection; for it is again and again mentioned in Scripture.

“ (2.) It is not so early as justification; for justified persons are to ‘ go on unto perfection.’ (Heb. vi. 1.)

"(3.) It is not so late as death; for St. Paul speaks of living men that were perfect. (Philip. iii. 15.)

"(4.) It is not absolute. Absolute perfection belongs not to man, nor to angels, but to God alone.

"(5.) It does not make a man infallible: None is infallible, while he remains in the body.

"(6.) Is it sinless? It is not worth while to contend for a term. It is 'salvation from sin.'

"(7.) It is 'perfect love.' (1 John iv. 18.) This is the essence of it; its properties, or inseparable fruits, are, rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks. (1 Thess. v. 16, &c.)

"(8.) It is improvable. It is so far from lying in an indivisible point, from being incapable of increase, that one perfected in love may grow in grace far swifter than he did before.

"(9.) It is amissible, capable of being lost; of which we have numerous instances. But we were not thoroughly convinced of this, till five or six years ago.

"(10.) It is constantly both preceded and followed by a gradual work.

"(11.) But is it in itself instantaneous or not? In examining this, let us go on step by step.

"An instantaneous change has been wrought in some believers: None can deny this.

"Since that change, they enjoy perfect love; they feel this, and this alone; they 'rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks.' Now, this is all that I mean by perfection; therefore, these are witnesses of the perfection which I preach.

"'But in some this change was not instantaneous.' They did not perceive the instant when it was wrought. It is often difficult to perceive the instant when a man dies; yet there is an instant in which life ceases. And if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it.

"'But if they have this love now, they will lose it.' They may; but they need not. And whether they do or no, they have it now; they now experience what we teach. They now are all love; they now rejoice, pray, and praise without ceasing.

"'However, sin is only suspended in them; it is not



destroyed.' Call it which you please. They are all love to-day ; and they take no thought for the morrow.

" ' But this doctrine has been much abused.' So has that of justification by faith. But that is no reason for giving up either this or any other scriptural doctrine. ' When you wash your child,' as one speaks, ' throw away the water ; but do not throw away the child.'

" ' But those who think they are saved from sin say they have no need of the merits of Christ.' They say just the contrary. Their language is,—

' Every moment, Lord, I want  
The merit of thy death ! '

They never before had so deep, so unspeakable, a conviction of the need of Christ in all his offices as they have now.

" Therefore, all our Preachers should make a point of preaching perfection to believers constantly, strongly, and explicitly ; and all believers should mind this one thing, and continually agonize for it."

27. I have now done what I proposed. I have given a plain and simple account of the manner wherein I first received the doctrine of perfection, and the sense wherein I received, and wherein I do receive, and teach it to this day. I have declared the whole and every part of what I mean by that scriptural expression. I have drawn the picture of it at full length, without either disguise or covering. And I would now ask any impartial person, What is there so frightful therein ? Whence is all this outcry, which, for these twenty years and upwards, has been made throughout the kingdom ; as if all Christianity were destroyed, and all religion torn up by the roots ? Why is it, that the very name of perfection has been cast out of the mouths of Christians ; yea, exploded and abhorred, as if it contained the most pernicious heresy ? Why have the Preachers of it been hooted at, like mad dogs, even by men that fear God ; nay, and by some of their own children, some whom they, under God, had begotten through the gospel ? What reason is there for this, or what pretence ? Reason, sound reason, there is none. It is impossible there should. But pretences there are, and those in great abundance. Indeed, there is ground to fear that, with some who treat us thus, it is mere pretence ; that it is no more than a copy of their countenance, from the beginning to the end.

They wanted, they sought, occasion against me; and here they found what they sought. "This is Mr. Wesley's doctrine! He preaches perfection!" He does: yet this is not his doctrine any more than it is yours, or any one's else, that is a Minister of Christ. For it is His doctrine, peculiarly, emphatically His; it is the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Those are his words, not mine: *Εσσεσθε εν υμεις τελειοι, ωσπερ ο Πατηρ υμων ο εν τοις θρανιοις τελειος εστι*,—"Ye shall therefore be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." And who says, ye shall not; or, at least, not till your soul is separated from the body? It is the doctrine of St. Paul, the doctrine of St. James, of St. Peter, and St. John; and no otherwise Mr. Wesley's, than as it is the doctrine of every one who preaches the pure and the whole gospel. I tell you, as plain as I can speak, where and when I found this. I found it in the oracles of God, in the Old and New Testament; when I read them with no other view or desire but to save my own soul. But whosoever this doctrine is, I pray you, what harm is there in it? Look at it again; survey it on every side, and that with the closest attention. In one view, it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, all inward as well as outward pollution. It is a renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of Him that created it. In yet another, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. Now, take it in which of these views you please, (for there is no material difference,) and this is the whole and sole perfection, as a train of writings prove to a demonstration, which I have believed and taught for these forty years, from the year 1725 to the year 1765.

28. Now let this perfection appear in its native form, and who can speak one word against it? Will any dare to speak against loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves? against a renewal of heart, not only in part, but in the whole image of God? Who is he that will open his mouth against being cleansed from all pollution both of flesh and spirit; or against having all the mind that was in Christ, and walking in all things as Christ walked? What



man, who calls himself a Christian, has the hardness to object to the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God? What serious man would oppose the giving God all our heart, and the having one design ruling all our tempers? I say, again, let this perfection appear in its own shape, and who will fight against it? It must be disguised before it can be opposed. It must be covered with a bear-skin first, or even the wild beasts of the people will scarce be induced to worry it. But whatever these do, let not the children of God any longer fight against the image of God. Let not the members of Christ say anything against having the whole mind that was in Christ. Let not those who are alive to God oppose the dedicating all our life to Him. Why should you who have his love shed abroad in your heart withstand the giving him all your heart? Does not all that is within you cry out, "O who that loves can love enough?" What pity that those who desire and design to please him should have any other design or desire! much more, that they should dread, as a fatal delusion, yea, abhor as an abomination to God, the having this one desire and design ruling every temper! Why should devout men be afraid of devoting all their soul, body, and substance to God? Why should those who love Christ count it a damnable error, to think we may have all the mind that was in him? We allow, we contend, that we are justified freely through the righteousness and the blood of Christ. And why are you so hot against us, because we expect likewise to be sanctified wholly through his Spirit? We look for no favour either from the open servants of sin, or from those who have only the form of religion. But how long will you who worship God in spirit, who are "circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands," set your battle in array against those who seek an entire circumcision of heart, who thirst to be cleansed "from all filthiness of flesh and spirit," and to "perfect holiness in the fear of God?" Are we your enemies, because we look for a full deliverance from that "carnal mind which is enmity against God?" Nay, we are your brethren, your fellow-labourers in the vineyard of our Lord, your companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus. Although this we confess, (if we are fools therein, yet as fools bear with us,) we do expect to love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. Yea, we do believe, that he will in this world

so "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that we shall perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name."

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## BRIEF THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

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SOME thoughts occurred to my mind this morning concerning Christian perfection, and the manner and time of receiving it, which I believe may be useful to set down.

1. By perfection I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God, and our neighbour, ruling our tempers, words, and actions.

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.

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

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

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.

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.

If it must be many years after justification, I would be glad to know how many. *Pretium quotus arroget annus?* \*

And how many days or months, or even years, can any one allow to be between perfection and death? How far from justification must it be; and how near to death?

LONDON, Jan. 27, 1767.

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

"How many years give sanction to our lines?"—EDIT.



## SOME THOUGHTS

ON

### AN EXPRESSION OF ST. PAUL, IN THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS,

CHAPTER V., VERSE 23.

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1. THE words, as literally translated as the English tongue will bear, run thus: "May the whole of you, the spirit, and the soul, and the body, be preserved blameless."

What does St. Paul here mean by dividing man into three parts, "the spirit, and the soul, and the body?"

This creates what has been thought an insurmountable difficulty by those who argue thus:—

"How is it possible to contradistinguish the soul both from the spirit and from the body? For it must be either material or immaterial, matter or not matter: There is no medium. But if it be matter, does it not co-incide with the body? If it be not matter, does it not co-incide with the spirit?"

But perhaps a way may be found of untieing this knot, of unraveling this difficulty, by simply declaring the (at least probable) meaning of these three terms.

May not *the spirit* mean (so it has been understood by the Christians in all ages) the highest principle in man, the immortal spirit made in the image of God, endued (as all spirits are, so far as we can conceive) with self-motion, understanding, will, and liberty?

Is not *the body* that portion of organized matter which every man receives in the womb, with which he is born into the world, and which he carries with him to the grave? At present it is connected with flesh and blood. But these are not the body. They are only the temporary clothing of the body, which it wholly puts off in the grave.

*The soul* seems to be the immediate clothing of the spirit, the vehicle with which it is connected from its first existence,

and which is never separated from it, either in life or in death. Probably it consists of ethereal or electric fire, the purest of all matter. It does not seem to be affected by the death of the body, but envelopes the separate, as it does the embodied, spirit; neither will it undergo any essential change, when it is clothed upon with the immortal body at the resurrection.

May not the Apostle have an eye to this in those remarkable words:—"We that are in this tabernacle" (this corruptible flesh and blood) "do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed," (divested of all covering, which belongs only to the Father of spirits,) "but clothed upon" with the glorious resurrection-body, covering both our soul and spirit? (2 Corinthians v. 4.) This will swallow up, totally destroy, *το θνητον*,—*that which was mortal*, namely, the flesh and blood, which alone was liable to death.

If we understand the words of the Apostle in this sense, all the difficulty vanishes away. We allow, there can be no medium between material and immaterial. But still there is room for a wide and essential difference between the soul and the body; the latter implying that original portion of matter which is now clothed with flesh and blood; the former, that vehicle of ethereal fire which immediately covers the immortal spirit.

CONGLETON,  
March 31, 1786.

## ON CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

TO THE REV. MR. DODD.

REV. SIR,

February 5, 1756.

I AM favoured with yours of January 26, for which I return you my sincere thanks. Your frank and open manner of writing is far from needing any apology, and I hope will never occasion your receiving such treatment from me, as I did from Mr. Law, who, after some very keen expressions, in answer to



the second private letter I sent him, plainly told me he desired to hear "no more on that head." I do desire to hear, and am very willing to consider, whatever you have to advance on the head of Christian perfection.

When I began to make the Scriptures my chief study, (about seven-and-twenty years ago,) I began to see that Christians are called to love God with all their heart, and to serve him with all their strength; which is precisely what I apprehend to be meant by the scriptural term perfection. After weighing this for some years, I openly declared my sentiments before the University, in the sermon on the Circumcision of the Heart, now printed in the second volume.\* About six years after, in consequence of an advice I received from Bishop Gibson, "Tell all the world what you mean by perfection," I published my coolest and latest thoughts in the sermon on that subject. You easily observe, I therein build on no authority, ancient or modern, but the Scripture. If this supports any doctrine, it will stand; if not, the sooner it falls, the better. Neither the doctrine in question, nor any other, is anything to me, unless it be the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles. If, therefore, you will please to point out to me any passages in that sermon which are either contrary to Scripture, or not supported by it, and to show that they are not, I shall be full as willing to oppose as ever I was to defend them. I search for truth, plain, Bible truth, without any regard to the praise or dispraise of men.

If you will assist me in this search, more especially by showing me where I have mistaken my way, it will be gratefully acknowledged by,

Reverend Sir,

Your affectionate brother and servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

N.B. I had at this time no acquaintance with Dr. Dodd; nor did I ever see him till I saw him in prison.

\* Volume V., p. 202, of the present edition.—EDIT.

## AN ANSWER TO THE REV. MR. DODD.\*

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1. You and I may the more easily bear with each other, because we are both of us rapid writers, and therefore the more liable to mistake. I will thank you for showing me any mistake I am in; being not so tenacious of my opinions now, as I was twenty or thirty years ago. Indeed, I am not fond of any opinion as such. I read the Bible with what attention I can, and regulate all my opinions thereby, to the best of my understanding. But I am always willing to receive more light; particularly with regard to any less common opinions, because the explaining and defending of them takes up much time, which I can ill spare from other employments. Whoever, therefore, will give me more light with regard to Christian perfection, will do me a singular favour. The opinion I have concerning it at present, I espouse merely because I think it is scriptural. If therefore I am convinced it is not scriptural, I shall willingly relinquish it.

2. I have no particular fondness for the term. It seldom occurs either in my preaching or writings. It is my opponents who thrust it upon me continually, and ask me what I mean by it. So did Bishop Gibson, till by his advice I publicly declared what I did not mean by it, and what I did. This I supposed might be best done in the form of a sermon, having a text prefixed, wherein that term occurred. But that text is there used only as an occasion or introduction to the subject. I do not build any doctrine thereupon, nor undertake critically to explain it.

3. What is the meaning of the term perfection? is another question; but that it is a scriptural term is undeniable. Therefore, none ought to object to the use of the term, whatever they may do to this or that explication of it. I am very willing to consider whatever you have to object to what is advanced under the first head of that sermon. But I still

\* At what time this answer was written, it is perhaps impossible exactly to ascertain. It appears to have been sent as a private letter to Mr. Dodd, before he had become a Doctor of Divinity; and not to have been published till the year 1782, when it was inserted in the Arminian Magazine.—EDIT.



think that perfection is only another term for holiness, or the image of God in man. "God made man perfect," I think is just the same as, "He made him holy," or "in his own image;" and you are the first person I ever read of or spoke with, who made any doubt of it. Now this perfection does certainly admit of degrees. Therefore, I readily allow the propriety of that distinction,—perfection of kinds, and perfection of degrees. Nor do I remember one writer, ancient or modern, who excepts against it.

4. In the sermon of Salvation by Faith, I say, "He that is born of God sinneth not," (a proposition explained at large in another sermon, and everywhere either explicitly or virtually connected with, "while he keepeth himself,") "by any sinful desire; any unholy desire he stifleth in the birth." (Assuredly he does, "while he keepeth himself.") "Nor doth he sin by infirmities; for his infirmities have no concurrence of his will; and without this they are not properly sins." Taking the words as they lie in connexion thus, (and taken otherwise they are not my words but yours,) I must still aver, they speak both my own experience, and that of many hundred children of God whom I personally know. And all this, with abundantly more than this, is contained in that single expression, "the loving God with all our heart, and serving him with all our strength." Nor did I ever say or mean any more by perfection, than thus loving and serving God. But I dare not say less than this; for it might be attended with worse consequences than you seem to be aware of. If there be a mistake, it is far more dangerous on the one side than on the other. If I set the mark too high, I drive men into needless fears; if you set it too low, you drive them into hell-fire.

5. We agree, that true "Christianity implies a destruction of the kingdom of sin, and a renewal of the soul in righteousness; which even babes in Christ do in a measure experience, though not in so large a measure as young men and fathers." But here we divide. I believe even babes in Christ, "while they keep themselves, do not commit sin." By sin, I mean, outward sin; and the word *commit*, I take in its plain, literal meaning. And this I think is fully proved by all the texts cited Sermon III., from the sixth chapter to the Romans. Nor do I conceive there is any material difference between committing sin, and continuing therein. I tell my neighbour here, "William, you are a child of the devil, for you commit

sin; you was drunk yesterday." "No, Sir," says the man, "I do not live or continue in sin" (which Mr. Dodd says is the true meaning of the text); "I am not drunk continually, but only now and then, once in a fortnight, or once in a month." Now, Sir, how shall I deal with this man? Shall I tell him he is in the way to heaven or hell? I think he is in the high road to destruction; and that if I tell him otherwise his blood will be upon my head. And all that you say of living, continuing in, serving sin, as different from committing it, and of its not reigning, not having dominion, over him who still frequently commits it, is making so many loopholes whereby any impenitent sinner may escape from all the terrors of the Lord. I dare not therefore give up the plain, literal meaning either of St. Paul's or St. Peter's words.

6. As to those of St. John, cited Sermon V., I do not think you have proved they are not to be taken literally. In every single act of obedience, as well as in a continued course of it, *ποιεῖ δικαιοσύνην*: And in either an act or a course of sin *ποιεῖ ἁμαρτίαν*. Therefore, that I may give no countenance to any kind or degree of sin, I still interpret these words by those in the fifth chapter, and believe, "he that is born of God" (while he keepeth himself) "sinneth not;" doth not commit outward sin.

7. But "it is absolutely necessary," as you observe, "to add sometimes explanatory words to those of the sacred penmen." It is so; to add words explanatory of their sense, but not subversive of it. The words added to this text, "Ye know all things," are such; and you yourself allow them so to be. But I do not allow the words wilfully and habitually to be such. These do not explain, but overthrow, the text. That the first Fathers thus explained it, I deny; as also that I ever spoke lightly of them.

8. You proceed: "You allow in another sermon, in evident contradiction to yourself, that the true children of God could, and did, commit sin." This is no contradiction to anything I ever advanced. I everywhere allow that a child of God can and will commit sin, if he does not keep himself. "But this," you say, "is nothing to the present argument." Yes, it is the whole thing. If they keep themselves, they do not; otherwise, they can and do commit sin. I say nothing contrary to this in either sermon. But "hence," you say, "we conclude that he who is born of God, may possibly commit sin:" An idle conclusion as



ever was formed ; for who ever denied it ? I flatly affirm it in both the sermons, and in the very paragraph now before us. The only conclusion which I deny is, that "all Christians do and will commit sin, as long as they live." Now this you yourself (though you seem to start at it) maintain from the beginning of your Letter to the end ; namely, that all Christians do sin, and cannot but sin, more or less, to their lives' end. Therefore I do not "artfully put this conclusion ;" but it is your own conclusion, from your own premises. Indeed were I artfully to put in anything in expounding the word of God, I must be an arrant knave. But I do not ; my conscience bears me witness, that I speak the very truth, so far as I know it, in simplicity and godly sincerity.

9. I think that all this time you are directly pleading for looseness of manners, and that everything you advance naturally tends thereto. This is my grand objection to that doctrine of the necessity of sinning : Not only that it is false, but that it is directly subversive of all holiness. The doctrine of the Gnostics was, not that a child of God does not commit sin, that is, act the things which are forbidden in Scripture, but that they are not sin in him, that he is a child of God still ; so they contend, not for sinless, but sinful, perfection ; just as different from what I contend for, as heaven is from hell. What the Donatists were, I do not know ; but I suspect they were the real Christians of that age ; and were therefore served by St. Augustine and his warm adherents, as the Methodists are now by their zealous adversaries. It is extremely easy to blacken ; and could I give myself leave, I could paint the consequences of your doctrine, in at least as dark and odious colours as you could paint mine.

10. The passage of St. Peter, mentioned Sermon XII., I still think proves all which I brought it to prove.

"But you allow, (Sermon XIV.,) that Paul and Barnabas did commit sin. And these were, without all controversy, fathers in Christ." That is not without controversy,—that either Barnabas when he left Paul, or Peter when he dissembled at Antioch, was at that time a father in Christ in St. John's sense ; though by office undoubtedly they were. Their example, therefore, only proves what no one denies, namely, that if a believer keeps not himself, he may commit sin. Would the conclusions here drawn "be made only by a very weak opponent ?" Then you are a weak opponent ; for you make

them all, either from these or other premises : For you believe and maintain, (1.) That all the other Apostles committed sin sometimes. (2.) That all the other Christians of the apostolic age sometimes committed sin. (3.) That all other Christians, in all ages, do and will commit sin as long as they live. And, (4.) That every man must commit sin, cannot help it, as long as he is in the body. You cannot deny one of these propositions, if you understand your own premises.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your affectionate brother,

J. WESLEY.

### SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LATE DR. DODD.

1. I HAVE been frequently desired to give some account of the conversations I had with Dr. Dodd. I could have done this more accurately some years ago, when they were fresh in my memory.\* However, I will now set down what I can recollect. And it may enable many who love to think for themselves to form an impartial judgment of one that has been so variously represented.

2. I had no knowledge of Dr. Dodd till he told that excellent woman, Mrs. Lefevre, that he was going to publish something against Mr. Wesley. She advised him to send it to me first. He did so, and was so far at least satisfied with my answer, that his treatise against Christian perfection never saw the light. This was about thirty years ago. And here our intercourse ended ; which indeed was very slight, as I had never seen him, either in private or public.

3. When he was imprisoned, he sent to me, desiring to see me. But I was not willing to go, supposing he only wanted me to intercede for him with great men ; which I judged would be lost labour. He sent a second time, but I did not go. The gentleman who brought the third message told me plainly, "Sir, I will not go without you." I then went with him to Wood-Street Compter, where the Doctor then was. The Keeper (an extremely well-behaved man) told me, "Sir, of all

\* Dr. Dodd was executed for forgery, June 27th, 1777 ; and this account was published in July, 1783.—EDIT.



the prisoners that have been in this place, I have not seen such a one as Dr. Dodd. I could trust him in any part of the house. Nay, he has gained the affection of even these wretches, my turnkeys." When I came into his room, and sat down by his bed-side, (for he had then a fever,) we were both of us silent for some time; till he began, "Sir, I have long desired to see you; but I little thought our first interview would be in such a place as this." I replied, "Sir, I am persuaded God saw this was the best, if not the only, way of bringing you to himself; and I trust it will have that happy effect." He said earnestly, "God grant it may! God grant it may!" We conversed about an hour; but I was agreeably disappointed. He spoke of nothing but his own soul, and appeared to regard nothing in comparison of it. So that I went away far better satisfied than I came.

4. A few days after, I saw him again: the day before he was removed to Newgate, in order to his trial, which was to be the day following. I then stayed but about half an hour. I found him in the same temper as before, affected as one in such circumstances ought to be; but withal, calm and composed. I asked, "Sir, do not you find it difficult to preserve your recollection, amidst all these lawyers and witnesses?" He answered, "It is difficult; but I have one sure hold,—'Lord, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'"

5. Being obliged to take a long journey, I did not see him again till after he had lost the hope of life; the sentence which had been referred to the twelve Judges having been confirmed by them. He was now in Newgate. Entering into that house of woe, I was utterly surprised: It was as quiet and still as a College in the University. It seemed as if even the felons were unwilling to disturb him. We conversed about an hour; but had not one word about any but spiritual things. I found his mind still quiet and composed; sorrowing, but not without hope. And I could not but observe, that all these times he never blamed any one but himself. He did not appear to have the least touch of resentment to any man, receiving everything as at the hand of God.

6. On Wednesday (two days before his death) I paid him one visit more. As we were talking, Mrs. Dodd came in; but when she came near him, she sunk down. He caught her in his arms, and carried her to a chair; but had such a command over himself, that his eyes only spoke, though without tears,

being afraid of adding to her distress. I now told him, "Sir, I think you do not ask enough, or expect enough, from God, your Saviour. The present blessing you may expect from him is, to be filled with all joy, as well as peace in believing." "O Sir," said he, "it is not for such a sinner as me to expect any joy in this world. The utmost I can desire is peace; and, through the mercy of God, that I have." We then spent a little time in prayer, and I solemnly commended him to God.

7. On Friday morning all the prisoners were gathered together, when he came down into the court. He seemed entirely composed. But when he observed most of them lifting up their hands, praying for him, blessing him, and weeping aloud, he was melted down, burst into tears too, and prayed God to bless them all. When he came out of the gate, an innumerable multitude were waiting, many of whom seemed ready to insult him. But the moment they saw him, their hearts were changed, and they began to bless him and pray for him too. A Clergyman, (Mr. P.,) being desirous to see the last of him, pressed on, though with much difficulty and danger, and kept near him quite to the place of execution. One of his fellow-prisoners seemed to be in utter despair. Dr. Dodd, forgetting himself, laboured to comfort him; and strongly applied the promises. After some time spent in prayer, he pulled his cap over his eyes; and, sinking down, seemed to die in a moment. I make no doubt, but in that moment the angels were ready to carry him into Abraham's bosom.

JOHN WESLEY.

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## THOUGHTS ON A SINGLE LIFE.\*

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1. THE forbidding to marry, as it is well known the Church of Rome does, and has done for several ages, (in which marriage is absolutely forbidden, not only to all religious orders, but to the whole body of the Clergy,) is numbered, by the great Apostle, among "the doctrines of devils." And

\* In the year 1743 Mr. Wesley published a small pamphlet under the title of, "Thoughts on Marriage and a Single Life." It was afterwards superseded by the tract now before the reader; which embodies the principal sentiments contained in the former publication.—EDIT.



among the same we need not scruple to number the despising or condemning marriage; as do many of those in the Romish Church who are usually termed Mystic writers. One of these does not scruple to affirm, "Marriage is only licensed fornication." But the Holy Ghost says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled." Nor can it be doubted but persons may be as holy in a married as in a single state.

2. In the latter clause of the sentence, the Apostle seems to guard against a mistake, into which some sincere Christians have fallen; particularly when they have just found such a liberty of spirit as they had not before experienced. They imagine a defilement where there is none, "and fear where no fear is." And it is possible this very fear of sin may betray them into sin. For it may induce persons to defraud each other, forgetting the express determination of the Apostle: "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife." (1 Cor. vii. 4.)

3. And yet we must not forget what the Apostle subjoins in the following verses: "I say to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them, if they abide even as I. Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But if thou marry, thou hast not sinned. Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh. I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit, that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction." (Verses 8, 27, 28, 32—35.)

4. But though "it is good for a man not to touch a woman," (verse 1,) yet this is not an universal rule. "I would," indeed, says the Apostle, "that all men were as myself." (Verse 7.) But that cannot be; for "every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, another after that." "If," then, "they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn." (Verse 9.) "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." Exactly agreeable to this are the words of our

Lord. When the Apostles said, "If the case be so, it is good not to marry; he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, who were so born from their mother's womb; there are some, who were made eunuchs by men; and there are eunuchs, who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." (Matt. xix. 10—12.)

5. But who is able to "receive this saying,"—to abstain from marriage, and yet not burn? It behoves every one here to judge for himself; none is called to judge for another. In general, I believe every man is able to receive it when he is first justified. I believe every one then receives this gift; but with most it does not continue long. Thus much is clear; it is a plain matter of fact, which no man can deny. It is not so clear, whether God withdraws it of his own good pleasure, or for any fault of ours. I incline to think, it is not withdrawn without some fault on our part. But, be that as it may, I have now only to do with those who are still able to "receive this saying."

6. To this happy few I say, (1.) Know the advantages you enjoy, many of which are pointed out by the Apostle himself. You may be without carefulness. You are under no necessity of "caring for the things of the world." You have only to "care for the things of the Lord, how you may please the Lord." One care alone lies upon you, how you "may be holy both in body and spirit."

You may "attend upon the Lord without distraction;" while others, like Martha, are cumbered with much serving, and drawn hither and thither by many things, you may remain centred in God, sitting, like Mary, at the Master's feet, and listening to every word of his mouth.

You enjoy a blessed liberty from the "trouble in the flesh," which must more or less attend a married state, from a thousand nameless domestic trials which are found, sooner or later, in every family. You are exempt from numberless occasions of sorrow and anxiety, with which heads of families are entangled; especially those who have sickly, or weak, or unhappy, or disobedient children. If your servants are wicked, you may put them away, and your relation to them ceases. But what could you do with a wicked son or daughter? How could you dissolve that relation?



Above all, you are at liberty from the greatest of all entanglements, the loving one creature above all others. It is possible to do this without sin, without any impeachment of our love to God. But how inconceivably difficult! to give God our whole heart, while a creature has so large a share of it! How much more easily may we do this, when the heart is, tenderly indeed, but equally attached to more than one; or, at least, without any great inequality! What angelic wisdom does it require to give enough of our affection, and not too much, to so near a relation!

And how much easier is it (just to touch on one point more) wholly to conquer our natural desires, than to gratify them exactly so far as Christian temperance allows! just so far as every pleasure of sense prepares us for taking pleasure in God.

7. You have leisure to improve yourself in every kind, to wait upon God in public and private, and to do good to your neighbour in various ways, as Christian prudence shall suggest; whereas those who are married are necessarily taken up with the things of the world. You may give all your time to God without interruption, and need ask leave of none but yourself so to do. You may employ every hour in what you judge to be the most excellent way. But if you was married, you may ask leave of your companion; otherwise what complaints or disgust would follow! And how hard is it even to know (how much more to act suitably to that knowledge) how far you ought to give way, for peace' sake, and where to stop! What wisdom is requisite, in order to know how far you can recede from what is most excellent, particularly with regard to conversation that is not "to the use of edifying," in order to please your good-natured or ill-natured partner, without displeasing God!

8. You may give all your worldly substance to God; nothing need hinder. You have no increasing family, you have no wife or children to provide for, which might occasion a thousand doubts, (without any extraordinary measure of divine light,) whether you had done either too much or too little for them. You may "make yourself friends of" all "the mammon of unrighteousness" which God entrusts you with; having none that has any right to complain, or to charge you with unkindness for so doing. You may lay out all your talents of every kind entirely for the glory of God;

as you have none else to please, none to regard, but Him that lived and died for you.

9. I say, Secondly, prize the advantages you enjoy; know the value of them. Esteem them as highly while you have them, as others do after they have lost them. Pray constantly and fervently for this very thing, that God would teach you to set a due value upon them. And let it be matter of daily thanksgiving to God, that he has made you a partaker of these benefits. Indeed, the more full and explicit you are herein, the more sensible you will be of the cause you have to be thankful; the more lively conviction you will have of the greatness of the blessing.

10. If you know and duly prize the advantages you enjoy, then, (3.) Be careful to keep them. But this (as easy as it may seem) it is impossible you should do by your own strength; so various, so frequent, and so strong, are the temptations which you will meet with to cast them away. Not only the children of the world, but the children of God, will undoubtedly tempt you thereto; and that partly by the most plausible reasons, partly by the most artful persuasions. Meantime, the old deceiver will not be wanting to give an edge to all those reasons and persuasions, and to recal the temptation again and again, and press it close upon your heart. You have need, therefore, to use every help: And the First of these is earnest prayer. Let no day pass without this, without praying for this very thing,—that God would work what with men is impossible; that he would vouchsafe to preserve his own gift, and that you may not suffer any loss this day, either by the subtlety or power of devils or men, or the deceitfulness of your own heart.

11. A Second help may be, the conversing frequently and freely with those of your own sex who are like-minded. It may be of infinite service to disclose to these the very secrets of your hearts; especially the weaknesses springing from your natural constitution, or education, or long-contracted habit, and the temptations which, from time to time, most easily beset you. Advise with them on every circumstance that occurs; open your heart without reserve. By this means a thousand devices of Satan will be brought to nought; innumerable snares will be prevented; or you will pass through them without being hurt. Yea, and if at some time you should have suffered a little, the wound will speedily be healed.



12. I say, *of your own sex*; for, in the Third place, it will be highly expedient to avoid all needless conversation, much more all intimacy, with those of the other sex; so expedient, that unless you observe this, you will surely cast away the gift of God. Say not, "But they have much grace and much understanding." So much the greater is the danger. There would be less fear of your receiving hurt from them, if they had less grace or less understanding. And whenever any of these are thrown in your way, "make a covenant with your eyes," your ears, your hands, that you do not indulge yourself in any that are called innocent freedoms. Above all, "keep your heart with all diligence." Check the first risings of desire. Watch against every sally of imagination, particularly if it be pleasing. If it is darted in, whether you will or no, yet, let no "vain thought lodge within you." Cry out, "My God and my all, I am thine, thine alone! I will be thine for ever! O save me from setting up an idol in my heart! Save me from taking any step toward it. Still bring my 'every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.'"

13. "But how shall I attain to, or how preserve, this strength and firmness of spirit?" In order to this, I advise you, Fourthly, (need I say, to avoid the sin of Onan, seeing Satan will not cast out Satan? or rather) avoid with the utmost care, all softness and effeminacy; remembering the express denunciation of an inspired writer, *οι μαλακοι*, the *soft* or *effeminate*, whether poor or rich, (the Apostle does not make any difference upon that account,) "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Avoid all delicacy, first in spirit, then in apparel, food, lodging, and a thousand nameless things; and this the more speedily and the more resolutely, if you have been long accustomed thereto. Avoid all needless self-indulgence, as well as delicacy and softness. All these tend to breed or cherish those appetites and passions which you have renounced for Christ's sake. They either create or increase those desires which, "for the kingdom of heaven's sake," you are determined not to gratify. Avoid all sloth, inactivity, indolence. Sleep no more than nature requires. Be never idle; and use as much bodily exercise as your strength will allow. I dare not add Monsieur Pascal's rule,—Avoid all pleasure. It is not possible to avoid all pleasure, even of sense, without destroying the body. Neither doth God require it at our hands; it is not his will concerning us. On

the contrary, he "giveth us all things to enjoy," so we enjoy them to his glory. But I say, avoid all that pleasure which anyway hinders you from enjoying him; yea, all such pleasure as does not prepare you for taking pleasure in God. Add to this constant and continued course of universal self-denial, the taking up your cross daily, the enduring "hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Remember, "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." This is the way; walk therein; think not of a smother path. Add to your other exercises constant and prudent fasting, and the Lord will uphold you with his hand.

14. I advise you, Lastly, if you desire to keep them, use all the advantages you enjoy. Indeed, without this, it is utterly impossible to keep them; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken the word which cannot be broken, which must be fulfilled with regard to all the good gifts of God: "To him that hath," uses what he hath, "shall be given; and he shall have more abundantly: But from him that hath not," uses it not, "shall be taken even that which he hath." Would you therefore retain what you now have, what God hath already given? If so, "giving all diligence," use it to the uttermost. "Stand fast in" every instance of "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free." Be not "entangled" again in the "cares of this life;" but "cast all your care on Him that careth for you. Be careful for nothing, but in everything make your requests known unto God with thanksgiving."

See that you "wait upon the Lord without distraction:" Let nothing move you from your centre. "One thing is needful;" to see, love, follow Christ, in every thought, word, and work.

Flee the "sorrow of this world;" it "worketh death." Let not your heart be troubled. In all circumstances, let your soul magnify the Lord, and your spirit rejoice in God your Saviour. Preserve a constant serenity of mind, an even cheerfulness of spirit.

Keep at the utmost distance from foolish desires, from desiring any happiness but in God. Still let all your "desire be to him, and to the remembrance of his name."

Make full use of all the leisure you have; never be unemployed, never triflingly employed; let every hour turn to some good account. Let not a scrap of time be squandered away; "gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost." Give all your time to God; lay out the whole as you judge



will be most to his glory. In particular, see that you waste no part of it in unprofitable conversation ; but let all your discourse “be seasoned with salt, and meet to minister grace to the hearers.”

Give all your money to God. You have no pretence for laying up treasure upon earth. While you “gain all you can,” and “save all you can,” “give all you can,” that is, all you have.

Lay out your talents of every kind in doing all good to all men ; knowing that “every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.”

15. Upon the whole, without disputing whether the married or single life be the more perfect state, (an idle dispute ; since perfection does not consist in any outward state whatever, but in an absolute devotion of all our heart and all our life to God,) we may safely say, Blessed are “they who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake ;” who abstain from things lawful in themselves, in order to be more devoted to God. Let these never forget those remarkable words : “Peter said, Lo, we have left all and followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you,” (a preface denoting both the certainty and importance of what is spoken,) “There is no man that hath left” (either by giving them up, or by not accepting them) “house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time ; and in the world to come eternal life.” (Mark x. 28—30.)

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## A THOUGHT UPON MARRIAGE.

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If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

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1. I AM not now about to speak to men of the world, or to them that have only the form of religion ; but to you who have experienced, if you do not now, the “faith which worketh by love :” And, in speaking to you, I do not peremptorily

assert anything. I barely propose a thought that rises in my mind, and beg you to consider it.

2. You have some thoughts of altering your condition; and we know, "marriage is honourable in all men." But is your eye single herein? This is worthy your most serious consideration. Retire a little into yourself, and ask your own heart: "What is it moves me to think of this?"

3. I will tell you how it was with me: Though I do not know I was ever low-spirited, (my spirits being always the same, whether in sickness or in health,) yet I was often uneasy. Even in vigorous health, in plenty, and in the midst of my friends, I wanted something; I was not satisfied. I looked about for happiness, but could not find it. Then I thought, "O, if I had but such a person with me, I should surely be happy." I mused with myself, "How lovely is her look! How agreeably she talks!" I thought of Sappho's words:—

"Bless'd as the' immortal gods is he,  
The youth that fondly sits by thee;  
And hears and sees thee all the while  
Softly speak and sweetly smile."

"Surely, this is the very thing I want; and could I attain it, I should then no more be solitary! For,—

Thou from all shades the darkness wouldst exclude,  
And from a desert banish solitude:

Therefore, with her I can be happy; without her I never can."

4. Perhaps your case is something like mine. Let me then ask you a few questions.

Were you ever convinced of sin? of your lost, undone state? Did you feel the wrath of God abiding on you? If so, what did you then want to make you happy? "To know, my God is reconciled." You had your wish. You were enabled to say boldly, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." And were not you then happy? "Indeed I was." In what? In the knowledge and love of God.

5. And if you have now the same knowledge and love of God, does it not answer the same end? Will not the same cause still produce the same effect? If, therefore, you are not happy now, is it not because you have not that intercourse with God which you then had? And are you seeking to supply the want of that intercourse by the enjoyment of a creature? You imagine that



near connexion with a woman will make amends for distance from God! Have you so learned Christ? Has your experience taught you no better than this?

6. You were happy once; you knew you were; happy in God, without being beholden to any creature. You did not need

Love's all-sufficient sea to raise  
With drops of creature-happiness.

And is it wise to seek it now anywhere else than where you found it before? You have not the same excuse with those who never were happy in God. And how little is the seeking it in any creature better than idolatry! Is it not, in effect, loving the creature more than the Creator? Does it not imply that you are "a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God?"

7. O return to Him that made you happy before, and He will make you happy again. Repeat your prayer,—

"Keep me dead to all below;  
Only Christ resolved to know:  
Firm, and disengaged, and free;  
Seeking all my bliss in thee!"

Seek, accept of nothing in the room of, God. Let all the springs of your happiness be in him. "Seek first," just as you did before, "the kingdom of God and his righteousness;" the knowledge and love of God; "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ;" "and all other things shall be added unto you;" particularly joy in the Holy Ghost. Again,—

Know God, and teach thy soul to know  
The joys that from religion flow:  
Then every grace shall be thy guest,  
And peace be there to crown the rest.

JOHN WESLEY

LISBURN, *June 11, 1785.*

A D V I C E  
TO  
THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS,  
WITH REGARD TO DRESS.

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I. 1. I AM not fond of saying the same thing over and over ; especially when I have so many things to say, that the day of life (which with me is far spent) is not likely to suffice for them. But, in some cases, it is needful for you that I should ; and then it is not grievous to me. And it may be best to speak freely and fully at once, that there may be the less need of speaking on this head hereafter.

2. When we look into the Bible with any attention, and then look round into the world, to see who believes and who lives according to this book ; we may easily discern that the system of practice, as well as the system of truth, there delivered, is torn in pieces, and scattered abroad, like the members of Absyrtus. Every denomination of Christians retains some part either of Christian truth or practice ; these hold fast one part, and those another, as their fathers did before them. What is the duty, meantime, of those who desire to follow the whole word of God ? Undoubtedly, to "gather up" all these "fragments," that, if possible, "nothing be lost ;" with all diligence to follow all those we see about us, so far as they follow the Bible ; and to join together in one scheme of truth and practice what almost all the world put asunder.

3. Many years ago I observed several parts of Christian practice among the people called Quakers. Two things I particularly remarked among them,—plainness of speech, and plainness of dress. I willingly adopted both, with some restrictions, and particularly plainness of dress ; the same I recommended to you, when God first called you out of the world ; and after the addition of more than twenty years' experience, I recommend it to you still.



4. But before I go any farther, I must entreat you, in the name of God, be open to conviction. Whatever prejudices you have contracted from education, custom, or example, divest yourselves of them, as far as possible. Be willing to receive light either from God or man; do not shut your eyes against it. Rather, be glad to see more than you did before; to "have the eyes of your understanding opened." Receive the truth in the love thereof, and you will have reason to bless God for ever.

II. 1. Not that I would advise you to imitate the people called Quakers in those little particularities of dress which can answer no possible end but to distinguish them from all other people. To be singular, merely for singularity's sake, is not the part of a Christian: I do not, therefore, advise you to wear a hat of such dimensions, or a coat of a particular form. Rather, in things that are absolutely indifferent, that are of no consequence at all, humility and courtesy require you to conform to the customs of your country.

2. But I advise you to imitate them, First, in the neatness of their apparel. This is highly to be commended, and quite suitable to your Christian calling. Let all your apparel, therefore, be as clean as your situation in life will allow. It is certain the poor cannot be as clean as they would, as having little change of raiment. But let even these be as clean as they can, as care and diligence can keep them. Indeed, they have particular need so to be; because cleanliness is one great branch of frugality. It is likewise more conducive to health than is generally considered. Let the poor, then, especially labour to be clean, and provoke those of higher rank to jealousy.

3. I advise you to imitate them, Secondly, in the plainness of their apparel. In this are implied two things: (1.) That your apparel be cheap, not expensive; far cheaper than others in your circumstances wear, or than you would wear, if you knew not God: (2.) That it be grave, not gay, airy, or showy; not in the point of the fashion. And these easy rules may be applied both to the materials whereof it is made, and the manner wherein it is made or put on.

4. Would you have a farther rule with respect to both? Then take one, which you may always carry in your bosom: "Do everything herein with a single eye;" and this will direct you in every circumstance. Let a single intention to

please God prescribe both what clothing you shall buy, and the manner wherein it shall be made, and how you shall put on and wear it. To express the same thing in other words: Let all you do, in this respect, be so done that you may offer it to God, a sacrifice acceptable through Christ Jesus; so that, consequently, it may increase your reward and brighten your crown in heaven. And so it will do, if it be agreeable to Christian humility, seriousness, and charity.

5. Shall I be more particular still? Then I "exhort all those who desire me to watch over their souls," Wear no gold, (whatever Officers of State may do; or Magistrates, as the ensign of their office,) no pearls, or precious stones; use no curling of hair, or costly apparel, how grave soever. I advise those who are able to receive this saying, Buy no velvets, no silks, no fine linen, no superfluities, no mere ornaments, though ever so much in fashion. Wear nothing, though you have it already, which is of a glaring colour, or which is in any kind gay, glistening, or showy; nothing made in the very height of the fashion, nothing apt to attract the eyes of the by-standers. I do not advise women to wear rings, ear-rings, necklaces, lace, (of whatever kind or colour,) or ruffles, which, by little and little, may easily shoot out from one to twelve inches deep. Neither do I advise men to wear coloured waistcoats, shining stockings, glittering or costly buckles or buttons, either on their coats, or in their sleeves, any more than gay, fashionable, or expensive perukes. It is true, these are little, very little things, which are not worth defending; therefore, give them up, let them drop, throw them away without another word; else, a little needle may cause much pain in your flesh, a little self-indulgence much hurt to your soul.

III. 1. For the preceding exhortation I have the authority of God, in clear and express terms: "I will that women" (and, by parity of reason, men too) "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered" (curled) "hair, or gold, or pearls," (one kind of precious stones, which was then most in use, put for all,) "or costly apparel; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." (1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.) Again: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting" (curling) "the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the ornament of a meek



and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." (1 Peter iii. 3, 4.) Nothing can be more express; the wearing of gold, of precious stones, and of costly apparel, together with curling of hair, is here forbidden by name: Nor is there any restriction made, either here, or in any other scripture. Whoever, therefore, says, "There is no harm in these things," may as well say, "There is no harm in stealing or adultery."

2. There is something peculiarly observable in the manner wherein both St. Peter and St. Paul speak of these things. "Let not your adorning," says St. Peter, "be that outward adorning; but let it be the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." The latter clause is not added barely to fill up the sentence, but with strong and weighty reason. For there is a direct contrariety (as little as we may suspect it) between that outward, and this inward, adorning; and that, both with regard to their source, and with regard to their tendency. As to their source, all that adorning springs from nature; a meek and quiet spirit, from grace; the former, from conforming to our own will, and the will of man; the latter, from conformity to the will of God. And as to their tendency, nothing more directly tends to destroy meekness and quietness of spirit than all that outward adorning; whereby we seek to commend ourselves to men, and not to God. For this cherishes all those passions and tempers which overthrow the quiet of every soul wherein they dwell.

3. Let "them adorn themselves," saith St. Paul, "not with curling of hair, or with gold, pearls, or costly apparel; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." The latter clause is here likewise added for plain and weighty reasons. For, (1.) That kind of adorning cannot spring from godliness; from either the love or fear of God; from a desire of conforming to his will, or from the mind which was in Christ Jesus. (2.) It noway tends to increase godliness; it is not conducive to any holy temper. But, (3.) It manifestly tends to destroy several of the tempers most essential to godliness. It has no friendly influence on humility; whether we aim at pleasing others or ourselves hereby. Either in one case or the other, it will rather increase pride or vanity than lowliness of heart. It does not at all minister to the seriousness which becomes a sinner born to die. It is utterly inconsistent with simplicity; no

one uses it merely to please God. Whoever acts with a single eye, does all things to be seen and approved of God; and can no more dress, than he can pray, or give alms, "to be seen of men."

4. "O, but one may be as humble in velvet and embroidery, as another is in sackcloth." True; for a person may wear sackcloth, and have no humility at all. The heart may be filled with pride and vanity, whatever the raiment be. Again: Women under the yoke of unbelieving parents or husbands, as well as men in office, may, on several occasions, be constrained to put on gold or costly apparel; and in cases of this kind, plain experience shows, that the baleful influence of it is suspended. So that wherever it is not our choice, but our cross, it may consist with godliness, with a meek and quiet spirit, with lowliness of heart, with Christian seriousness. But it is not true that any one can choose this from a single eye to please God; or, consequently, without sustaining great loss as to lowliness and every other Christian temper.

5. But, however this be, can you be adorned at the same time with costly apparel and with good works; that is, in the same degree as you might have been, had you bestowed less cost on your apparel? You know this is impossible; the more you expend on the one, the less you have to expend on the other. Costliness of apparel, in every branch, is therefore immediately, directly, inevitably destructive of good works. You see a brother, for whom Christ died, ready to perish for want of needful clothing. You would give it him gladly; but, alas, "it is corban, whereby he might have been profited." It is given already, not indeed for the service of God, not to the treasury of the temple; but either to please the folly of others, or to feed vanity or the lust of the eye in yourself. Now (even suppose these were harmless tempers, yet) what an unspeakable loss is this, if it be really true, that "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour!" if there be indeed a reward in heaven for every work of faith, for every degree of the labour of love!

IV. 1. As to the advice subjoined, it is easy to observe, that all those smaller things are, in their degree, liable to the same objections as the greater. If they are gay, showy, pleasing to the eye, the putting them on does not spring



from a single view to please God. It neither flows from, nor tends to advance, a meek and quiet spirit. It does not arise from, nor anyway promote, real, vital godliness.

2. And if they are in anywise costly, if they are purchased with any unnecessary expense, they cannot but, in proportion to that expense, be destructive of good works. Of consequence, they are destructive of that charity which is fed thereby; hardening our heart against the cry of the poor and needy, by inuring us to shut up our bowels of compassion toward them.

3. At least, all unnecessary expenses of this kind, whether small or great, are senseless and foolish. This we may defy any man living to get over, if he allows there is another world. For there is no reward in heaven for laying out your money in ornaments, or costly apparel; whereas you may have an eternal reward for whatever you expend on earth.

4. Consider this more closely: Here are two ways proposed of laying out such a sum of money. I may lay it out in expensive apparel for myself, or in necessary clothing for my neighbour. The former will please my own eye, or that of others; the latter will please God. Now suppose there were no more harm in one than in the other; in that which pleases man, than in that which pleases God; is there as much good in it? If they were equally innocent, are they equally wise? By the one, I gratify the desire of the eye, and gain a pleasure that perishes in the using; by the other I gain a larger share of those pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore. By the former, I obtain the applause of men; by the latter, the praise of God. In this way I meet with the admiration of fools; in that, I hear from the Judge of all, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

5. Brethren, whatever ye are accounted by men, I would not have you fools in God's account. "Walk ye circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise;" not in those ways which God may possibly forgive, (to put things in the most favourable light,) but in those which he will certainly reward. "In wickedness be ye children" still; "but in understanding be ye men." I want to see a visible body of people who are standing examples of this wisdom; patterns of doing all things, great and small, with an eye to God and eternity.

V. 1. But we may be assured, the wisdom of the world will find out abundance of objections to this. Accordingly, it is objected, First, "If God has given us plentiful fortunes, if we are placed in the higher ranks of life, we must act suitably to our fortune. We ought to dress according to our rank; that is, in gold and costly apparel." Not to insist that none of you are of this rank, I answer, Where is this written? Our Saviour once occasionally said, "Behold, they who wear gorgeous" (splendid) "apparel, are in Kings' courts;" but he does not say, they ought to be even there; he neither enjoins nor countenances it. And where is this either enjoined or allowed by Him or any of his Apostles? Bring me plain, scriptural proof for your assertion, or I cannot allow it.

2. "But did not God give express command by Moses, that some even among his chosen people should be adorned in the most exquisite manner with gold and precious stones, and costly array?" Indeed he did; he expressly commanded this with regard to Aaron and his successors in the High Priesthood. But to this I answer, First, This direction which God gave, with regard to the Jewish High Priest, can certainly affect no person in England, unless the Archbishop of Canterbury; and I apprehend, he does not plead the precedent. Secondly, The Jews and we are under different dispensations. The glory of the whole Mosaic dispensation was chiefly visible and external; whereas the glory of the Christian dispensation is of an invisible and spiritual nature.

3. "But what then are gold and precious stones for? Why have they a place in the creation?" What, if I say I cannot tell? There are abundance of things in the creation which I do not know the use of. What are crocodiles, lions, tigers, scorpions for? Why have so many poisons a place in the creation? Some of them are for medicine: But whatever they are for, in whatever manner they may be useful, they are certainly not to be used in such a manner as God has expressly forbidden.

4. "But if they were not thus adorned, Kings and Generals would be despised by their subjects and soldiers." Supposing they would, that is nothing to you; for you are neither Kings nor Generals. But it is absolutely certain they would not, if they were not despised on other accounts. If they are valiant and wise, they will never be despised for



the plainness of their dress. Was ever General or King more esteemed or beloved by his subjects and soldiers than King Charles of Sweden? And it is sure he wore no gold or costly apparel, not so much as a common Officer. But we need not go so many years back. Who is the Prince that is now honoured and beloved both by his subjects and soldiers, far beyond any other King or General in Europe? There is no need to repeat his name. But does he gain this honour and love by the costliness of his apparel? So far from it, that he rarely uses any other dress than the uniform of his own guards.

5. "But if all men were to dress like him, how would tradesmen live?" I answer, (1.) God certainly considered this before ever he gave these commands. And he would never have given them, had he not seen, that, if they were universally observed, men in general would live better than they otherwise could; better in this world, as well as that to come. But, (2.) There is no danger at all that they should be universally observed. Only a little flock in any civilized nation will observe them, till the knowledge of God covers the earth. (3.) If those who do observe them, employ the money they thus save in the most excellent manner, then a part of what before only served to fat a few rich tradesmen for hell, will suffice to feed and clothe and employ many poor that seek the kingdom of heaven. (4.) "And how will those tradesmen themselves live?" They will live like men, by honest labour; most of whom before lived like swine, wallowing in all gluttony and sensuality. But, (5.) This is all mere trifling. It is only a copy of your countenance; for it is not this, it is not a regard to trade, or the good of the nation, that makes you disobey God. No; it is pride, vanity, or some other sinful temper, which is the real cause of these sinful actions.

6. "But we cannot carry on our own trade without dressing like other people." If you mean only conforming to those customs of your country that are neither gay nor costly, why should you not dress like other people? I really think you should. Let an Englishman dress like other Englishmen, not like a Turk or a Tartar. Let an English woman dress like other English women, not like a French woman, or a German. But if you mean conformity to them in what God has forbidden, the answer is ready at hand: If

you cannot carry on your trade without breaking God's command, you must not carry it on. But I doubt the fact; I know no trade which may not be carried on by one who uses plain and modest apparel. I fear, therefore, this too is but a copy of your countenance; you love these things, and therefore think them necessary. Your heart carries away your judgment; if you were not fond of them, you would never dream of their necessity.

7. In one single case these things may be necessary, that is, unavoidable; namely, that of women who are under the yoke of self-willed, unreasonable husbands or parents. Such may be constrained to do, in some degree, what otherwise they would not. And they are blameless herein, if, (1.) They use all possible means, arguments, entreaties, to be excused from it; and, when they cannot prevail, (2.) Do it just so far as they are constrained, and no farther.

VI. 1. And now, brethren, what remains, but that I beseech you who are not under the yoke, who are under God the directors of your own actions, to set prejudice, obstinacy, fashion aside, and to yield to Scripture, to reason, to truth. Suppose, as some affirm, you acted on no higher motive than to please me herein, I know not that you would have need to be ashamed; even this you might avow in the face of the sun. You owe something to me; perhaps it is not my fault if you owe not your own souls also. If then you did an indifferent thing only on this principle, not to give me any uneasiness, but to oblige, to comfort me in my labour, would you do much amiss? How much more may you be excused in doing what I advise, when truth, reason, and Scripture advise the same? when the thing in question is not an indifferent thing, but clearly determined by God himself?

2. Some years ago, when I first landed at Savannah, in Georgia, a gentlewoman told me, "I assure you, Sir, you will see as well-dressed a congregation on Sunday, as most you have seen in London." I did so; and, soon after, took occasion to expound those scriptures which relate to dress, and to press them freely upon my audience, in a plain and close application. All the time that I afterward ministered at Savannah, I saw neither gold in the church, nor costly apparel; but the congregation in general was almost constantly clothed in plain, clean linen or woollen.

3. And why should not my advice, grounded on Scripture



and reason, weigh with you as much as with them? I will tell you why: (1.) You are surrounded with saints of the world, persons fashionably, reputably religious. And these are constant opposers of all who would go farther in religion than themselves. These are continually warning you against running into extremes, and striving to beguile you from the simplicity of the Gospel. (2.) You have near you still more dangerous enemies than these,—Antinomians, whether German or English; who, when any Christian practice is enforced, come in with the cuckoo's note, "The law, the law!" and, while they themselves glory in their shame, make you ashamed of what should be your glory. (3.) You have suffered by false Teachers of our own, who undermined the doctrine you had received; negatively, in public, by not insisting upon it, by not exhorting you to dress as persons professing godliness; (and not to speak for a Christian duty is, in effect, to speak against it;) and positively, in private, either by jesting upon your exactness in observing the Scripture rule, or by insinuations, which, if you did not mind them then, yet would afterward weaken your soul.

4. You have been, and are at this day, "in perils among false brethren;" I mean, not only those of other congregations, who count strictness all one with bondage, but many of our own; in particular those who were once clearly convinced of the truth; but they have sinned away the conviction themselves, and now endeavour to harden others against it, at least by example; by returning again to the folly from which they were once clean escaped. But what is the example of all mankind, when it runs counter to Scripture and reason? I have warned you a thousand times not to regard any example which contradicts reason or Scripture. If it ever should be, (pray that it may not be, but if ever it should,) that I or my brother, my wife or his, or all of us together, should set an example contrary to Scripture and reason, I entreat you, regard it not at all; still let Scripture and reason prevail.

5. You who have passed the morning, perhaps the noon, of life, who find the shadows of the evening approach, set a better example to those that are to come, to the now rising generation. With you the day of life is far spent; the night of death is at hand. You have no time to lose; see that you redeem every moment that remains. Remove

everything out of the way, be it ever so small, (though indeed gay or costly apparel is not so,) that might anyways obstruct your lowliness and meekness, your seriousness of spirit, your single intention to glorify God, in all your thoughts and words and actions. Let no needless expense hinder your being, in the highest degree you possibly can, "rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate," till you are clothed with glory and immortality.

Our carcases will soon fall into the dust; then let the survivors adorn them with flowers. Meantime, let us regard those ornaments only that will accompany us into eternity.

6. You that are in the morning of your days, either your form is agreeable, or it is not. If it is not, do not make your person remarkable; rather let it lie hid in common apparel. On every account, it is your wisdom to recommend yourself to the eye of the mind; but especially to the eye of God, who reads the secrets of your hearts, and in whose sight the incorruptible ornaments alone are of great price. But if you would recommend yourself by dress, is anything comparable to plain neatness? What kind of persons are those to whom you could be recommended by gay or costly apparel? None that are any way likely to make you happy; this pleases only the silliest and worst of men. At most, it gratifies only the silliest and worst principle in those who are of a nobler character.

7. To you, whom God has entrusted with a more pleasing form, those ornaments are quite needless:

The' adorning thee with so much art

Is but a barbarous skill;

'Tis like the poisoning of a dart,

Too apt before to kill.

That is, to express ourselves in plain English, without any figure of poetry, it only tends to drag them into death everlasting, who were going fast enough before, by additional provocations to lust, or, at least, inordinate affection. Did you actually design to raise either of these in those who looked upon you? What! while you and they were in the more immediate presence of God? What profaneness and inhumanity mixed together! But if you designed it not, did you not foresee it? You might have done so without any extraordinary sagacity. "Nay, I did not care or think



about it." And do you say this by way of excuse? You "scatter abroad arrows, firebrands, and death," and do not care or think about it!

8. O let us walk more charitably and more wisely for the time to come! Let us all cast aside, from this very hour, whatever does not become men and women professing godliness; whatever does not spring from the love and fear of God, and minister thereto. Let our seriousness "shine before men," not our dress. Let all who see us know that we are not of this world. Let our adorning be that which fadeth not away; even righteousness and true holiness. If ye regard not weakening my hands, and grieving my spirit, yet grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. Do you ask, "But what shall I do with the gay or costly apparel, and with the ornaments, I have already? Must I suffer them to be lost? Ought I not to wear them, now I have them?" I answer, There is no loss like that of using them; wearing them is the greatest loss of all. But what then shalt thou do with them? Burn them, rather than wear them; throw them in the depth of the sea. Or, if thou canst with a clear conscience, sell them, and give the money to them that want; but buy no more at the peril of thy soul. Now be a faithful steward: After providing for those of thine own household, things needful for life and godliness, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the sick, the prisoner, the stranger, with all that thou hast: Then shall God clothe thee with glory and honour in the presence of men and angels; and thou shalt "shine as the brightness of the firmament," yea, "as the stars for ever and ever."

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## THOUGHTS UPON DRESS.

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LOUD complaint has been made concerning a passage taken out of a little tract, entitled, "The Refined Courtier," which is inserted in the last April Magazine, page 197.\* The passage objected to runs thus: "Let every one, when he appears in public, be decently clothed, according to his age, and the custom of the place where he lives." There is no

\* The Arminian Magazine for 1788.—EDIT.

fault in this. It is exactly right. Accordingly, when I appear in public, I am decently appareled, according to my age and the custom of England; sometimes in a short coat, sometimes in a night-gown, sometimes in a gown and cassock. "He that does otherwise, seems to affect singularity." And though a Christian frequently may, yea, must, be singular, yet he never affects singularity; he only takes up his cross so far as conscience requires. Thus far, then, there is nothing which is not capable of a fair construction. "Nor is it sufficient that our garment be made of good cloth," (the author speaks all along of people of rank; particularly those that attend the Court,) "but we should constrain ourselves to follow the garb where we reside," suppose at St. James's. "Seeing custom is the law and standard of decency, in all things of this nature." It certainly is; and I advise all the King's Lords of the Bedchamber, the Queen's Maids of Honour, to follow it. All this, therefore, may bear a sound construction; nor does it contradict anything which I have said or written.

JOHN WESLEY.

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## A LETTER

TO

THE REV. MR. THOMAS MAXFIELD.

OCCASIONED BY A LATE PUBLICATION.

[PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1778.]

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I WAS a little surprised to read, in a late publication of yours, the following assertions:—

1. Thomas Maxfield was "some of the first-fruits of Mr. Whitefield's ministry." (Page 18.)
2. "When he went abroad, he delivered me, and many thousands more, into the hands of those he thought he could have trusted them with, and who would have given *them back to him* again at his return. But, alas! it was not so." (*Ibid.*)



"I heard Mr. Whitefield say, at the Tabernacle, in the presence of five or six Ministers, to Mr. —, a little before he left England for the last time, 'I delivered thirty thousand people into the hands of your brother and you, when I went abroad. And by the time I came back, you had so turned their hearts against me, that not three hundred of them would come to hear me.' I knew this was true." (*Ibid.*)

3. "I heard Mr. Whitefield say, 'When I came back from Georgia, there was no speaking evil of each other. O what would I not give, or suffer, or do, to see such times again! But O that division! that division! What slaughter it has made!'

"It was doctrine that caused the difference; or, at least, it was so pretended." (*Ibid.*)

"He preached a few times in connexion with his old friends. But, ah! how soon was the sword of contention drawn!" (Page 19.)

4. "Where can you now find any loving ones, of *either* party? They have no more love to each other than Turks." (*Ibid.*)

"Read their vile contentions, and the evil characters they give of each other, raking the filthiest ashes, to find some black story against their fellow-Preachers." (Page 20.)

They "slay with the sword of bitterness, wrath, and envy. Still more their shame is what they have sent out into the world against each other, on *both sides*, about five or six years ago, and till this very day." (Page 21.)

To satisfy both friends and foes, I propose a few queries on each of these four heads.

I. As to the first, I read a remarkable passage in the third Journal, (vol. I., page 196,) the truth of which may be still attested by Mr. Durbin, Mr. Westell, and several others then present, who are yet alive:—"A young man who stood behind, sunk down, as one dead; but soon began to roar out, and beat himself against the ground, so that six men could scarce hold him. This was Thomas Maxfield." Was this *you*? If it was, how are you "the first-fruits of Mr. Whitefield's ministry?" And how is it, that neither I, nor your fellow-labourers, ever heard one word of this during all those years wherein you laboured in connexion with us?

II. "When he went abroad again, he delivered me, and many thousands, into the hands of Mr. —."

When? where? in what manner? This is quite new to me! I never heard one word of it before!

But stay! here is something more curious still! "I heard Mr. Whitefield say, at the Tabernacle, in the presence of five or six Ministers, a little before he left England the last time, 'I delivered thirty thousand people into the hands of you and your brother when I went abroad.'"

Mr. Whitefield's going abroad, which is here referred to, was in the year 1741. Did he then deliver *you* into my hands? Was you not in my hands before? Had you not then, for above a year, been a member of the society under my care? Nay, was you not, at the very time, one of *my* Preachers? Did you not *then* serve me as a son in the Gospel? Did you not eat my bread, and lodge in my house? Is not this then a total misrepresentation? Would to God it be not a wilful one!

"I heard," you say, "Mr. Whitefield say, at the Tabernacle, in the presence of five or six Ministers, a little before he left England the last time:"—Who then can doubt the truth of what follows? For here is chapter and verse! Here both the time, the place, and the persons present, are specified. And they ought to be; seeing the crime alleged is one of a very heinous nature. Many a man has been justly sentenced to death for sins which, in the sight of God, were not equal to this. The point, therefore, requires a little more examination. And, first, I desire to know what are the names of those five or six Ministers? and which of them heard Mr. Whitefield say, "When I went abroad (in 1741,) I delivered thirty thousand people into the hands of you and your brother?" Thirty thousand people! Whence did they come? Did they spring out of the earth? Why, there were not, at that time, five thousand Methodists in England, or in the world. The societies in London, Bristol, and Kingswood, (the only ones I had,) contained fourteen or fifteen hundred members. I believe not so many were in *his* societies. But were they fewer, or more, they were nothing to *me*. He never entrusted *me* with them. He never delivered into mine, or my brother's hands, either his society at the Tabernacle in London, or that in Bristol, or in Kingswood, or any other place whatever. He never delivered (that I remember) one single society into my hands. I bless God, I needed it not. I



did not need to build upon another man's foundation. A dispensation of the Gospel was given me also; and my labour was not in vain. I was constrained to cry out (and you yourself used the same words to God in my behalf),—

“O the fathomless love  
Which has deign'd to approve  
And prosper the work of my hands !  
With my pastoral crook  
I went over the brook,  
And, behold ! I am spread into bands ! ”

With what view then can you charge me with that perfidy, which I am no more guilty of than of high treason? For what end can you affirm, “When he went abroad, he delivered many thousands into the hands of those he thought he could have trusted them with?” Delivered! when? where? how? What can you mean? I flatly deny that ever he delivered one thousand, or one hundred, souls into *my* hands. Do you mean, “He spoke honourably of you to them at Kennington-common and Rose-green?” True: But not so honourably as I spoke of *you*, even at London; yea, as late as the year 1763! Yet was this the same thing with “delivering the people” at London “into your hands?” Nay, but “Mr. Whitefield trusted that you would have given them back at his return.” Them! whom? His society at London, or Bristol? I had them not to give. He never entrusted me with them. Therefore I could not “give them back.”

But how melancholy is the exclamation that follows: “Alas! It was not so!” Was not how? Why, I did not give back what I never had received; but went straight on my way, taking the best care I could of those who *entrusted themselves* to me.

III. So much for the second article. As to the third, your words are, “I heard Mr. Whitefield say, ‘O that division! that division! what slaughter it has made!’”

But who made that division? It was not I. It was not my brother. It was Mr. Whitefield himself; and that notwithstanding all admonitions, arguments, and entreaties. Mr. Whitefield first wrote a treatise against me by name. He sent it to my brother, who endorsed it with these words: “Put up again thy sword into its place.” It slept a while; but after a time he published it. I made no reply. Soon

after Mr. Whitefield preached against my brother and me by name. This he did constantly, both in Moorfields, and in all other public places. We never returned railing for railing, but spoke honourably of him, at all times, and in all places. But is it any wonder, that those who loved us should no longer choose to hear him? Meantime, was it *we* that "turned their hearts against him?" Was it not *himself*?

But you say, "It was doctrine that caused the difference;" (oddly enough expressed!) "at least, it was so pretended!" "It was so pretended!" What do you mean? that difference of doctrine was only *pretended*? that we were agreed at the bottom, and only fought, like prize-fighters, to show our skill? Nay, here was no pretence. The thing was as plain as the sun at noon-day. Did not Mr. Whitefield proclaim, upon the house-top, the difference between us and him? And yet it was not merely the difference of doctrine that caused the division. It was rather the *manner* wherein he maintained his doctrine, and treated us in every place. Otherwise difference of doctrine would not have created any difference of affection; but he might lovingly have held particular redemption, and we general, to our lives' end.

He did indeed "preach a few times in connexion with his old friends; but how soon was the sword of contention drawn!" By whom? Truly, by himself. Do not you know, (thousands do, if you do not,) that when he preached in the very Foundery, and my brother sat by him, he preached the absolute decrees in the most peremptory and offensive manner? What was this, but drawing the sword and throwing away the scabbard? Who then is chargeable with the contention and division that ensued?

IV. "But where," you ask, "can you now find any loving ones of either party?" Blessed be God, I can find many thousands, both in London, in Bristol, in Kingswood, and in various parts, not only of England, but also of Scotland and Ireland; persons as full of love, both to God and man, as any I knew forty years ago.

Some of these I find (and much rejoice to find) in Mr. Whitefield's societies. And I pray God, they may increase a thousand-fold, both in number and in strength. "Nay, they have no more love to each other than Turks." They! who? This is not the case with our societies. They not only love each other, but love their enemies, even those that



still despitefully use them. But "read their vile contentions, and the evil character they give each other, raking the filthiest ashes, to find some black story." I will answer for one. I give no "evil character" of my "fellow-Preachers." I "rake into no filthy ashes, for black stories." Let him who does, take it to himself. "They slay with the sword of bitterness, wrath, and envy." I do not. I plead, Not guilty. As I envy no man, so neither my wrath nor bitterness slays any human creature. "Still more to their shame is what they have sent out into the world, against each other, on both sides, about five or six years ago, and till this very day."

"What they have sent out against each other, on both sides, about five or six years ago." Within five or six years I have been vehemently called to answer for myself; twice by Mr. Richard Hill, and afterwards by his brother. Have you read what we "have sent out into the world, against each other, on both sides?" If you have not, how can you so peremptorily affirm what "both sides" have done? You cannot possibly be a judge of what you have not read; and if you *had* read, you could not have passed such a sentence. Three tracts I have wrote; but in none of these do I "slay with the sword of bitterness, or wrath, or envy." In none of them do I speak one bitter, or passionate, or disrespectful word. Bitterness and wrath, yea, low, base, virulent invective, both Mr. Richard and Mr. Rowland Hill (as well as Mr. Toplady) have poured out upon me, in great abundance. But where have I, in one single instance, returned them railing for railing? I have not so learned Christ. I dare not rail, either at them or you. I return not cursing, but blessing. That the God of love may bless both them and you, is the prayer of your injured,

Yet still affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

*February 14, 1778.*

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CLEAR AND CONCISE DEMONSTRATION  
OF THE  
DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

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THERE are four grand and powerful arguments which strongly induce us to believe that the Bible must be from God; viz., miracles, prophecies, the goodness of the doctrine, and the moral character of the penmen. All the miracles flow from divine power; all the prophecies, from divine understanding; the goodness of the doctrine, from divine goodness; and the moral character of the penmen, from divine holiness.

Thus Christianity is built upon four grand pillars; viz., the power, understanding, goodness, and holiness of God. Divine power is the source of all the miracles; divine understanding, of all the prophecies; divine goodness, of the goodness of the doctrine; and divine holiness, of the moral character of the penmen.

I beg leave to propose a short, clear, and strong argument to prove the divine inspiration of the holy Scriptures.

The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

1. It could not be the invention of good men or angels; for they neither would nor could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, "Thus saith the Lord," when it was their own invention.

2. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils; for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity.

3. Therefore, I draw this conclusion, that the Bible must be given by divine inspiration.

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## THE REAL CHARACTER OF MONTANUS.

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THERE is great variety of opinions, says a late eminent historian, about the time when Montanus first appeared to work signs and miracles ; either by the operation of God, as the historian supposes, or by that of the devil transformed ; and that in such a manner as nobody was able to discern, because both his life and doctrine were holy and blameless. The time when it began to be doubted, concerning the spirit which operated in him, and moved him after an extraordinary manner, whether it were a good or an evil one, is very uncertain ; but it seems to be between the years of Christ 150 and 170. However, so it was, that the sentiments of those sound in the faith, or the Christians in general, were much divided in their judgments. Of all the ancients, none was more express than he in the mystery of the incarnation, or seemed more to honour the person of Christ, and extol his merits. All the ancient heretics erred greatly from the truth, as to this ; but he was clear in this respect, preaching up repentance, and faith in the name of the Lord Jesus alone, as the one Mediator between God and man. Neither is it denied that he was orthodox in the notion of the Church, as to Christian fellowship, rightly formed, according to the pattern delivered by Christ himself, and knit together by the bond of the Spirit, under Pastors and Officers of several orders, having a clear and certain mission from Him whom they represent ; but he, under the character of a Prophet, as an order established in the Church, appeared (without bringing any new doctrine) for reviving what was decayed, and reforming what might be amiss ; whereas others that had been judged heretics, were not only preachers of strange and monstrous opinions, but were utter enemies to all manner of discipline in the Church.

It seems, therefore, by the best information we can procure at this distance of time, that Montanus was not only a truly good man, but one of the best men then upon earth ; and that his real crime was, the severely reproving those who professed

themselves Christians, while they neither had the mind that was in Christ, nor walked as Christ walked; but were conformable both in their temper and practice to the present evil world.

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## LETTER ON PREACHING CHRIST.

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LONDON, December 20, 1751.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE point you speak of in your letter of September 21 is of a very important nature. I have had many serious thoughts concerning it, particularly for some months last past; therefore, I was not willing to speak hastily or slightly of it, but rather delayed till I could consider it thoroughly.

I mean by *preaching the gospel*, preaching the love of God to sinners, preaching the life, death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ, with all the blessings which, in consequence thereof, are freely given to true believers.

By *preaching the law*, I mean, explaining and enforcing the commands of Christ, briefly comprised in the Sermon on the Mount.

Now, it is certain, preaching the gospel to penitent sinners "begets faith;" that it "sustains and increases spiritual life in true believers."

Nay, sometimes it "teaches and guides" them that believe; yea, and "convinces them that believe not."

So far all are agreed. But what is the stated means of feeding and comforting believers? What is the means, as of begetting spiritual life where it is not, so of sustaining and increasing it where it is?

Here they divide. Some think, preaching the law only; others, preaching the gospel only. I think, neither the one nor the other; but duly mixing both, in every place, if not in every sermon.

I think, the right method of preaching is this: At our first beginning to preach at any place, after a general declaration of the love of God to sinners, and his willingness that they should be saved, to preach the law, in the strongest, the



closest, the most searching manner possible ; only intermixing the gospel here and there, and showing it, as it were, afar off.

After more and more persons are convinced of sin, we may mix more and more of the gospel, in order to "beget faith," to raise into spiritual life those whom the law hath slain ; but this is not to be done too hastily neither. Therefore, it is not expedient wholly to omit the law ; not only because we may well suppose that many of our hearers are still unconvinced ; but because otherwise there is danger, that many who are convinced will heal their own wounds slightly ; therefore, it is only in private converse with a thoroughly convinced sinner, that we should preach nothing but the gospel.

If, indeed, we could suppose a whole congregation to be thus convinced, we should need to preach only the gospel : And the same we might do, if our whole congregation were supposed to be newly justified. But when these grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, a wise builder would preach the law to them again ; only taking particular care to place every part of it in a gospel light, as not only a command, but a privilege also, as a branch of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. He would take equal care to remind them, that this is not the cause, but the fruit, of their acceptance with God ; that other cause, "other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ ;" that we are still forgiven and accepted, only for the sake of what he hath done and suffered for us ; and that all true obedience springs from love to him, grounded on his first loving us. He would labour, therefore, in preaching any part of the law, to keep the love of Christ continually before their eyes ; that thence they might draw fresh life, vigour, and strength, to run the way of his commandments.

Thus would he preach the law even to those who were pressing on to the mark. But to those who were careless, or drawing back, he would preach it in another manner, nearly as he did before they were convinced of sin. To those, meanwhile, who were earnest, but feeble-minded, he would preach the gospel chiefly ; yet variously intermixing more or less of the law, according to their various necessities.

By preaching the law in the manner above described, he

would teach them how to walk in Him whom they had received. Yea, and the same means (the main point wherein, it seems, your mistake lies) would both sustain and increase their spiritual life. For the commands are food, as well as the promises; food equally wholesome, equally substantial. These, also, duly applied, not only direct, but likewise nourish and strengthen, the soul.

Of this you appear not to have the least conception; therefore, I will endeavour to explain it. I ask, then, Do not all the children of God experience, that when God gives them to see deeper into his blessed law, whenever he gives a new degree of light, he gives, likewise, a new degree of strength? Now I see, he that loves me, bids me do this; and now I feel I can do it, through Christ strengthening me.

Thus light and strength are given by the same means, and frequently in the same moment; although sometimes there is a space between. For instance: I hear the command, "Let your communication be always in grace, meet to minister grace to the hearers." God gives me more light into this command. I see the exceeding height and depth of it. At the same time I see (by the same light from above) how far I have fallen short. I am ashamed; I am humbled before God. I earnestly desire to keep it better; I pray to him that hath loved me for more strength, and I have the petition I ask of him. Thus the law not only convicts the unbeliever, and enlightens the believing soul, but also conveys food to a believer; sustains and increases his spiritual life and strength.

And if it increases his spiritual life and strength, it cannot but increase his comfort also. For, doubtless, the more we are alive to God, the more we shall rejoice in him; the greater measure of his strength we receive, the greater will be our consolation also.

And all this, I conceive, is clearly declared in one single passage of Scripture:—

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb." They



are both food and medicine; they both refresh, strengthen, and nourish the soul.

Not that I would advise to preach the law without the gospel, any more than the gospel without the law. Undoubtedly, both should be preached in their turns; yea, both at once, or both in one: All the conditional promises are instances of this. They are law and gospel mixed together.

According to this model, I should advise every Preacher continually to preach the law; the law grafted upon, tempered by, and animated with, the spirit of the gospel. I advise him to declare, explain, and enforce every command of God; but, meantime, to declare, in every sermon, (and the more explicitly the better,) that the first and great command to a Christian is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" that Christ is all in all, our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" that all life, love, strength, are from him alone, and all freely given to us through faith. And it will ever be found, that the law thus preached both enlightens and strengthens the soul; that it both nourishes and teaches; that it is the guide, "food, medicine, and stay," of the believing soul.

Thus all the Apostles built up believers; witness all the Epistles of St. Paul, James, Peter, and John. And upon this plan all the Methodists first set out. In this manner, not only my brother and I, but Mr. Maxfield, Nelson, James Jones, Westell, and Reeves, all preached at the beginning.

By this preaching it pleased God to work those mighty effects in London, Bristol, Kingswood, Yorkshire, and Newcastle. By means of this, twenty-nine persons received remission of sins in one day at Bristol only; most of them, while I was opening and enforcing, in this manner, our Lord's Sermon upon the Mount.

In this manner John Downes, John Bennet, John Haughton, and all the other Methodists, preached, till James Wheatly came among them, who never was clear, perhaps not sound, in the faith. According to his understanding was his preaching; an unconnected rhapsody of unmeaning words, like Sir John Suckling's—

Verses, smooth and soft as cream,  
In which was neither depth nor stream.

Yet (to the utter reproach of the Methodist congregations) this man became a most popular Preacher. He was admired more and more wherever he went, till he went over the second time into Ireland, and conversed more intimately than before with some of the Moravian Preachers.

The consequence was, that he leaned more and more both to their doctrine and manner of preaching. At first, several of our Preachers complained of this; but, in the space of a few months, (so incredible is the force of soft words,) he, by slow and imperceptible degrees, brought almost all the Preachers then in the kingdom to think and speak like himself.

These, returning to England, spread the contagion to some others of their brethren. But still the far greater part of the Methodist Preachers thought and spoke as they had done from the beginning.

This is the plain fact. As to the fruit of this new manner of preaching, (entirely new to the Methodists,) speaking much of the promises, little of the commands; (even to unbelievers, and still less to believers;) you think it has done great good; I think it has done great harm.

I think it has done great harm to the Preachers; not only to James Wheatly himself, but to those who have learned of him,—David Trathen, Thomas Webb, Robert Swindells, and John Maddern: I fear to others also; all of whom are but shadows of what they were; most of them have exalted themselves above measure, as if they only “preached Christ, preached the gospel.” And as highly as they have exalted themselves, so deeply have they despised their brethren; calling them “legal Preachers, legal wretches;” and (by a cant name) “Doctors,” or “Doctors of Divinity.” They have not a little despised their Ministers also, for “countenancing the Doctors,” as they termed them. They have made their faults (real or supposed) common topics of conversation; hereby cherishing in themselves the very spirit of Ham; yea, of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

I think it has likewise done great harm to their hearers; diffusing among them their own prejudice against the other Preachers; against their Ministers, me in particular, (of which you have been an undeniable instance,) against the scriptural, Methodist manner of preaching Christ, so that they could no longer bear sound doctrine; they could no



longer hear the plain old truth with profit or pleasure, nay, hardly with patience.

After hearing such Preachers for a time, you yourself (need we further witnesses?) could find in my preaching no food for your soul; nothing to strengthen you in the way; no inward experience of a believer; it was all barren and dry; that is, you had no taste for mine or John Nelson's preaching; it neither refreshed nor nourished you.

Why, this is the very thing I assert: That the gospel Preachers, so called, corrupt their hearers; they vitiate their taste, so that they cannot relish sound doctrine; and spoil their appetite, so that they cannot turn it into nourishment; they, as it were, feed them with sweetmeats, till the genuine wine of the kingdom seems quite insipid to them. They give them cordial upon cordial, which make them all life and spirit for the present; but, meantime, their appetite is destroyed, so that they can neither retain nor digest the pure milk of the word.

Hence it is, that (according to the constant observation I have made, in all parts both of England and Ireland) Preachers of this kind (though quite the contrary appears at first) spread death, not life, among their hearers. As soon as that flow of spirits goes off, they are without life, without power, without any strength or vigour of soul; and it is extremely difficult to recover them, because they still cry out, "Cordials! Cordials!" of which they have had too much already, and have no taste for the food which is convenient for them. Nay, they have an utter aversion to it, and that confirmed by principle, having been taught to call it husks, if not poison: How much more to those bitters which are previously needful to restore their decayed appetite!

This was the very case when I went last into the north. For some time before my coming, John Downes had scarce been able to preach at all; the three others in the round were such as styled themselves Gospel Preachers. When I came to review the societies, with great expectation of finding a vast increase, I found most of them lessened by one-third; one entirely broken up. That of Newcastle itself was less by a hundred members than when I visited it before. And of those that remained, the far greater number in every place were cold, weary, heartless, dead. Such were the

blessed effects of this gospel preaching ! of this new method of preaching Christ !

On the other hand, when, in my return, I took an account of the societies in Yorkshire, chiefly under the care of John Nelson, one of the old way, in whose preaching you could find no life, no food, I found them all alive, strong, and vigorous of soul, believing, loving, and praising God their Saviour ; and increased in number from eighteen or nineteen hundred, to upwards of three thousand. These had been continually fed with that wholesome food which you could neither relish nor digest. From the beginning they had been taught both the law and the gospel. " God loves you ; therefore, love and obey him. Christ died for you ; therefore, die to sin. Christ is risen ; therefore, rise in the image of God. Christ liveth evermore ; therefore, live to God, till you live with him in glory."

So we preached ; and so you believed. This is the scriptural way, the Methodist way, the true way. God grant we may never turn therefrom, to the right hand or to the left !

I am,

My dear friend,

Your ever affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

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## THOUGHTS ON SALVATION BY FAITH.

[PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1779.]

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1. It is now upwards of forty years since my brother and I were convinced of that important truth, which is the foundation of all real religion, that " by grace we are saved through faith." And as soon as we believed, we spoke ; when we saw it ourselves, we immediately began declaring it to others. And, indeed, we could hardly speak of anything else, either in public or private. It shone upon our minds with so strong a light, that it was our constant theme. It



was our daily subject, both in verse and prose; and we vehemently defended it against all mankind.

2. But in doing this we met with abundance of difficulty; we were assaulted and abused on every side. We were everywhere represented as mad dogs, and treated accordingly. We were stoned in the streets, and several times narrowly escaped with our lives. In sermons, newspapers, and pamphlets of all kinds, we were painted as unheard-of monsters. But this moved us not; we went on, by the help of God, testifying salvation by faith both to small and great, and not counting our lives dear unto ourselves, so we might finish our course with joy.

3. While we were thus employed, another storm arose from a quarter whence we least expected it. Some of our familiar friends declared open war against us for preaching salvation by works! This we could not in anywise understand; we wondered what they meant. We utterly disavowed the charge; we denied it in the strongest terms. We declared, over and over, both in public and private, "We believe, and constantly preach, salvation by faith. Salvation by works is a doctrine we abhor; we neither preach nor believe it." But it did not avail: Say what we would, the same charge was still repeated; and that not only when we were at a convenient distance, but even before our face.

4. At first we were inclined to think, that many who affirmed this, did not believe themselves; that it was merely a copy of their countenance, spoken *ad movendam invidiam*.\* And could we have been fully persuaded of this, the difficulty would have been solved. But we did not dare to give way to the thought: Whatever they might think or say of us, we could not but think they were upright men, and spoke according to their real sentiments. The wonder therefore remained, how they could impute to us a doctrine which our soul abhorred, and which we were continually opposing, and confuting with all our might.

5. I was in this perplexity when a thought shot across my mind, which solved the matter at once: "This is the key: Those that hold, 'Every one is absolutely predestinated either to salvation or damnation,' see no medium between salvation by works and salvation by absolute decrees." It follows,

\* To excite ill-will.—EDIT.

against a man, when an archangel durst not bring one against the devil? O fight, fight for an unconditional decree! For if there be any condition, how can you be saved?

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### GOD'S EYES ARE OVER ALL THE EARTH.

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MANY years ago, as my eldest brother was walking in the back street of Hackney, a gentleman accosted him, and said, "Sir, I am old, and I would willingly inform you of a remarkable scene of Providence, that it may be remembered when I am gone hence:—I was walking here some time since, (as I frequently do,) early in a morning, when a chariot stopped at a little distance from me, and a young lady, stepping out, ran by me with all her might. A gentleman quickly followed her, caught her, and brought her back; when I just heard her say, 'What, my dear, will you serve me so?' Immediately that door over against us opened, and he thrust her in before him. I mused upon it all day and all night, and was very uneasy. In the morning, a gardener which I employed coming in, I asked him, 'Do you know such a house in Hackney?' He answered, 'Sir, I am going to trim the trees in the garden next to it; and I will make any inquiries which you desire, and bring you back the best account I can.' The account he gave me the next morning was this:—When I went to work, I saw over a low hedge a gardener trimming the trees in the other garden; and I asked him, 'Pray, who lives in that house?' On his answering, 'A mad Doctor;' I asked, 'Has he many patients?' He said, 'I do not know, though I dine in the house; for he never suffers any to see them.' I said, 'I will give you a pot of beer, if you can find the name of a young lady that came in a day or two ago.' He answered, 'I cannot promise; but I will do my best when I go in to dinner.' When I saw him again, he said, 'No patient in the house dares speak to any one; and I could get no pen, ink, and paper; but I got a pin and a card, on which a young woman has pricked her name: Here it is.' I took



the card, and knew the name. The next day I went to her father, and asked, 'Sir, where is your daughter?' He said, 'She is lately married to a very worthy man, and is gone with her husband into the country.' I then told him the story, and we went together to the Lord Chief Justice. Early in the morning we went to the Doctor's house, and knocked at the door. He looked through a little grate, and bade us go on our way; we had no business with him. I answered, 'Here is the Lord Chief Justice's warrant, and his tip-staff. Open the door, or we shall break it open.' He then opened it, and I asked, 'Where is the young lady that was brought in hither three days ago?' He answered, 'There is no such person in my house; you may search it from top to bottom.' We did so; but could not find any trace of her. Coming down the stairs, I said, 'Is there no one under these stairs?' The Doctor answered, 'There is a poor creature; but she is so outrageous, that we are obliged to shut her up in the dark.' On his opening the door, she put out her head. My friend sighed, and said, 'I know nothing of this poor thing.' She answered, 'What, Sir, am I so altered in three days, that you do not know your own daughter?' He immediately knew her voice, and took her home. Her husband was very glad to refund her fortune."

JOHN WESLEY.

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## A REMARKABLE PROVIDENCE.

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A GENTLEMAN walking with Mr. Chapoon, (uncle to Mr. Roquet,) in Moorfields, proposed stepping into Bedlam. After they had walked there awhile, they were turning to go out, when a young woman cried, "Sir, I desire to speak with you." His friend said, "Sure, you will not stay to hear a mad woman's tale." He answered, "Indeed I will:" On which the other went away. She then said, "My father left me and my fortune in the hands of my uncle. A young gentleman offered me marriage, and all things were agreed

on; when one morning my uncle took me out with him in the chariot, as he said, to see a friend; but instead of this he brought me to Bedlam, where I have been confined ever since."

"Your story is plausible," said Mr. C.; "but how shall I know it is the truth?" "Very easily," said she. "The gentleman that was to marry me lives within a day's journey of London. Write to him; and tell him you have something to say concerning me, and would be glad to meet him at such a place in town. If he does not come, let this all pass for a mad woman's dream." Mr. C. wrote, and asked the gentleman, who came to the place appointed, whether he knew such a person. He answered, "Perfectly well. We were to have been married before now; but her uncle sent me word she was taken ill." Mr. C. then told him the whole story. He immediately sent to her uncle; who was very ready to take her out, and pay her fortune, to avoid farther trouble.

So the curiosity of one to see a strange place, and of another to hear a strange tale, was a means of detecting a notorious scene of villany, and of setting an innocent sufferer at liberty!

JOHN WESLEY.

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## AN ACCOUNT OF THE BROTHERS' STEPS.

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LAST summer [1780] I received a letter from a friend, wherein were these words:—

"I THINK it would be worth your while to take a view of those wonderful marks of the Lord's hatred to duelling, called The Brothers' Steps. They are in the fields, about a third of a mile northward from Montague-House; and the awful tradition concerning them is, that two brothers quarrelled about a worthless woman, and, according to the fashion of those days, fought with sword and pistol. The prints of their feet are about the depth of three inches, and



nothing will vegetate so much as to disfigure them. The number is only eighty-three; but probably some are at present filled up; for I think there were formerly more in the centre, where each unhappy combatant wounded the other to death: And a bank on which the first who fell died, retains the form of his agonizing couch, by the curse of barrenness, while grass flourishes all about it. Mr. George Hall, who was the Librarian of Lincoln's-Inn, first showed me those steps twenty-eight years ago, when, I think, they were not quite so deep as now. He remembered them about thirty years, and the man who first showed them him, about thirty more, which goes back to the year 1692; but I suppose they originated in King Charles the Second's reign. My mother well remembered their being ploughed up, and corn sown, to deface them, about fifty years ago: But all was labour in vain; for the prints returned in a while to their pristine form; as probably will those that are now filled up. Indeed I think an account of them in your Magazine would be a pious memorial of their lasting reality.

"These hints are only offered as a small token of my good-will to yourself and the work, by

"Your son and brother in the gospel,

"JOHN WALSH."

This account appeared to me so very extraordinary, that I knew not what to think of it. I knew Mr. Walsh to be a person of good understanding and real piety; and he testified what he had seen with his own eyes: But still I wanted more witnesses, till, awhile ago, being at Mr. Cary's in Copthall-Buildings, I occasionally mentioned The Brothers' Footsteps; and asked the company if they had heard anything of them. "Sir," said Mr. Cary, "sixteen years ago, I saw and counted them myself." Another added, "And I saw them four years ago." I could then no longer doubt but they had been; and a week or two after I went with Mr. Cary and another person to seek them.

We sought for near half an hour in vain. We could find no steps at all within a quarter of a mile, no, nor half a mile, north of Montague-House. We were almost out of hope, when an honest man, who was at work, directed us to the next ground, adjoining to a pond. There we found what we sought for, about three-quarters of a mile north of Montague-House, and about five hundred yards east of Tottenham.

Court Road. The steps answer Mr. Walsh's description. They are of the size of a large human foot, about three inches deep, and lie nearly from north-east to south-west. We counted only seventy-six; but we were not exact in counting. The place where one or both the brothers are supposed to have fallen, is still bare of grass. The labourer showed us also the bank, where (the tradition is) the wretched woman sat to see the combat.

What shall we say to these things? Why, to Atheists, or Infidels of any kind, I would not say one word about them. For "if they hear not Moses and the Prophets," they will not regard anything of this kind. But to men of candour, who believe the Bible to be of God, I would say, Is not this an astonishing instance, held forth to all the inhabitants of London, of the justice and power of God? Does not the curse he has denounced upon this ground bear some little resemblance to that of our Lord on the barren figtree, "Henceforth let no fruit grow upon thee for ever?" I see no reason or pretence for any rational man to doubt of the truth of the story; since it has been confirmed by these open, visible tokens for more than a hundred years successively.

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## A PROVIDENTIAL EVENT.

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THE forty King's Scholars at Westminster-School lodge in one room, which is called the dormitory. While my eldest brother was at school, the head boy cried out vehemently one morning, "Lads, lads! you oversleep yourselves! you lie too late: It is time to be at school." They all started up, dressed as quick as they could, and ran down with him. When they came into the cloisters, one who was a little before the rest saw something white, and cried out, "What have we got here?" They went up to it, and found a man stark naked, and so benumbed that he could not speak. Just then the clock struck two. They took him up, carried him into the dormitory, and put him into a warm bed. After some rest, he recovered his senses and speech; and



being asked how he came into that condition, he told them, as he was coming over Chelsea-Fields, he was robbed by two footpads, who then stripped him stark naked, tied him neck and heels, and threw him into a ditch. There he must have perished, but that some young women, coming to market very early in the morning, heard him groan, and, going to the ditch, untied him, and then ran away. He made toward the town as well as he could, till, being unable to walk any farther, he crept into the cloisters upon his hands and feet, where he lay till the King's Scholars came. Probably in an hour or two he would have expired. After he had slept some hours, they gave him something warm to drink; then one gave him a shirt, another a coat or waistcoat, others what they could spare, till they had clothed him from head to foot. They then collected for him among themselves about forty shillings, and wished him well home.

See the wisdom of God, making the sport of a boy the means of saving a poor man's life!

JOHN WESLEY.

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## AN EXTRAORDINARY CURE.

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BISHOP HALL, speaking of the good offices which angels do to God's servants, says, "Of this kind was that marvellous cure which was wrought upon a poor cripple, at St. Madern's in Cornwall; whereof, besides the attestation of many hundreds of the neighbours, I took a strict examination in my last visitation: This man, for sixteen years together, was obliged to walk upon his hands, by reason the sinews of his legs were so contracted. Upon an admonition in his dream, to wash in a certain well, he was suddenly so restored to his limbs that I saw him able to walk and get his own maintenance. The name of this cripple was John Trebble."

And were "many hundreds of the neighbours," together with Bishop Hall, deceived in so notorious a matter of fact? or did they all join together to palm such a falsehood on the

world? O incredulity! what ridiculous shifts art thou driven to! what absurdities wilt thou not believe, rather than own any extraordinary work of God!

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### MURDER PREVENTED BY A THREE-FOLD DREAM.

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MONDAY, April 2, 1781, I was informed by a person in an eminent station, of a very uncommon incident:—

He had occasion to correct, with a few stripes, a lad that lived with him at Rochester, which he resented so as to leave his place. But sometime after, he seemed to repent, humbled himself, and was received again. He now behaved in a most becoming manner, and was doubly diligent in his service.

But his mistress dreamed one night, that this lad was going to cut her throat: And she had a twin-sister, between whom and her there is so strange a sympathy, that if either of them is ill, or particularly affected at any time, the other is so likewise. This sister wrote to her from another part of the kingdom, that she had dreamed the very same thing. She carried this letter to her father, a gentleman that lives not far off, and was surprised to hear that he likewise, on the same night, had had a dream to the same effect.

The lad had been observed to come up, about noon, into his lady's apartment, with a case-knife in his hand; and being asked why he did so, he said, he was going into the adjoining room, to scrape the dirt off from his master's embroidered clothes.

His master now took the lad aside, and examined him strictly. After denying it for a considerable time, it was at length extorted from him, that he had always remembered, with indignation, his master's severity to him, and that he was fully resolved to be revenged, but in what particular manner he would not confess. On this he was totally dismissed without delay.

JOHN WESLEY.



## AN ANSWER TO A REPORT.

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I HAVE lately heard, to my no small surprise, that a person professing himself a Quaker, and supposed to be a man of some character, has confidently reported, that he has been at Sunderland himself, and inquired into the case of Elizabeth Hobson; that she was a woman of a very indifferent character; that the story she told was purely her own invention; and that John Wesley himself was now fully convinced that there was no truth in it.

From what motive a man should invent and publish all over England (for I have heard this in various places) a whole train of absolute, notorious falsehoods, I cannot at all imagine. On the contrary, I declare to all the world, 1. That Elizabeth Hobson was an eminently pious woman; that she lived and died without the least blemish of any kind, without the least stain upon her character. 2. That the relation could not possibly be her own invention, as there were many witnesses to several parts of it; as Mr. Parker, the two Attorneys whom she employed, Miss Hosmer, and many others. And, 3. That I myself am fully persuaded, that every circumstance of it is literally and punctually true.

I know that those who fashionably deny the existence of spirits are hugely disgusted at accounts of this kind. I know that they incessantly labour to spread this disgust among those that are of a better mind; because if one of these accounts be admitted, their whole system falls to the ground. But, whoever is pleased or displeased, I must testify what I believe to be the truth. Indeed I never myself saw the appearance of an unbodied spirit; and I never saw the commission of a murder. Yet, upon the testimony of unexceptionable witnesses, I can firmly believe both one and the other.

JOHN WESLEY.

FROME,  
*September 12, 1782.*

## A LETTER TO A FRIEND,

### CONCERNING TEA.

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NEWINGTON, *December 10, 1748.*

DEAR SIR,

1. I HAVE read your letter with attention, and much approve of the spirit with which it is wrote. You speak in love. I desire to do so too; and then no harm can be done on either side. You appear not to be wedded to your own opinion, but open to further conviction. I would willingly be of the same temper; not obstinately attached to either side of the question. I am clearly satisfied of the necessity of this; a willingness to see what as yet I see not. For I know, an unwillingness to be convinced would utterly blind either you or me; and that if we are resolved to retain our present opinion, reason and argument signify nothing.

2. I shall not therefore think it is time or pains misemployed, to give the whole cause a second hearing; to recite the occasion of every step I have taken, and the motives inducing me so to do; and then to consider whatsoever either you or others have urged on the contrary side of the question.

3. Twenty-nine years since, when I had spent a few months at Oxford, having, as I apprehended, an exceeding good constitution, and being otherwise in health, I was a little surprised at some symptoms of a paralytic disorder. I could not imagine what should occasion the shaking of my hand; till I observed it was always worst after breakfast; and that if I intermitted drinking tea for two or three days, it did not shake at all. Upon inquiry, I found tea had the same effect upon others also of my acquaintance; and therefore saw that this was one of its natural effects, (as several Physicians have often remarked,) especially when it is largely and frequently drank; and most of all on persons of weak nerves. Upon



this I lessened the quantity, drank it weaker, and added more milk and sugar. But still for above six-and-twenty years I was more or less subject to the same disorder.

4. July was two years I began to observe that abundance of the people of London, with whom I conversed, laboured under the same, and many other, paralytic disorders, and that in a much higher degree; insomuch that some of their nerves were quite unstrung; their bodily strength quite decayed, and they could not go through their daily labour. I inquired, "Are you not a hard drinker?" and was answered by one and another, and another, "No, indeed, Sir, not I; I drink scarce anything but a little tea, morning and night." I immediately remembered my own case; and, after weighing the matter thoroughly, easily gathered from many concurring circumstances, that it was the same case with them.

5. I considered, "What an advantage would it be to these poor enfeebled people, if they would leave off what so manifestly impairs their health, and thereby hurts their business also! Is there nothing equally cheap which they could use? Yes, surely; and cheaper too. If they used English herbs in its stead, (which would cost either nothing, or what is next to nothing,) with the same bread, butter, and milk, they would save just the price of the tea. And hereby they might not only lessen their pain, but in some degree their poverty too; for they would be able to work (as well as to save) considerably more than they can do now. And by this means, if they are in debt, they might be more just, paying away what they either earned or saved. If they are not in debt, they might be more merciful, giving it away to them that want."

6. I considered farther: "What an advantage might this be, particularly in such a body of men as those are who are united together in these societies, who are both so numerous and so poor! How much might be saved in so numerous a body; even in this single article of expense! And how greatly is all that can possibly be saved, in every article, wanted daily by those who have not even food convenient for them!"

7. I soon perceived that this latter consideration was of a more general nature than the former; and that it affected many of those whom the other did not so immediately concern; seeing it was as needful for all to save needless

expenses, as for some to regain the health they had impaired; especially, considered as members of a society, the wants of which they could not be unapprized of. They knew, of those to whom they were so peculiarly united, some had not food to sustain nature; some were destitute of even necessary clothing; some had not where to lay their head. They knew, or might know, that the little contributions made weekly did in nowise suffice to remove these wants, being barely sufficient to relieve the sick; and even that in so scanty a manner, that I know not if some of them have not, with their allowance, pined away, and at length died for want. If you and I have not saved all we could to relieve these, how shall we face them at the throne of God?

8. I reflected: "If one only would save all that he could in this single instance, he might surely feed or clothe one of his brethren, and perhaps save one life. What then might be done, if ten thousand, or one thousand, or only five hundred, would do it? yea, if half that number should say, 'I will compute this day what I have expended in tea, weekly or yearly. I will immediately enter on cheaper food: And whatever is saved hereby, I will put into that poor-box weekly, to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked.' I am mistaken, if any among us need want either food or raiment from that hour."

9. I thought farther: "It is said, nay, many tell me to my face, I can persuade this people to anything. I will make a fair trial. If I cannot persuade them, there may be some good effect. All who do not wilfully shut their eyes will see that I have no such influence as they supposed. If I can persuade any number, many who are now weak or sick will be restored to health and strength. Many will pay those debts, which others, perhaps equally poor, can but ill afford to lose. Many will be less straitened in their own families. Many, by helping their neighbour, will lay up for themselves treasures in heaven."

10. Immediately it struck into my mind, "But example must go before precept; therefore I must not plead an exemption for myself, from a daily practice of twenty-seven years. I must begin." I did so. I left it off myself in August, 1746. And I have now had sufficient time to try the effects, which have fully answered my expectation. My paralytic complaints are all gone; my hand is steady as it



was at fifteen ; although I must expect that or other weaknesses soon, as I decline into the vale of years. And so considerable a difference do I find in my expense, that I can make it appear, from the accounts now in being, in only those four families at London, Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle, I save upwards of fifty pounds a year.

11. The first to whom I explained these things at large, and whom I advised to set the same example to their brethren, were a few of those who rejoice to assist my brother and me, as our sons in the gospel. A week after, I proposed it to about forty of those whom I believed to be strong in faith ; and the next morning to about sixty more, entreating them all to speak their minds freely. They did so ; and, in the end, saw the good which might ensue ; yielded to the force of Scripture and reason ; and resolved all, (but two or three,) by the grace of God, to make the trial without delay.

12. In a short time, I proposed it, but with all the tenderness I could, first, to the body of those who are supposed to have living faith, and, after staying a few days, (that I might judge the better how to speak,) to the whole society. It soon appeared (as I doubted not but it would) how far these were from calling me Rabbi, from implicitly submitting to my judgment, or implicitly following my example. Objections rose in abundance from all sides. These I now proceed to consider ; whether they are advanced by you, or by others ; and whether pointed at the premises, or directly at the conclusion.

13. I. Some objected : "Tea is not unwholesome at all ; not in any kind prejudicial to health."

To these I reply, First, You should not be so sure of this. Even that casual circumstance, related in Dr. Short's history of it, might incline you to doubt ; namely, that "while the Chinese dry the leaves, and turn it with their hands upon the tin plates, the moisture of them is so extremely corrosive, that it eats into the flesh, if not wiped off immediately." It is not probable, then, that what remains in the leaves is quite friendly to the human body.

Secondly, Many eminent Physicians have declared their judgment, that it is prejudicial in several respects ; that it gives rise to numberless disorders, particularly those of the nervous kind ; and that, if frequently used by those of weak nerves, it is no other than a slow poison.

Thirdly, If all physicians were silent in the case, yet plain fact is against you. And this speaks loud enough. It was prejudicial to *my* health; it is so to many to this day.

14. "But it is not so to me," says the objector: "Why then should I leave it off?"

I answer, First, To give an example to those to whom it is undeniably prejudicial.

Secondly, That you may have the more wherewith to give bread to the hungry, and raiment to the naked.

15. "But I cannot leave it off; for it helps my health. Nothing else will agree with me."

I answer, First, Will nothing else agree with you? I know not how to believe that. I suppose your body is much of the same kind with that of your great-grandmother. And do you think nothing else agreed with her, or with any of her progenitors? What poor, puling, sickly things, must all the English then have been, till within these hundred years! But you know they were not so. Other things agreed with them; and why not with you?

Secondly, If, in fact, nothing else will, if tea has already weakened your stomach, and impaired your digestion to such a degree, it has hurt you more than you are aware. It has prejudiced your health extremely. You have need to abhor it as deadly poison, and to renounce it from this very hour.

So says a drinker of drams: "Nothing else will agree with me. Nothing else will raise my spirits. I can digest nothing without them." Indeed! Is it so? Then touch no more, if you love your life.

Thirdly, Suppose nothing else agrees with you at first; yet in a while many things will. When I first left off tea, I was half asleep all day long; my head ached from morning to night. I could not remember a question asked, even till I could return an answer; but in a week's time all these inconveniences were gone, and have never returned since.

Fourthly, I have not found one single exception yet; not one person in all England, with whom, after sufficient trial made, nothing else would agree.

It is therefore well worth while for you to try again, if you have any true regard for your own health, or any compassion for those who are perishing all around you for want of the common necessities of life.

16. If you are sincere in this plea, if you do not talk of



your health, while the real objection is your inclination, make a fair trial thus: (1.) Take half a pint of milk every morning, with a little bread, not boiled, but warmed only: A man in tolerable health might double the quantity. (2.) If this is too heavy, add as much water, and boil it together, with a spoonful of oatmeal. (3.) If this agrees not, try half a pint, or a little more, of water-gruel, neither thick nor thin; not sweetened, for that may be apt to make him sick, but with a very little butter, salt, and bread. (4.) If this disagrees, try sage, green balm, mint, or penny-royal tea, infusing only so much of the herb as just to change the colour of the water. (5.) Try two or three of these mixed, in various proportions. (6.) Try ten or twelve other English herbs. (7.) Try foltron, a mixture of herbs to be had at many grocers', far healthier, as well as cheaper, than tea. (8.) Try cocoa. If, after having tried each of these for a week or ten days, you find none of them will agree with your constitution, then use (weak green) tea again; but at the same time know, that your having used it so long has brought you near the chambers of death.

17. II. "I do not know," says another, "but tea may hurt me; but there is nothing saved by leaving it off; for I am sure other things cost full as much." I pray, what other things? Sack-and-sugar costs more; and so do ragouts, or pheasants, or ortolans. But what is this to the point? We do not say, All things are cheaper: But any of the things above mentioned are; at least, if prudently managed. Therefore, if you really desire to save what you can, you will drink tea no more.

18. "Well, I do not design to buy any more myself; but where others drink it, there is nothing saved by my abstaining." I answer, First, Yes, something is saved, though but little; especially if you tell them before, "I shall not drink tea." And many a little you know, put together, will make a great sum.

Secondly, If the whole saved were ever so little, if it were but two mites, when you save this for God, and your brethren's sake, it is much.

Thirdly, Your example in saving a little now, may occasion the saving of more by and by.

Fourthly, It is not a little advantage which you may reap, even now, to your own soul; by habituating yourself

not to be ashamed of being singular in a good thing; by taking up your cross, and denying yourself even in so small an instance, and by accustoming yourself to act on rational grounds, whether in a little matter or a great.

19. "But what is saved will be no better employed." Do you say this with regard to yourself, or others? If with regard to yourself, it will be your fault if you do not employ it better. I do not say you will, but I am sure you may; and if you do not, it is your own sin, and your own shame.

If with regard to others, how do you know that it will not be employed better? I trust it will. It cannot be denied that it often has, and that it always may be. And it is highly probable all who save anything from the best motive, will lay it out to the best purpose.

20. "As to example," you say, "I have lately been without hopes of doing any good by it." I suppose you mean, because so exceeding few will follow either your example or mine. I am sorry for it. This only gives me a fresh objection to this unwholesome, expensive food; viz., that it has too much hold on the hearts of them that use it; that, to use a scriptural phrase, they are "under the power of" this trifle. If it be so, were there no other reason than this, they ought to throw it away at once; else they no more regard St. Paul than they do you or me; for his rule is home to the point: "All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any." Away with it then, however lawful, (that is, though it were wholesome as well as cheap,) if you are already brought "under the power of" it.

And the fewer they are who follow this rule, the greater reason there is that you should add one example more to those few. Though, blessed be God, they are not so few as you suppose. I have met with very many in London who use less of it than they had done for many years; and above an hundred who have plucked out the right eye and cast it from them, who wholly abstain from it.

21. You add, "But I am equally, yea, abundantly more, concerned to set an example in all Christian behaviour." I grant it: This, therefore, "ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

22. But "one day," you add, "I saw your brother drink tea; which he said was for fear of giving offence."



I answer, First, Learn from hence to follow neither his nor my practice implicitly; but weigh the reason of each, and then follow reason, wheresoever it stands. But,

Secondly, Examine your heart, and beware inclination does not put on the shape of reason.

Thirdly, You see with your own eyes, I do not drink it at all, and yet I seldom give offence thereby. It is not then the bare abstaining, but the manner of doing it, which usually gives the offence.

Fourthly, There is therefore a manner wherein you may do it too, and yet give no more offence than I. For instance: If any ask you, simply reply, "I do not drink tea; I never use it." If they say, "Why, you did drink it;" answer, "I did so; but I have left it off a considerable time." Those who have either good-nature or good manners will say no more. But if any should impertinently add, "O, but why did you leave it off?" answer, mildly, "Because I thought water-gruel (suppose) was wholesomer, as well as cheaper." If they, with still greater ill-manners and impertinence, go on, "What, you do it because Mr. Wesley bids you;" reply, calmly, "True; I do it because Mr. Wesley, on good reasons, advises me so to do." If they add the trite cant phrase, "What, you follow man!" reply, without any emotion, "Yes, I follow any man, you or him, or any other, who gives me good reason for so doing." If they persist in cavilling, close the whole matter with, "I neither drink it, nor dispute about it."

23. If you proceed in this manner, with mildness and love, exceeding few will be offended. "But you ought," say some, "to give up an indifferent thing, rather than give an offence to any. So St. Paul: 'I will eat no flesh whilst the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.'" I reply, This is not an indifferent thing, if it affects the health either of myself or my brethren. Therefore that rule relating wholly to things indifferent is not applicable to this case. Would St. Paul have said, "I will drink drams while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend?" "But tea is not so hurtful as drams." I do not believe it is. But it is hurtful; and that is enough. The question does not turn on the degree of hurtfulness. "However, it is but a small thing." Nay, nothing is small if it touches conscience: Much less is it a small thing to preserve my own

or my brother's health, or to be a faithful steward even of the mammon of unrighteousness. O think it not a small thing, whether only one for whom Christ died be fed or hungry, clothed or naked !

To conclude the head of offence : You must at least allow that all this is no plea at all for your drinking tea at home. "Yes, it is ; for my husband or parents are offended if I do not drink it." I answer, First, Perhaps this, in some rare cases, may be a sufficient reason why a wife or a child should use this food, that is, with them ; but nowhere else. But, Secondly, try, and not once or twice only, if you cannot overcome that offence by reason, softness, love, patience, longsuffering, joined with constant and fervent prayer.

24. Your next objection is, "I cannot bear to give trouble ; therefore, I drink whatever others drink where I come, else there is so much hurry about insignificant me." I answer,

First, This is no plea at all for your drinking tea at home. Therefore, touch it not there, whatever you do abroad.

Secondly, Where is the trouble given, even when you are abroad, if they drink tea, and you fill your cup with milk and water ?

Thirdly, Whatever trouble is taken, is not for "insignificant me," but for that poor man who is half-starved with cold and hunger ; for that miserable woman who, while she is poisoning herself, wipes her mouth, and says she does no evil ; who will not believe the poison will hurt her, because it does not (sensibly at least) hurt you. O throw it away ! let her have one plea less for destroying her body, if not her soul, before the time !

25. You object, farther, "It is my desire to be unknown for any particularity, unless a peculiar love to the souls of those who are present." And I hope, to the souls of the absent too ; yea, and to their bodies also, in a due proportion, that they may be healthy, and fed, and clothed, and warm, and may praise God for the consolation.

26. You subjoin : "When I had left it off for some months, I was continually puzzled with, Why, What, &c. ; and I have seen no good effects, but impertinent questions and answers, and unedifying conversation about eating and drinking."

I answer, First, Those who were so uneasy about it, plainly



showed that you touched the apple of their eye. Consequently, these, of all others, ought to leave it off; for they are evidently "brought under the power of it."

Secondly, Those impertinent questions might have been cut short, by a very little steadiness and common sense. You need only have taken the method mentioned above, and they would have dropped in the midst.

Thirdly, It is not strange you saw no good effects of leaving it off, where it was not left off at all. But you saw very bad effects of not leaving it off; viz., the adding sin to sin; the joining much unedifying conversation to wasteful, unhealthy self-indulgence.

Fourthly, You need not go far to see many good effects of leaving it off: You may see them in me. I have recovered thereby that healthy state of the whole nervous system, which I had in a great degree, and I almost thought irrecoverably lost for considerably more than twenty years. I have been enabled hereby to assist, in one year, above fifty poor with food or raiment, whom I must otherwise have left (for I had before begged for them all I could) as hungry and naked as I found them. You may see the good effects in above thirty poor people just now before you, who have been restored to health, through the medicines bought by that money which a single person has saved in this article. And a thousand more good effects you will not fail to see, when her example is more generally followed.

27. Neither is there any need that conversation should be unedifying, even when it turns upon eating and drinking. Nay, from such a conversation, if duly improved, numberless good effects may flow. For how few understand, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God!" And how glad ought you to be of a fair occasion to observe, that though the kingdom of God does not consist in "meats and drinks," yet, without exact temperance in these, we cannot have either "righteousness, or peace, or joy in the Holy Ghost!"

It may therefore have a very happy effect, if, whenever people introduce the subject, you directly close in, and push it home, that they may understand a little more of this important truth.

28. But "I find at present very little desire to change either my thoughts or practice." Shall I speak plain? I

fear, by not standing your ground, by easiness, cowardice, and false shame, you have grieved the Spirit of God, and thereby lost your conviction and desire at once.

Yet you add: "I advise every one to leave off tea, if it hurts their health, or is inconsistent with frugality; as I advise every one to avoid dainties in meat, and vanity in dress, from the same principle." Enough, enough! Let this only be well pursued, and it will secure all that I contend for. I advise no persons living to leave it off, if it does not hurt the health either of them or their brethren; and if it is not inconsistent with the Christian frugality of cutting off every needless expense.

29. But "to be subject to the consequences of leaving it off again! this I cannot bear."

I answer, First, It may be so. You cannot easily bear it. For, by your giving up the point once, you have made it much harder to stand your ground now than it was at first. Yet still it is worth all your courage and labour; since the reasons for it are as strong as at the beginning.

Secondly, As to the consequences you fear, they are shadowy all; they are a mere lion in the streets. "Much trouble to others." Absolutely none at all, if you take the tea-kettle, and fill your cup with water. "Much foolish discourse." Take the preceding advice, and it will be just the reverse. "Nothing helpful toward the renewal of my soul in the image of Jesus Christ." What a deep mistake is this! Is it not helpful to speak closely of the nature of his inward kingdom? to encourage one another in casting off every weight, in removing every hinderance of it? to inure ourselves to the bearing his cross? to bring Christianity into common life, and accustom ourselves to conduct even our minutest actions by the great rules of reason and religion?

30. Is it "not of any importance" to do this? I think, it is of vast importance. However, "it is a very small circumstance in self-denial." It is well if you find it so. I am sure I did not. And I believe the case is the same with many others at this day. But you say, "I have so many other assaults of self-indulgence, that this is nothing." "It is nothing," said one to a young woman, "to fast once or twice a week; to deny yourself a little food. Why do not you deny yourself as to anger and fretfulness, as to peevishness and discontent?" She replied, "That I want; so I



deny myself in little things first, till I am able to do it in greater." Neither you nor I can mend her reply. Go thou and do likewise.

31. I have done what I proposed; and indeed in many more words than I at first intended. I have told you the occasions of every step I have taken, and the motives inducing me thereto; and have considered what either you or others have urged on the contrary side of the question.

And now, the advice I would give upon the whole is this: First, Pray earnestly to God for clear light; for a full, piercing, and steady conviction, that this is the more excellent way. Pray for a spirit of universal self-denial, of cheerful temperance, of wise frugality; for bowels of mercies; for a kind, compassionate spirit, tenderly sensible of the various wants of your brethren; and for firmness of mind; for a mild, even courage, without fear, anger, or shame. Then you will once more, with all readiness of heart, make this little (or great) sacrifice to God; and withal present your soul and body a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ.

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## THOUGHTS ON NERVOUS DISORDERS;

### PARTICULARLY THAT WHICH IS USUALLY TERMED LOWNESS OF SPIRITS.

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1. WHEN Physicians meet with disorders which they do not understand, they commonly term them *nervous*; a word that conveys to us no determinate idea, but it is a good cover for learned ignorance. But these are often no natural disorder of the body, but the hand of God upon the soul, being a dull consciousness of the want of God, and the unsatisfactoriness of everything here below. At other times it is conviction of sin, either in a higher or a lower degree. It is no wonder that those who are strangers to religion

should not know what to make of this; and that, consequently, all their prescriptions should be useless, seeing they quite mistake the case.

2. But undoubtedly there are nervous disorders which are purely natural. Many of these are connected with other diseases, whether acute or chronical. Many are the forerunners of various distempers, and many the consequences of them. But there are those which are not connected with others, being themselves a distinct, original distemper. And this frequently arises to such a height, that it seems to be one species of madness. So, one man imagines himself to be made of glass; another thinks he is too tall to go in at the door. This is often termed the *spleen*, or *vapours*; often, *lowness of spirits*; a phrase that, having scarce any meaning, is so much the fitter to be given to this unintelligible disorder. It seems to have taken its rise from hence: We sometimes say, "A man is in high spirits;" and the proper opposite to this is, "He is low-spirited." Does not this imply, that a kind of faintness, weariness, and listlessness affects the whole body, so that he is disinclined to any motion, and hardly cares to move hand or foot? But the mind seems chiefly to be affected, having lost its relish of everything, and being no longer capable of enjoying the things it once delighted in most. Nay, everything round about is not only flat and insipid, but dreary and uncomfortable. It is not strange if, to one in this state, life itself is become a burden; yea, so insupportable a burden, that many who have all this world can give, desperately rush into an unknown world, rather than bear it any longer.

3. But what are the causes of this strange disorder? One cause is, the use of spirituous liquors. This is one of the horrid effects which naturally follow the swallowing that fashionable poison. That liquid fire lays the foundation of numberless diseases, and of this in particular. It is amazing that the preparing or selling this poison should be permitted (I will not say in any Christian country, but) in any civilized state. "O, it brings in a considerable sum of money to Government." True; but is it wise to barter men's lives for money? Surely, that gold is bought too dear, if it is the price of blood. Does not the strength of every country consist in the number of its inhabitants? If so, the lessening their number is a loss which no money can compensate. So



that it is inexcusable ill husbandry, to give the lives of useful men for any sum of money whatever.

4. But a more extensive cause of this disorder than the use of drams, I apprehend, is the use of tea; particularly where it is taken either in large quantities, or strong, or without cream and sugar. "Nay, weak tea is far more hurtful." This is a senseless, shameless falsehood. I long drank hot sugar-and-water instead of tea; and it did me no hurt at all. But three cups of strong tea will now make my hand shake, so that I can hardly write. And let any try the experiment: If any tea make his hand shake, it will not be weak tea, but strong. This has exceedingly increased the number of nervous complaints throughout the three kingdoms. And this furnishes us with a satisfactory answer to the common question, "Why are these complaints so general now, which were scarce heard of two or three centuries ago?" For this plain reason: Two or three centuries ago, no tea was drank in either Britain or Ireland.

5. But allowing both tea and spirituous liquors to have contributed largely to the increase of nervous disorders, yet it may be doubted, whether one or both of them are the principal causes of them. The principal causes of them (particularly among those who do not work for their living) are, as Dr. Cadogan justly observes, indolence, intemperance, and irregular passions.

First. Indolence, the not using such a degree of exercise as the constitution requires. To illustrate this: Our body is composed of earth, water, air, and fire; and the two latter are as necessary as the two former. To supply these, that curious engine, the lungs, continually takes in the air; to every particle of which a particle of fire is attached, which, being detached from it, is mingled with the blood. Now, exercise quickens the motion of the lungs, and enables them to collect from the air a due quantity of fire. The nerves are the conductors of this ethereal fire, vulgarly called the animal spirits. If this is duly diffused through the whole body, we are lively and vigorous; if it is not, (which without exercise it cannot be,) we soon grow faint and languid. And if other disorders do not ensue, those termed nervous surely will, with that whole train of symptoms which are usually comprised in what is termed *lowness of spirits*.

6. Intemperance is another principal cause of this;—if not intemperance in drink, which is not quite so common, yet intemperance in meat; the taking more of it than nature requires. Dr. Cheyne well observes, it is not generally the quality, but the quantity, of what we eat which hurts us. What hurts the nerves in particular, is the eating too much animal food, especially at night; much more the eating at one meal foods of several different kinds. If we consider how few observe this, we shall not wonder that so many have nervous disorders; especially among those that have an opportunity of indulging themselves daily in variety, and who are hereby continually tempted to eat more than nature requires.

7. But there is another sort of intemperance, of which I think Dr. Cadogan does not take the least notice. And yet it is the source of more nervous disorders than even intemperance in food; I mean, intemperance in sleep; the sleeping longer than nature requires. This alone will account for the weak nerves of most of our Nobility and Gentry. Not that I would insist upon the old rule,—

*Sex horas quivis poscit, septemque scholaris;  
Octo viator habet; nebulo quisque novem.\**

I would allow between six and seven hours, at an average, to a healthy man; or an hour more, between seven and eight hours, to an unhealthy man. And I do not remember, that in threescore years I have known either man or woman who laid longer in bed than this, (whether they slept or no,) but in some years they complained of lowness of spirits.

The plain reason of which seems to be, while we sleep all the springs of nature are unbent. And if we sleep longer than is sufficient, they are relaxed more than is sufficient, and of course grow weaker and weaker. And if we lie longer in bed, though without sleep, the very posture relaxes the whole body; much more when we are covered up with clothes, which throw back on the body whatever perspires from it. By this means it is stewed in the moist vapour: It

\* Thus paraphrastically translated by an anonymous writer in the Arminian Magazine:—

“Six hours for sleep the human frame requires;  
Hard students may to seven incline;  
To eight, the men whom toil or travelling tires;  
But lazy knaves will all have nine.”—*EDIT.*



sucks in again what nature has cast out, and the flesh is, as it were, parboiled therein, and becomes more and more soft and flabby; and the nerves suffer at least as much hereby as any other part of the habit. I cannot therefore but account this, the lying too long in bed, the grand cause of our nervous disorders.

8. And this alone sufficiently answers this question, "Why are we more nervous than our forefathers?" Because we lie longer in bed: They, rich and poor, slept about eight, when they heard the curfew-bell, and rose at four; the bell ringing at that hour (as well as at eight) in every parish in England. We rise (if not obliged to work for our living) at ten, eleven, or twelve. Is it any wonder then, were there no other cause, that we complain of lowness of spirits?

9. Yet something may be allowed to irregular passions. For as long as the soul and body are united, these undoubtedly affect the body; the nerves in particular. Even violent joy, though it raises the spirits for a time, does afterwards sink them greatly. And every one knows what an influence fear has upon our whole frame. Nay, even "hope deferred maketh the heart sick;" puts the mind all out of tune. The same effect have all foolish and hurtful desires. They "pierce us through with many sorrows;" they occasion a deep depression of the spirits: So, above all, does inordinate affection; whereby so many, refusing to be comforted, sorrow even unto death.

10. But is there no cure for this sore evil? Is there no remedy for lowness of spirits? Undoubtedly there is; a most certain cure, if you are willing to pay the price of it. But this price is not silver or gold, nor anything purchasable thereby. If you would give all the substance of your house for it, it would be utterly despised; and all the medicines under the sun avail nothing in this distemper. The whole *materia medica* put together, will do you no lasting service; they do not strike at the root of the disease: But you must remove the cause, if you wish to remove the effect.

But this cannot be done by your own strength; it can only be done by the mighty power of God. If you are convinced of this, set about it, trusting in Him, and you will surely conquer.

First. Sacredly abstain from all spirituous liquors. Touch them not, on any pretence whatever. To others they may

sometimes be of use ; but to nervous persons they are deadly poison.

Secondly. If you drink any, drink but little tea, and none at all without eating, or without sugar and cream. "But you like it without." No matter ; prefer health before taste.

Thirdly. Every day of your life take at least an hour's exercise, between breakfast and dinner. If you will, take another hour before supper, or before you sleep. If you can, take it in the open air ; otherwise, in the house. If you cannot ride or walk abroad, use, within, a dumb-bell, or a wooden horse. If you have not strength to do this for an hour at a time, do it at twice or thrice. Let nothing hinder you. Your life is at stake. Make everything yield to this.

Fourthly. Take no more food than nature requires. Dine upon one thing,—except pudding or pie. Eat no flesh at supper ; but something light and easy of digestion.

Fifthly. Sleep early and rise early ; unless you are ill, never lie in bed much above seven hours. Then you will never lie awake. Your flesh will be firm, and your spirits lively.

Sixthly. Above all,—

Give not your passions way ;

God gave them to thee under lock and key.

Beware of anger ; beware of worldly sorrow ; beware of the fear that hath torment ; beware of foolish and hurtful desires ; beware of inordinate affection ; remember the kind command, "My son, give me thy heart !" Then shall there be no more complaining of lowness of spirits ! But "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," shall keep thy heart and mind in Christ Jesus !

MELVILL-HOUSE,

May 20, 1784.