

CLXXXII.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

LONDON, *December 1, 1781.*

NEVER be afraid that I should think your letters troublesome: I am never so busy as to forget my friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher made an excellent beginning, and I trust they will increase with all the increase of God. Now, let all of you that remain in the neighbourhood arise up and supply her lack of service. Be instant in season, out of season; that all may know you have caught her mantle!

But pray do not suffer my poor Miss Ritchie to work herself to death. Let her do all she can, and not more than she can.

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CLXXXIII.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

Near LONDON, *November 21, 1783.*

THROUGH the blessing of God, I find no difference at all between the health and strength which are now given me, and that which I had forty years ago. Only I had then many pains which I have not now.

You are enabled to give a very clear and standing proof that weakness of nerves cannot prevent joy in the Lord. Your nerves have been remarkably weak, and that for many years: But still your soul can magnify the Lord, and your spirit rejoice in God your Saviour!

Your affectionate brother.

CLXXXIV.—*To Dr. Robertson.*

DEAR SIR,

BRISTOL, *September 24, 1753.*

I HAVE lately had the pleasure of reading Mr. Ramsay's "Principles of Religion," with the notes you have annexed to them. Doubtless he was a person of a bright and strong understanding, but I think not of a very clear apprehension. Perhaps it might be owing to this, that, not distinctly perceiving the strength of some of the objections to his hypothesis, he is very peremptory in his assertions, and apt to treat his opponent with an air of contempt and disdain.

This seems to have been a blemish even in his moral character. I am afraid the using guile is another: For surely it is a mere artifice to impute to the Schoolmen the rise of almost every opinion which he censures; seeing he must have known that most, if not all, of those opinions, preceded the Schoolmen several hundred years.

The treatise itself gave me a stronger conviction than ever I had before, both of the fallaciousness and unsatisfactoriness of the mathematical method of reasoning on religious subjects. Extremely fallacious it is; for if we slip but in one line, a whole train of errors may follow: And utterly unsatisfactory, at least to me, because I can never be sufficiently assured that this is not the case.

The two first books, although doubtless they are a fine chain of reasoning, yet gave me the less satisfaction, because I am clearly of Mr. H——'s judgment, that all this is beginning at the wrong end; that we can have no idea of God, nor any sufficient proof of his very being, but from the creatures; and that the meanest plant is a far stronger proof hereof, than all Dr. Clarke's or the Chevalier's demonstrations.

Among the latter, I was surprised to find a demonstration of the manner how God is present to all beings; (page 57;) how he begat the Son from all eternity; (page 77;) and how the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. (Page 85.) *Quanto satius est fateri nescire quæ nescias, quam ista effutientem nauseare, et ipsum tibi displicere?** How much better to keep to his own conclusion, (page 95,) "Reason proves that this mystery is possible!" Revelation assures us that it is true; Heaven alone can show us how it is.

There are several propositions in his second book which I cannot assent to; particularly with regard to the divine foreknowledge. I can by no means acquiesce in the twenty-second proposition, "That it is a matter of free choice in God, to think of finite ideas." I cannot reconcile this with the assertion of the Apostle, "Known unto God are all his works *απ' αιωνος*, from eternity." And if any one ask, "How

* This quotation from Cicero on the Nature of the Gods is thus translated by Dr. Francklin:—"How much more laudable would it be, to acknowledge you do not know what you do not know, than to follow that blunderer, whom you must surely despise!"—EDIT.

is God's foreknowledge consistent with our freedom ;" I plainly answer, I cannot tell.

In the third book, (page 209,) I read, "The desire of God, purely as beatifying, as the source of infinite pleasure, is a necessary consequence of the natural love we have for happiness." I deny it absolutely. My natural love for happiness was as strong thirty years ago as at this instant. Yet I had then no more desire of God, as the source of any pleasure at all, than I had of the devil or of hell. So totally false is that, "That the soul inevitably loves what it judges to be the best."

Equally false is his next corollary ; that "if ever fallen spirits see and feel that moral evil is a source of eternal misery, they cannot continue to will it deliberately." (*Ibid.*) I can now show living proofs of the contrary. But I take knowledge, both from this and many other of his assertions, that Mr. R. never rightly understood the height and depth of that corruption which is in man, as well as diabolical nature.

The doctrine of pure love, as it is stated in the fourth book and elsewhere, (the loving God chiefly if not solely for his inherent perfections,) I once firmly espoused. But I was at length unwillingly convinced that I must give it up or give up the Bible. And for near twenty years I have thought, as I do now, that it is at least unscriptural, if not antiscritptural : For the Scripture gives not the least intimation, that I can find, of any higher, or indeed any other, love of God, than that mentioned by St. John : "We love him, because he first loved us." And I desire no higher love of God, till my spirit returns to Him.

Page 313 : "There can be but two possible ways of curing moral evil ; the sensation of pleasure in the discovery of truth, or the sensation of pain in the love of error."

So here is one who has searched out the Almighty to perfection ! who knows every way wherein He can exert his omnipotence !

I am not clear in this. I believe it is very possible for God to act in some third way. I believe he can make me as holy as an archangel, without any sensation at all preceding.

Page 324 : "Hence it is that the chaos mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis cannot be understood of the primitive state of nature."

Why not, if God created the world gradually, as we are assured he did?

In the fifth book, (page 334,) I read a more extraordinary assertion than any of the preceding: "The infusion of such supernatural habits, by one instantaneous act, is impossible. We cannot be confirmed in immutable habits of good, but by a long-continued repetition of free acts." I dare not say so. I am persuaded God can this moment confirm me immutably good.

Page 335: "Such is the nature of finite spirits, that, after a certain degree of good habits contracted, they become unpervertible and immutable in the love of order." If so, "after a certain degree of evil habits contracted, must they not become unconvertible and immutable in the hatred of order?" And if Omnipotence cannot prevent the one, neither can it prevent the other.

Page 343: "No creature can suffer, but what has merited punishment." This is not true; for the man Christ Jesus was a creature. But he suffered; yet he had not merited punishment, unless our sins were imputed to him. But if so, Adam's sin might be imputed to us; and on that account even an infant may suffer.

Now, if these things are so, if a creature may suffer for the sin of another imputed to him, then the whole frame of reasoning for the pre-existence of souls, raised from the contrary supposition, falls to the ground.

Page 347: "There are but three opinions concerning the transmission of original sin." That is, there are but three ways of accounting how it is transmitted. I care not if there were none. The fact I know, both by Scripture and by experience. I know it is transmitted; but how it is transmitted, I neither know nor desire to know.

Page 353: "By this insensibility and spiritual lethargy in which all souls remain, ere they awake into mortal bodies, the habits of evil in some are totally extinguished."

Then it seems there is a third possible way of curing moral evil. And why may not all souls be cured this way, without any pain or suffering at all?

"If any impurity remains in them, it is destroyed in a middle state after death." (*Ibid.*)

I read nothing of either of these purgations in the Bible. But it appears to me, from the whole tenor of his writings,

that the Chevalier's notions are about one quarter scriptural, one quarter Popish, and two quarters Mystic.

Page 360: "God dissipated the chaos, introduced into the solar system by the fall of angels." Does sacred writ affirm this? Where is it written, except in Jacob Behmen?

Page 366: "Physical evil is the only means of curing moral evil." This is absolutely contrary both to Scripture, experience, and his own words, page 353. And "this great principle," as he terms it, is one of those fundamental mistakes which run through the whole Mystic divinity.

Almost all that is asserted in the following pages may likewise be confuted by simply denying it.

Page 373: "Hence we see the necessity of sufferings and expiatory pains in order to purify lapsed beings; the intrinsic efficacy of physical, to cure moral, evil."

"Expiatory pains" is pure, unmixed Popery; but they can have no place in the Mystic scheme. This only asserts, "the intrinsic efficacy of physical, to cure moral, evil, and the absolute necessity of sufferings, to purify lapsed beings:" Neither of which I can find in the Bible; though I really believe there is as much of the efficacy in sufferings, as in spiritual lethargy.

Page 374. "If beasts have any souls, they are either material or immaterial, to be annihilated after death; or degraded intelligences." No; they may be immaterial, and yet not to be annihilated.

If you ask, "But how are they to subsist after death?" I answer, He that made them knows.

The sixth book, I fear, is more dangerously wrong than any of the preceding, as it effectually undermines the whole scriptural account of God's reconciling the world unto himself, and turns the whole redemption of man by the blood of Christ into a mere metaphor. I doubt whether Jacob Behmen does not do the same. I am sure he does, if Mr. Law understands him right.

I have not time to specify all the exceptionable passages: If I did, I must transcribe part of almost every page.

Page 393: "The Divinity is unsusceptible of anger." I take this to be the *πρωτον ψευδος** of all the Mystics. But I demand the proof. I take anger to have the same relation to justice, as love has to mercy.

* The prime fallacy.—EDIT.

But if we grant them this, then they will prove their point. For if God was never angry, his anger could never be appeased; and then we may safely adopt the very words of Socinus, *Tota redemptionis nostræ per Christum metaphora* ;* seeing Christ died only to "show to all the celestial choirs God's infinite aversion to disorder."

Page 394: "He suffered, because of the sin of men, infinite agonies, as a tender father suffers to see the vices of his children. He felt all that lapsed angels and men should have suffered to all eternity. Without this sacrifice, celestial spirits could never have known the horrible deformity of vice. In this sense, he substituted himself as a victim to take away the sins of the world; not to appease vindictive justice, but to show God's infinite love of justice."

This is as broad Socinianism as can be imagined. Nay, it is more. It is not only denying the satisfaction of Christ, but supposing that he died for devils as much, and for the angels in heaven much more, than he did for man.

Indeed he calls Him an expiatory sacrifice, a propitiatory victim; but remember, it was only in this sense: For you are told again, (page 399,) "See the deplorable ignorance of those who represent the expiatory sacrifice of Christ as destined to appease vindictive justice, and avert divine vengeance. It is by such frivolous and blasphemous notions that the Schoolmen have exposed this divine mystery."

These "frivolous and blasphemous notions" do I receive as the precious truths of God. And so deplorable is my ignorance, that I verily believe all who deny them deny the Lord that bought them.

Page 400: "The immediate, essential, necessary means of re-uniting men to God are prayer, mortification, and self-denial." No; the immediate, essential, necessary mean of re-uniting me to God, is living faith; and that alone: Without this, I cannot be re-united to God; with this, I cannot but be re-united.

Prayer, mortification, and self-denial, are the fruits of faith, and the grand means of continuing and increasing it.

But I object to the account Mr. R. and all the Mystics give of these. It is far too lax and general. And hence

those who receive all he says will live just as they did before, in all the ease, pleasure, and state they can afford.

Page 403: "Prayer, mortification, and self-denial, produce necessarily in the soul faith, hope, and charity."

On the contrary, faith must necessarily precede both prayer, mortification, and self-denial, if we mean thereby, "adoring God in spirit and in truth, a continual death to all that is visible, and a constant, universal suppression and sacrifice of all the motions of false love." And the Chevalier talks of all these like a mere parrot, if he did not know and feel in his inmost soul, that it is absolutely false that any of these should subsist in our heart till we truly believe in the Son of God.

"True faith is a divine light in the soul that discovers the laws of eternal order, the all of God, and the nothingness of the creatures." It does; but it discovers first of all, that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me, and washes me from my sins in his own blood.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate brother.

CLXXXV.—*To Mrs. Sarah Ryan.**

MY DEAR SISTER,

NEWBURY, November 8, 1757.

IN the hurry of business I had not time to write down what you desired,—the rules of our family. So I snatch a few minutes to do it now; and the more cheerfully, because I know you will observe them.

1. The family rises, part at four, part at half an hour after.
2. They breakfast at seven, dine at twelve, and sup at six.
3. They spend the hour from five to six in the evening (after a little joint prayer) in private.
4. They pray together at nine, and then retire to their chambers; so that all are in bed before ten.
5. They observe all Fridays in the year as days of fasting, or abstinence.

You, in particular, I advise,—Suffer no impertinent visitant, no unprofitable conversation, in the house. It is a

* Mr. Wesley's housekeeper at Bristol.—EDIT.

city set upon an hill ; and all that is in it should be "holiness to the Lord."

On what a pinnacle do you stand ! You are placed in the eye of all the world, friends and enemies. You have no experience of these things ; no knowledge of the people ; no advantages of education ; not large natural abilities ; and are but a novice, as it were, in the ways of God ! It requires all the omnipotent love of God to preserve you in your present station. Stand fast in the Lord, and in the power of his might ! Show that nothing is too hard for Him. Take to thee the whole armour of God ; and do and suffer all things through Christ strengthening thee. If you continue teachable and advisable, I know nothing that shall be able to hurt you.

Your affectionate brother.

CLXXXVI.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

NORWICH, November 22, 1757.

MAY the peace and love of God spring up in your heart, as in time past, and more abundantly ! You have refreshed my bowels in the Lord : I feel your words, and praise God on your behalf. I not only excuse but love your simplicity ; and whatever freedom you use, it will be welcome.

Surely God will never suffer me to be ashamed of my confidence in you. I have been censured for it by some of your nearest friends ; but I cannot repent of it. Will not you put forth all your strength, (which indeed is not yours ; it is the Spirit of the Father which now worketh in you,)

1. In managing all things pertaining to the house, so as to adorn the Gospel of God our Saviour ? 2. In feeding the sheep he has committed to your immediate care, and carrying the weak and sickly in your bosom ? 3. In assisting, quickening, and directing the family at Kingswood, whom I trust you will always bear upon your heart ? 4. In reproving, stirring up, or confirming all whom the providence of God shall put into your hands ? And, lastly, in watching over, and helping forward in the ways of God, one who has more need of help than all the rest ; and who is always willing to receive it from you, because you always speak the truth in love ?

Do you find no interruption or abatement at any time of

your joy in the Lord? Do you continually see God; and that without any cloud, or darkness, or mist between? Do you pray without ceasing, without ever being diverted from it by anything inward or outward? Are you never hindered by any person or thing? by the power or subtlety of Satan, or by the weakness or disorders of the body, pressing down the soul? Can you be thankful for everything without exception? And do you feel all working together for good? Do you do nothing, great or small, merely to please yourself? Do you feel no touch of any desire or affection but what springs from the pure love of God? Do you speak no words but from a principle of love, and under the guidance of his Spirit? O how I long to find you unblamable in all things, and holy as He that hath called you is holy!

I am yours, &c.

CLXXXVII.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

LONDON, *November 30, 1757.*

YOUR letter came in a seasonable time, as rain in a time of drought. How fain would we excuse those we love! I would gladly acquit those who severely condemn each other. The wrong to myself is not worth a thought; it gives me not a moment's uneasiness. But I am pained for others, who if they do not sin against God, yet give great occasion to the enemy to blaspheme.

You may learn an excellent lesson herefrom. Suppose you are saved from sin, it is certain that you are not saved from a possibility of mistake. On this side, therefore, Satan may assault you; you may be deceived either as to persons or things. You may think better, or (which is far more strange) you may think worse, of them, than they deserve. And hence words or actions may spring, which, if not sinful in you, are certainly wrong in themselves; and which will and must appear sinful to those who cannot read your heart. What grievous inconvenience would ensue! How would the good that is in you be evil spoken of! How would the great gift of God be doubted of, if not disbelieved and denied, for your cause! Therefore, in the name of God I exhort you, keep close every moment to the unction of the Holy One! Attend to the still small voice! Beware of hearkening to the voice of a stranger! My eyes ache, my head aches, my heart aches. And yet I know not when to

have done. O speak nothing; act nothing, think nothing, but as you are taught of God!

Still may He with your weakness stay,
Nor for a moment's space depart;
Evil and danger turn away,
And keep your hand, your tongue, your heart.

So shall you always comfort, not grieve,
Your affectionate brother.

CLXXXVIII.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

December 14, 1757.

I FIND by Mr. P—n's last letter, that he is deeply offended; that his former affection (so he speaks) is degenerated into a cold esteem, and that he no longer regards me as a dear friend, but as an austere master. Has he not a little affected you? He does not speak with passion; but his words distil as the dew. The God whom you serve send forth his light and his truth, and direct you in every thought!

Do you never find any wandering thoughts in prayer, or useless thoughts at other seasons? Does the corruptible body never press down the soul, and make it muse about useless things? Have you so great a command over your imagination, as to keep out all unprofitable images? at least to banish them the moment they appear, so that they neither trouble nor sully your soul? Do you find every reasoning brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ? Is there no vanity or folly in your dreams? no temptation that almost overcomes you? And are you then as sensible of the presence of God, and as full of prayer, as when you are waking?

I can hardly avoid trembling for you still: Upon what a pinnacle do you stand! Perhaps few persons in England have been in so dangerous a situation as you are now. I know not whether any other was ever so regarded both by my brother and me at the same time. What can I do to help you? The Father of mercies help you, and with his favourable kindness surround you on every side! May the eternal Spirit help you in every thought, word, and work, to serve the living God!

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CLXXXIX.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

January 20, 1758.

How did you feel yourself under your late trial? Did you find no stirring of resentment; no remains of your own will; no desire or wish that things should be otherwise? In one sense, you do desire it; because you desire that God should be glorified in all things. But did not the falling short of that desire lessen your happiness? Had you still the same degree of communion with God, the same joy in the Holy Ghost? I never saw you so much moved as you appeared to be that evening. Your soul was then greatly troubled; and a variety of conflicting passions, love, sorrow, desire, with a kind of despair, were easy to be read in your countenance. And was not your heart unhinged at all? Was it not ruffled or discomposed? Was your soul all the time calmly stayed on God? waiting upon him without distraction? Perhaps one end of this close trial was, to give you a deeper knowledge of yourself and of God; of His power to save, and of the salvation he hath wrought in you.

Most of the trials you have lately met with have been of another kind; but it is expedient for you to go through both evil and good report. The conversing with you, either by speaking or writing, is an unspeakable blessing to me. I cannot think of you without thinking of God. Others often lead me to him; but it is, as it were, going round about; you bring me straight into His presence. Therefore, whoever warns me against trusting you, I cannot refrain; as I am clearly convinced He calls me to it.

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CXC.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

January 27, 1758.

LAST Friday, after many severe words, my —— left me, vowing she would see me no more. As I had wrote to you the same morning, I began to reason with myself, till I almost doubted whether I had done well in writing, or whether I ought to write to you at all. After prayer that doubt was taken away. Yet I was almost sorry that I had

written that morning. In the evening, while I was preaching at the chapel, she came into the chamber where I had left my clothes, searched my pockets, and found the letter there, which I had finished, but had not sealed. While she read it, God broke her heart; and I afterwards found her in such a temper as I have not seen her in for several years. She has continued in the same ever since. So I think God has given a sufficient answer, with regard to our writing to each other.

I still feel some fear concerning you. How have you found yourself since we parted? Have you suffered no loss by anything? Has nothing damped the vigour of your spirit? Is honour a blessing, and dishonour too? the frowns and smiles of men? Are you one and the same in ease or pain; always attentive to the voice of God? What kind of humility do you feel? What have you to humble you, if you have no sin? Are you wise in the manner of spending your time? Do you employ it all, not only well, but as well as it is possible? What time have you for reading? I want you to live like an angel here below; or rather, like the Son of God. Woman, walk thou as Christ walked; then you cannot but love and pray for

Your affectionate brother.

CXCI.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

February 10, 1758.

YOUR last letter was seasonable indeed. I was growing faint in my mind. The being continually watched over for evil, the having every word I spoke, every action I did, small and great, watched over with no friendly eye; the hearing a thousand little, tart, unkind reflections, in return for the kindest words I could devise,—

Like drops of eating water on the marble,
At length have worn my sinking spirits down.

Yet I could not say, "Take thy plague away from me;" but only, "Let me be purified, not consumed."

What kind of humility do you feel? Is it a sense of sinfulness? Is it not a sense of helplessness, of dependence, of emptiness, and, as it were, nothingness? How do you look back on your past sins, either of heart or life? What tempers or passions do you feel, while you are employed in

these reflections? Do you feel nothing like pride while you are comparing your present with your past state; or while persons are showing their approbation of, or esteem for, you? How is it that you are so frequently charged with pride? Are you careful to abstain from the appearance of it? O how important are all your steps! The Lord God guide and support you every moment!

I am yours, &c.

CXCII.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

MALDON, *February 20, 1758.*

Is your eye altogether single? Is your heart entirely pure? I know you gave up the whole to God once; but do you stand to the gift? Once your will was swallowed up in God's. But is it now, and will it be so always? The whole Spirit and power of God be upon you; stablish, strengthen, settle you; and preserve your spirit, soul, and body, spotless and unblamable, unto the coming of Jesus Christ!

I am yours, &c.

CXCIII.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

DUBLIN, *April 4, 1758.*

O THAT I could be of some use to you! I long to help you forward in your way. I want to have your understanding a mere lamp of light, always shining with light from above! I want you to be full of divine knowledge and wisdom, as Jordan in the time of harvest! I want your words to be full of grace, poured out as precious ointment. I want your every work to bear the stamp of God, to be a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour: Without any part weak, earthly, or human; all holy, all divine. The great God, your Father and your Love, bring you to this self-same thing! Begin, soldier of Christ, child of God. Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith thou art called! Remember the faith! Remember the Captain of thy salvation! Fight! conquer! Die,—and live for ever!

I am yours, &c.

CXCIV.—*To Mr. Joseph Cownley.*BRISTOL, *September 20, 1746.*

MY DEAR BRETHREN,*

As many of you as have set your hands to the plough, see that you go on, and look not back. The prize and the crown are before you; and in due time you shall reap, if you faint not. Meantime, fight the good fight of faith, enduring the cross, and despising the shame. Beware that none of you return evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing. Show forth out of a loving heart, your good conversation, with meekness and wisdom. Avoid all disputes as you would avoid fire: So shall ye continue kindly affectionate one toward another. The God of peace be with you.

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CXC.V.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

DUBLIN, *April 12, 1750.*

I DOUBT you are in a great deal more danger from honour than from dishonour. So it is with me. I always find there is most hazard in sailing upon smooth water. When the winds blow, and the seas rage, even the sleepers will rise and call upon God.

From Newcastle to London, and from London to Bristol, God is everywhere reviving his work. I find it is so now in Dublin; although there has been great imprudence in some, whereby grievous wolves have lately crept in amongst us, not sparing the flock; by whom some souls have been utterly destroyed, and others wounded, who are not yet recovered. Those who ought to have stood in the gap did not; but I trust they will be wiser for the time to come. After a season, I think it will be highly expedient for you to labour in Ireland again. Mr. Lunell has been on the brink of the grave by a fever. Yesterday we had hopes of his recovery. I see a danger you are in, which perhaps you do not see yourself. Is it not most pleasing to me, as well as you, to be always preaching of the love of God? And is

* This letter, though directed to Mr. Cownley, was addressed to the society at Leominster.—EDIT.

there not a time when we are peculiarly led thereto, and find a peculiar blessing therein? Without doubt, so it is. But yet it would be utterly wrong and unscriptural to preach of nothing else. Let the Law always prepare for the Gospel. I scarce ever spoke more earnestly here of the love of God in Christ than last night: But it was after I had been tearing the unawakened in pieces. Go thou and do likewise. It is true, the love of God in Christ alone feeds his children; but even they are to be guided as well as fed; yea, and often physicked too: And the bulk of our hearers must be purged before they are fed; else we only feed the disease. Beware of all honey. It is the best extreme; but it is an extreme.

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CXCVI.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

LONDON, *January 10, 1756.*

I HAVE no objection to anything but the blister. If it does good, well. But if I had been at Cork, all the Physicians in Ireland should not have put it upon your head. Remember poor Bishop Pearson. An Apothecary, to cure a pain in his head, covered it with a large blister. In an hour, he cried out, "O my head, my head!" and was a fool ever after, to the day of his death. I believe cooling things (if anything under heaven) would remove that violent irritation of your nerves, which probably occasions the pain. Moderate riding may be of use; I believe of more than the blister: Only do not take more labour upon you than you can bear. Do as much as you can, and no more. Let us make use of the present time. Every day is of importance. We know not how few days of peace remain. We join in love to you and yours.

I am, dear Joseph,

Your affectionate friend and brother.

CXCVII.—*To Miss —.*

February 21, 1759.

PROBABLY, Miss —, this may be the last trouble of the kind which you will receive from me. Therefore you

may forgive me this; and the rather, when you consider my motives to it. You know I can have no temporal view; I can have none but a faint, distant hope (because with God all things are possible) of doing some service to one whom I love. And this may answer the question which you might naturally ask, "What would you have? What do you want with me?" I want you, not to be a convert to my opinions, but to be a member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of his kingdom. Be anything as to outward profession, so you are lowly in heart; so you resist and conquer every motion of pride, and have that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Be what you please besides; only be meek and gentle, and in patience possess your soul; so that one may truly say to you,

"Calm thou ever art within,
All unruffled, all serene."

Hear what Preacher you will; but hear the voice of God, and beware of prejudice and every unkind temper: Beware of foolish and hurtful desires, or they will pierce you through with many sorrows. In one word, be anything but a trifler, a trifler with God and your own soul. It was not for this, that God gave you

A mind superior to the vulgar herd.

No, Miss —, no! but that you might employ all your talents to the glory of Him that gave them. O do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God! Is He not still striving with you? striving to make you, not almost, but altogether, a Christian? Indeed you must be all or nothing; a saint or a devil; eminent in sin, or holiness! The good Lord deliver you from every snare, and guide your feet in the way of peace! How great a pleasure would this give to all your real friends, and in particular to

Your affectionate servant for Christ's sake.

CXCVIII.—*To the Same.*

COLCHESTER, *March 20, 1759*

My wife, Miss —, surprised me last night by informing me you are left mistress of a large fortune. Shall I say, agreeably surprised me? I cannot tell; because I believe there is another world; and I do not know what influence

this change may have on your condition. Therefore I am in fear and in hope. You may be hereby far more happy, or far more miserable, in eternity! O make a stand! Consider the situation you are in: Perhaps never before were you in so great danger. You know a little of your natural tempers: Now you have means of indulging, and thereby inflaming, them to the uttermost. And how many will incite you so to do! How few will dare to warn you against it! Now what food will you have for pride! what infinite temptations to think more highly than you ought to think! You do so already. But O, where will you stop? The good Lord arrest the storm in mid career! How impetuously now, unless God interpose, must self-will whirl you along! How deeply, unless He help, will you shortly be immersed in practical atheism! as ten thousand things will concur to drive God out of your thoughts, as much as if he were not in the world. But, above all, how will you escape from being swallowed up in idolatry? love of the world, such as you never knew before?

Hitherto you have been greatly superior to every delicacy in food: But even this may assault you now; and perhaps raise in you other desires which you are now a stranger to. At present, you are above the follies of dress; but will you be so a twelvemonth hence? May you not easily slide into the pride of life, in this as well as other instances? especially considering how your vanity will be gratified thereby? For who will not admire and applaud your admirable taste? It will only remain for you to marry some agreeable person, that has much wit and sense, with little or no religion; then it is finished! Either you will be thoroughly miserable in this world, or miserable to eternity.

“But what business is this of yours? Cannot you let me alone? What have I to do with you?” Believe me, I could very easily let you alone, if I had not a real and tender good-will toward you; and if I did not know (what perhaps you do not) that you have need even of me. You want friends who understand you well, and who dare tell you the whole, plain truth; and yet not in a surly, imperious manner; for then you could not receive it. I have endeavoured to do this once more. Will not you forgive me? I cannot but think, if you do not thank, you will at least excuse,

Your affectionate servant.

CXCIX.—*To Miss H—.*DUBLIN, *April 5, 1758.*

It is with great reluctance that I at length begin to write: First, because I abhor disputing, and never enter upon it but when I am, as it were, dragged into it by the hair of the head; and, next, because I have so little hope that any good will arise from the present dispute. I fear your passions are too deeply interested in the question to admit the force of the strongest reason. So that, were it not for the tender regard I have for you, which makes your desire a motive I cannot resist, I should not spend half an hour in so thankless a labour, and one wherein I have so little prospect of success.

"The doctrine of perfection," you say, "has perplexed you much, since some of our Preachers have placed it in so dreadful a light; one of them affirming, A believer, till perfect, is under the curse of God, and in a state of damnation: Another, If you die before you have attained it, you will surely perish."

By "perfection," I mean "perfect love," or the loving God with all our heart, so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. I am convinced every believer may attain this; yet I do not say, he is in a state of damnation, or under the curse of God, till he does attain. No, he is in a state of grace, and in favour with God, as long as he believes. Neither would I say, "If you die without it, you will perish;" but rather, Till you are saved from unholy tempers, you are not ripe for glory. There will therefore more promises be fulfilled in your soul, before God takes you to himself.

"But none can attain perfection unless they first believe it attainable." Neither do I affirm this. I know a Calvinist in London, who never believed it attainable, till the moment she did attain it; and then lay declaring it aloud for many days, till her spirit returned to God.

"But you yourself believed, twenty years ago, that we should not put off the infection of nature, but with our bodies." I did so. But I believe otherwise now, for many reasons, some of which you afterwards mention. How far Mr. Roquet or Mr. Walsh may have mistaken these, I know not: I can only answer for myself.

"The nature and fitness of things" is so ambiguous an expression, that I never make use of it. Yet if you ask me, "Is it fit or necessary in the nature of things, that a soul should be saved from all sin before it enters into glory?" I answer, It is. And so it is written, "No unclean thing shall enter into it." Therefore, whatever degrees of holiness they did, or did not, attain, in the preceding parts of life, neither Jews nor Heathens, any more than Christians, ever did, or ever will, enter into the New Jerusalem, unless they are cleansed from all sin before they enter into eternity.

I do by no means exclude the Old Testament from bearing witness to any truths of God. Nothing less: But I say, the experience of the Jews is not the standard of Christian experience; and that therefore, were it true, "The Jews did not love God with all their heart and soul," it would not follow, "Therefore, no Christian can;" because he may attain what they did not.

"But," you say, "either their words do not contain a promise of such perfection, or God did not fulfil this promise to them to whom he made it." I answer, He surely will fulfil it to them to whom He made it; namely, to the Jews, after their dispersion into all lands: And to these is the promise made; as will be clear to any who impartially considers the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy, wherein it stands.

I doubt whether this perfection can be proved by Luke vi. 40. From 1 John iii. 9, (which belongs to all the children of God,) I never attempted to prove it; but I still think it is clearly described in those words, "As he is, so are we in this world." And yet it doth not now appear "what we shall be," when this vile body is "fashioned like unto his glorious body;" when we shall see Him, not in a glass, but face to face, and be transformed into his likeness.

Those expressions, (John xiii. 10,) "Ye are clean, clean every whit," are allowed to refer to justification only. But that expression, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light," cannot refer to justification only. It does not relate to justification at all, whatever the other clause may do. Therefore, those texts are by no means parallel, neither can the latter be limited by the former; although it is sure, the privileges described in both belong to every adult believer.

But not only abundance of particular texts, but the whole

tenor of Scripture declares, Christ came to “destroy the works of the devil, to save us from our sins?” all the works of the devil, all our sins, without any exception or limitation. Indeed should we say, we have no sin to be saved or cleansed from, we should make Him come in vain. But it is at least as much for his glory to cleanse us from them all before our death as after it.

“But St. James says, ‘In many things we offend all;’ and whatever ‘we’ might mean, if alone, the expression ‘we all’ was never before understood to exclude the person speaking.” Indeed it was. It is unquestionably to be understood so as to exclude Isaiah, the person speaking, “We are all as an unclean thing; we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” (lxiv. 6.) For this was not the case with Isaiah himself. Of himself he says, “My soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” (lxi. 10.) Here the Prophet, like the Apostle, uses the word “we” instead of “you,” to soften the harshness of an unpleasing truth.

In this chapter the Apostle is not cautioning them against censuring others, but entering upon a new argument; wherein the second verse has an immediate reference to the first; but none at all to the thirteenth of the preceding chapter.

I added, “‘We offend all,’ cannot be spoken of all Christians; for immediately there follows the mention of one who offends not, as the ‘we’ before-mentioned did.” You answer, “His not offending in word, will not prove that he does not offend ‘in many things.’” I think St. James himself proves it, in saying, “He is able to bridle also the whole body;” to direct all his actions as well as words, according to the holy, perfect will of God; which those, and those only, are able to do, who love God with all their hearts. And yet these very persons can sincerely say, “Forgive us our trespasses.” For as long as they are in the body, they are liable to mistake, and to speak or act according to that mistaken judgment. Therefore they cannot abide the rigour of justice, but still need mercy and forgiveness.

Were you to ask, “What, if I should die this moment?”

I should answer, I believe you would be saved; because I am persuaded, none that has faith can die before he is made ripe for glory. This is the doctrine which I continually teach, which has nothing to do with justification by works. Nor can it discourage any who have faith, neither weaken their peace, nor damp their joy in the Lord. True believers are not distressed hereby, either in life or in death; unless in some rare instance, wherein the temptation of the devil is joined with a melancholy temper.

Upon the whole, I observe your great argument turns all along on a mistake of the doctrine. Whatever warm expressions may drop from young men, we do not teach that any believer is under condemnation. So that all the inferences drawn from this supposition fall to the ground at once.

Your other letter I hope to consider hereafter; though I have great reason to apprehend your prejudice will still be too strong for my arguments. However, whether you expect it or not, I must wish for your perfection. You of all people have most need of perfect love; because this alone casts out fear.

I am, with great sincerity,

Your affectionate brother and servant.

CC.—To ———.

DEAR SIR,

July 1, 1759.

CONSIDERING the variety of business which must lie upon you, I am not willing to trouble you too often; yet cannot any longer delay to return thanks for your favour of May 21. How happy is it that there is a higher wisdom than our own to guide us through the mazes of life! that we have an unction from the Holy One, to teach us of all things where human teaching fails! And it certainly must fail in a thousand instances. General rules cannot reach all particular cases; in some of which there is such a complication of circumstances, that God alone can show what steps we should take. There is one circumstance in your case which claims your peculiar attention, and makes it necessary often to check that boldness and simplicity, which otherwise would be both your duty and pleasure. But O,

how easily may you comply too far, and hurt yourself in hopes of gaining another! nay, perhaps hurt the other too, by that very compliance which was designed to help! And who is able to lay the line? to determine how far you should comply, and where fix your foot? May the God of wisdom direct you in all your steps! And I conceive He will rather do this, by giving you light directly from himself, in meditation and private prayer, than by the advice of others, who can hardly be impartial in so tender a point. Is it not then advisable, that you should much commune with God and your own heart? You may then lay aside all the trappings that naturally tend to hide you from yourself, and appear naked, as a poor sinful worm, before the great God, the Creator of heaven and of earth! the great God, who is your Father and your Friend! who hath prepared for you a kingdom! who calls you to forget the little things of earth, and to sit down with him on his throne! O may you dwell on these things, till they possess your whole soul, and cause you to love the honour which cometh of God only!

I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient servant.

CCI.—To ———

DEAR SIR,

May 16, 1759.

SINCE I received your favour I have had many thoughts on worldly and Christian prudence. What is the nature of each? How do they differ? How may we distinguish one from the other?

It seems worldly prudence either pursues worldly ends, —riches, honour, ease, or pleasure; or pursues Christian ends on worldly maxims, or by worldly means. The grand maxims which obtain in the world are, The more power, the more money, the more learning, and the more reputation a man has, the more good he will do. And whenever a Christian, pursuing the noblest ends, forms his behaviour by these maxims, he will infallibly (though perhaps by insensible degrees) decline into worldly prudence. He will use more or less of conformity to the world, if not in sin, yet in doing some things that are good in themselves, yet (all things considered) are not good to him; and perhaps at

length using guile, or disguise, simulation or dissimulation ; either seeming to be what he is not, or not seeming to be what he is. By any of these marks may worldly prudence be discerned from the wisdom which is from above.

This Christian prudence pursues Christian maxims, and by Christian means. The ends it pursues are holiness in every kind, and in the highest degree ; and usefulness in every kind and degree. And herein it proceeds on the following maxims :—The help that is done upon earth, God doeth it himself ; it is he that worketh all in all ; and that, not by human power ; generally he uses weak things to confound the strong ;—not by men of wealth ; most of his choicest instruments may say, “Silver and gold have I none ;”—not by learned or wise men after the flesh ; no, the foolish things hath God chosen ;—not by men of reputation, but by the men that were as the filth and offscouring of the world : All which is for this plain reason,—“that no flesh may glory in his sight.”

Christian prudence pursues these ends upon these principles, by only Christian means. A truly prudent Christian, while, in things purely indifferent, he becomes all things to all men, yet wherever duty is concerned, matters the example of all mankind no more than a grain of sand. His word is then,

*Non me, qui cætera, vincit
Impetus, et rapido contrarius evohor orbi.**

He will not, to gain the favour or shun the hate of all, omit the least point of duty. He cannot prevail upon himself on any account or pretence, to use either simulation or dissimulation. There is no guile in his mouth ; no evasion or ambiguity. Having one desire, one design, to glorify God with his body and with his spirit ; having only one fear,

Lest a motion, or a word,
Or thought arise, to grieve his Lord ;

having one rule, the word of God ; one guide, even his Spirit, he goes on in child-like simplicity. Continually seeing Him that is invisible, he walks in open day. Looking unto Jesus, and deriving strength from him, he goes on in his steps, in the work of faith, the labour of love, the

* This quotation from Ovid is thus translated by Addison :—

“I steer against their notions ; nor am I
Borne back by all the current of the sky.”—EDIT.

patience of hope, till he is called up to be ever with the Lord.

O that this were in all points your own character! Surely you desire it above all things. But how shall you attain? Difficulties and hinderances surround you on every side! Can you bear with my plainness? I believe you can. Therefore, I will speak without any reserve. I fear you have scarce one friend who has not more or less of the prudence which is not from above. And I doubt you have (in or near your own rank) hardly one example of true Christian prudence! Yet I am persuaded your own heart advises you right; or rather, God in your heart. O that you may hearken to his voice alone, and let all creatures keep silence before Him! Why should they encumber you with Saul's armour? If you essay to go forth thus, it will be in vain. You have no need of this, neither of his sword or spear; for you trust in the Lord of hosts. O go forth in his strength! and with the stones of the brook you shall overthrow all your enemies.

I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient servant for Christ's sake.

CCII.—To ———.

DEAR SIR,

DUBLIN, April 18, 1760.

DISCE, *docendus adhuc quæ censet amicus*;* and take in good part my mentioning some particulars which have been long on my mind; and yet I knew not how to speak them. I was afraid it might look like taking too much upon me, or assuming some superiority over you. But love casts out, or at least overrules, that fear. So I will speak simply, and leave you to judge.

It seems to me, that, of all the persons I ever knew, save one, you are the hardest to be convinced. I have occasionally spoken to you on many heads; some of a speculative, others of a practical nature; but I do not know that you was ever convinced of one, whether of great importance or small. I believe you retained your own opinion in every one, and did not vary a hair's breadth. I have likewise

* This quotation from Horace is thus translated by Francis:—

“To the instruction of an humble friend,

Who would himself be better taught, attend.”—EDIT.

doubted whether you was not full as hard to be persuaded, as to be convinced ; whether your will do not adhere to its first bias, right or wrong, as strongly as your understanding. I mean, with regard to any impression which another may make upon them. For perhaps you readily, too readily, change of your own mere motion ; as I have frequently observed great fickleness and great stubbornness meet in the same mind. So that it is not easy to please you long ; but exceeding easy to offend you. Does not this imply the thinking very highly of yourself ? particularly of your own understanding ? Does it not imply, what is always connected therewith, something of self-sufficiency ? “ You can stand alone ; you care for no man ; you need no help from man.” It was not so with my brother and me, when we were first employed in this great work. We were deeply conscious of our own insufficiency ; and though, in one sense, we trusted in God alone, yet we sought his help from all his children, and were glad to be taught by any man. And this, although we were really alone in the work ; for there were none that had gone before us therein ; there were none then in England who had trod that path wherein God was leading us. Whereas you have the advantage which we had not ; you tread in a beaten path ; others have gone before you, and are going now in the same way, to the same point. Yet it seems you choose to stand alone ; what was necessity with us, is choice with you ; you like to be unconnected with any, thereby tacitly condemning all. But possibly you go farther yet : Do not you explicitly condemn all your fellow-labourers, blaming one in one instance, one in another, so as to be thoroughly pleased with the conduct of none ? Does not this argue a vehement proneness to condemn ? a very high degree of censoriousness ? Do you not censure even *peritos in sua arte* ?* Permit me to relate a little circumstance to illustrate this : After we had been once singing a hymn at Everton, I was just going to say, “ I wish Mr. Whitefield would not try to mend my brother’s hymns. He cannot do it. How vilely he has murdered that hymn ; weakening the sense, as well as marring the poetry ! ” But how was I afterwards surprised to hear it was not Mr. Whitefield, but Mr. B. ! In very deed, it is not easy to

* Those who are clever in their particular profession.—EDIT.

mend his hymns, any more than to imitate them. Has not this aptness to find fault frequently shown itself, in abundance of other instances? sometimes with regard to Mr. Parker, or Mr. Hicks; sometimes with regard to me? And this may be one reason why you take one step which was scarce ever before taken in Christendom: I mean, the discouraging the new converts from reading; at least, from reading anything but the Bible. Nay, but get off the consequence who can: If they ought to read nothing but the Bible, they ought to hear nothing but the Bible; so away with sermons, whether spoken or written! I can hardly imagine that you discourage reading even our little tracts, out of jealousy lest we should undermine you, or steal away the affections of the people. I think you cannot easily suspect this. I myself did not desire to come among them; but you desired me to come. I should not have obtruded myself either upon them or you; for I have really work enough; full as much as either my body or mind is able to go through: And I have, blessed be God, friends enough; I mean, as many as I have time to converse with: Nevertheless, I never repented of that I spent at Everton; and I trust it was not spent in vain.* I have not time to throw these thoughts into a smoother form; so I give you them just as they occur. May the God whom you serve give you to form a right judgment concerning them, and give a blessing to the rough sincerity of,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate servant.

CCIII.—*To Miss Elizabeth Hardy.*

DEAR SISTER,

December 26, 1761.

THE path of controversy is a rough path. But it seems smoother while I am walking with you: So that I could follow you through all its windings; only my time will not permit.

The plain fact is this: I know many who love God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. He is their one

* From several expressions in this letter, it appears to have been addressed to the Rev. John Berridge, Vicar of Everton.—EDIT.

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 plain, sound, scriptural experience : And of this we have more and more living witnesses.

But these souls dwell in a shattered, corruptible body, and are so pressed down thereby, that they cannot exert their love as they would, by always thinking, speaking, and acting precisely right. For want of better bodily organs, they sometimes inevitably think, speak, or act wrong. Yet I think they need the advocacy of Christ, even for these involuntary defects ; although they do not imply a defect of love, but of understanding. However that be, I cannot doubt the fact. They are all love ; yet they cannot walk as they desire. "But are they all love while they grieve the Holy Spirit?" No, surely ; they are then fallen from their steadfastness ; and this they may do even after they are sealed. So that, even to such, strong cautions are needful. After the heart is cleansed from pride, anger, and desire, it may suffer them to re-enter : Therefore I have long thought some expressions in the Hymns are abundantly too strong ; as I cannot perceive any state mentioned in Scripture from which we may not (in a measure, at least) fall.

Persons who talked of being emptied before they were filled, were, for some time, a great stumbling-block to me too ; but I have since considered it thus : The great point in question is, Can we be saved from all sin, or not ? Now, it may please God to act in that uncommon manner, purposely to clear this point : To satisfy those persons that they are saved from all sin, before he goes on in his work.

Forgive me, dear Miss Hardy, that I do but just touch upon the heads of your letter. Indeed, this defect does not spring from the want of love, but only from want of time. I should not wonder if your soul was one of the next that was filled with pure love. Receive it freely, thou poor bruised reed ! It is able to make thee stand.

I am

Your affectionate friend and brother.

CCIV.—*To Lady* ———.

MY LADY,

March 18, 1760.

It was impossible to see the distress into which your Ladyship was thrown by the late unhappy affair, without bearing a part of it, without sympathizing with you. But may we not see God therein? May we not both hear and understand his voice? We must allow, it is generally "small and still;" yet he speaks sometimes in the whirlwind. Permit me to speak to your Ladyship with all freedom; not as to a person of quality, but as to a creature whom the Almighty made for himself, and one that is in a few days to appear before Him.

You were not only a nominal, but a real, Christian. You tasted of the powers of the world to come. You knew God the Father had accepted you, through his eternal Son; and God the Spirit bore witness with your spirit, that you were a child of God.

But you fell among thieves, and such as were peculiarly qualified to rob you of your God. Two of these in particular were sensible, learned, well-bred, well-natured, moral men. These did not assault you in a rough, abrupt, offensive manner. No; you would then have armed yourself against them, and have repelled all their attacks. But by soft, delicate, unobserved touches, by pleasing strokes of raillery, by insinuations, rather than surly arguments, they, by little and little, sapped the foundation of your faith; perhaps not only of your living faith, your "evidence of things not seen;" but even of your notional. It is well if they left you so much as an assent to the Bible, or a belief that Christ is God over all! And what was the consequence of this? Did not your love of God grow cold? Did not you

Measure back your steps to earth again?

Did not your love of the world revive? even of those poor, low trifles, which, in your very childhood, you utterly despised?

Where are you now? full of faith? looking into the holiest, and seeing Him that is invisible? Does your heart now glow with love to Him, who is daily pouring his benefits upon you? Do you now even desire it? Do you now say, (as you did almost twenty years ago,)—

“Keep me dead to all below,
Only Christ resolved to know;
Firm, and disengaged, and free,
Seeking all my bliss in thee?”

Is your taste now for heavenly things? Are not you a lover of pleasure, more than a lover of God? And O what pleasure? What is the pleasure of visiting? of modern conversation? Is there any more reason than religion in it? I wonder, what rational appetite does it gratify? Setting religion quite out of the question, I cannot conceive how a woman of sense can—relish, should I say? no, but suffer, so insipid an entertainment.

O that the time past may suffice! Is it not now high time that you should awake out of sleep? Now God calls aloud! My dear Lady, now hear the voice of the Son of God, and live! The trouble in which your tender parent is now involved may restore all that reverence for her which could not but be a little impaired while you supposed she was “righteous over-much.” O how admirably does God lay hold of and “strengthen the things that remain” in you! your gratitude, your humane temper, your generosity, your filial tenderness! And why is this, but to improve every right temper; to free you from all that is irrational or unholy; to make you all that you were, yea, all that you should be; to restore you to the whole image of God?

I am, my Lady,
Yours, &c.

CCV.—*To Mr. Hosmer.*

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, June 7, 1761.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I APPREHEND, if you will give another careful reading To those four pages, 244—247, you will find all your objections anticipated or answered. However, I do not think much of answering them over again. Your words are,

“You say, ‘A mistake is not a sin, if love is the sole principle of action; yet it is a transgression of the perfect law:’ Therefore, perfect love is not the perfect law!” Most sure: For, by “the perfect law,” I mean that given to Adam at his creation. But the loving God with all his heart was not the whole of that law: It implied abundantly

more; even thinking, speaking, and acting right in every instance, which he was then able, and therefore obliged, to do. But none of his descendants are able to do this; therefore love is the fulfilling of their law.

Perhaps you had not adverted to this. The law of love, which is the whole law given to us, is only one branch of that perfect law which was given to Adam in the beginning. His law was far wider than ours, as his faculties were more extensive. Consequently, many things might be transgressions of the latter, which were not of the former.

“But if ignorance be a transgression of the perfect law”—Whoever said or thought so? Ignorance is not; but mistake is. And this Adam was able to avoid; that kind of ignorance which was in him not constraining him to mistake, as ours frequently does.

“But is ‘a voluntary transgression of a known law’ a proper definition of sin?” I think it is of all such sin as is imputed to our condemnation. And it is a definition which has passed uncensured in the church for at least fifteen hundred years.

To propose any objections that naturally arise, is right; but beware you do not seek objections. If you once begin this, you will never have done. Indeed, this whole affair is a strife of words. The thing is plain. All in the body are liable to mistakes, practical as well as speculative. Shall we call them sins or no? I answer again and again, Call them just what you please.

CCVI.—*To Mr. Alexander Coates.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

OTLEY, *July 7, 1761.*

THE perfection I teach is perfect love; loving God with all the heart; receiving Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, to reign alone over all our thoughts, words, and actions. The Papists neither teach nor believe this: Give even the devil his due. They teach, there is no perfection here which is not consistent with venial sins; and among venial sins they commonly reckon simple fornication. Now, I think this is so far from the perfection I teach, that it does not come up to any but Mr. Relly's perfection. To say, Christ will not reign alone in our hearts in this life;

will not enable us to give him all our hearts ; this, in my judgment, is making him a half-Saviour : He can be no more, if he does not quite save us from our sins. I pray, then, be not quite so peremptory. Who exalts Christ most ? those who call on him to be the sole Monarch of the heart ; or those who allow him only to share the power, and to govern most of the thoughts and tempers ? Who honour him most ? those who believe He heals all our sickness, takes away all our ungodliness ; or those who say, He heals only the greater part of it, till death does what He cannot do ? I know no creature (of us) who says, "Part of our salvation belongs to Christ, and part to us." No ; we all say, Christ alone saves us from all sin ; and your question is not about the Author, but the measure, of salvation. Both agree, it is all Christ ; but is it all salvation, or only half salvation, he will give ? Who was Pelagius ? By all I can pick up from ancient authors, I guess he was both a wise and a holy man. But we know nothing but his name ; for his writings are all destroyed ; not one line of them left. But, brother Coates, this way of talking is highly offensive. I advise you, 1. If you are willing to labour with us, preach no doctrine contrary to ours. I have preached twenty years in some of Mr. Whitefield's societies ; yet, to this day, I never contradicted him among his own people. I did not think it honest, neither necessary at all. I could preach salvation by faith, and leave all controversy untouched. I advise you, 2. Avoid all those strong, rhetorical exclamations, "O horrid ! O dreadful !" and the like ; unless when you are strongly exhorting sinners to renounce the devil and all his works. 3. Acquaint yourself better with the doctrine we preach, and you will find it not dreadful, but altogether lovely. 4. Observe, that if forty persons think and speak wrong, either about justification or sanctification, (and perhaps fancy they have attained both,) this is no objection to the doctrines themselves. They must bear their own burden. But this does not at all affect the point in question. 5. Remember, as sure as you are that "believers cannot fall from grace," others (wise and holy men too) are equally sure they can ; and you are as much obliged to bear with them as they are to bear with you. 6. Abstain from all controversy in public. Indeed, you have not a talent for it. You have an honest heart, but not a clear head. Practical

religion is your point; therefore, 7. Keep to this: Repentance toward God, faith in Christ, holiness of heart and life, a growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, the continual need of his atoning blood, a constant confidence in him, and all these every moment to our life's end. In none of these will any of our Preachers contradict you, or you them.

When you leave this plain path, and get into controversy, then they think you "invade the glories of our adorable King, and the unspeakable rights, and privileges, and comforts of his children;" and can they then "tamely hold their peace?"

O Sander, know the value of peace and love!

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CCVII.—*To Mr. S. F.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

BRISTOL, *October 13, 1762.*

IN general, when I apprehend, "Certainly this is a contradiction;" if I find other persons of equal sagacity with myself, of equal natural and acquired abilities, apprehend it is not; I immediately suspect my own judgment; and the more so, because I remember I have been many times full as sure as I am now, and yet afterwards I found myself mistaken.

As to this particular question, I believe I am able to answer every objection which can be made. But I am not able to do it without expending much time, which may be better employed. For this reason I am persuaded, it is so far from being my duty to enter into a formal controversy about it, that it would be a wilful sin; it would be employing my short residue of life in a less profitable way than it may be employed.

The proposition which I will hold is this: "A person may be cleansed from all sinful tempers, and yet need the atoning blood." For what? For "negligences and ignorances;" for both words and actions, (as well as omissions,) which are, in a sense, transgressions of the perfect law. And I believe no one is clear of these till he lays down this corruptible body.

Now, Sammy, dropping the point of contradiction, tell me simply what you would have more. Do you believe evil tempers remain till death? all, or some? if some only, which?

I love truth wherever I find it. So, if you can help me to a little more of it, you will oblige.

Dear Sammy,
Yours, &c.

CCVIII.—*To Lord* ———.

MY LORD,

July 26, 1764.

UPON an attentive consideration, it will appear to every impartial person that the uniting of the serious Clergy in the manner I proposed in a former letter is not a matter of indifferency; but what none can reject, unless at the peril of his own soul. For every article therein mentioned is undeniably contained in the royal law, the law of love; and, consequently, the observance thereof is bound upon every man, as indispensably necessary to salvation. It will appear farther, that every single person may observe it, whether the other will or no. For many years, I, for instance, have observed this rule in every article. I labour to do so now; and will, by God's help, whatever others do, observe it to the end.

I rejoice that your Lordship so heartily concurs in doing what is in your power to promote a general observance of it. Certainly this is not possible to be effected by merely human means; but, it seems, your Lordship has taken one good step towards it, by communicating it to several. I am persuaded, at the same time, your Lordship's wish is, that it might take place everywhere. The same step I purpose to take, by sending to each of those gentlemen the substance of what I wrote to your Lordship, and desiring them to tell me freely, whatever objections they have against such an union. As many of those as are grounded on reason, I doubt not will be easily answered. Those only which spring from some wrong temper must remain till that temper is subdued. For instance: First, "We cannot unite," says one, "because we cannot trust one another." I answer to your reason or understanding, No matter whether we can

or no. Thus far we must unite, trust or not ; otherwise we sin against God. Secondly, I can trust you ; why cannot you trust me ? I can have no private end herein. I have neither personal hopes nor fears from you. I want nothing which you can give me ; and I am not afraid of your doing me any hurt ; though you may hurt yourself and the cause of God. But I cannot answer your envy, jealousy, pride, or credulity. As long as those remain, objections, however cut off, will spring up again like Hydra's heads.

If your Lordship has heard any objections, I should be glad to know them. May I be permitted to ask, Have not the objections you have heard made some impression upon your Lordship ? Have they not occasioned (if I may speak freely) your Lordship's standing aloof from me ? Have they not set your Lordship farther and farther off, ever since I waited upon you at — ? Why do I ask ? Indeed, not upon my own account. *Quid mea ? Ego in portu navigo.** I can truly say, I neither fear nor desire anything from your Lordship. To speak a rough truth, I do not desire any intercourse with any persons of quality in England. I mean, for my own sake. They do me no good ; and I fear, I can do none to them. If it be desired, I will readily leave all those to the care of my fellow-labourers. I will article with them so to do, rather than this shall be any bone of contention.

Were I not afraid of giving your Lordship pain, I would speak yet still further. Methinks you desire I should ; that is, to tell you, once for all, every thought that rises in my heart. I will then. At present, I do not want you ; but I really think you want me. For, have you a person in all England who speaks to your Lordship so plain and downright as I do ? who considers not the Peer, but the man ? not the Earl, but the immortal spirit ? who rarely commends, but often blames, and perhaps would do it oftener if you desired it ? who is jealous over you with a godly jealousy, lest you should be less a Christian by being a nobleman ? lest, after having made a fair advance towards heaven, you should

Measure back your steps to earth again.

O my Lord, is not such a person as this needful for you in

* This quotation from Terence is thus rendered by Dr. Samuel Patrick :—
“ But now all is at your peril. I ride safe in the harbour.”—EDIT.

the highest degree? If you have any such, I have no more to say, but that I pray God to bless him to your soul. If you have not, despise not even the assistance which it may please God to give you by,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's ready servant.

CCIX.—*To the Rev. Mr. H.*

DEAR SIR,

March 27, 1764.

YOUR book on the Millennium and the Mystic writers was lately put into my hands. I cannot but thank you for your strong and seasonable confirmation of that comfortable doctrine; of which I cannot entertain the least doubt as long as I believe the Bible. I thank you, likewise, for your remarks on that bad performance of the Bishop of G——, which undoubtedly tears up by the roots all real internal religion. Yet, at the same time, I cannot but bewail your vehement attachment to the Mystic writers; with whom I conversed much for several years, and whom I then admired, perhaps more than you do now. But I found, at length, an absolute necessity of giving up either them or the Bible. So, after some time, I fixed my choice, to which I hope to adhere to my life's end. It is only the extreme attachment to these which can account for the following words:—"Mr. W. does, in several parts of his Journals, lay down some marks of the new birth, not only doubtful, but exceptionable; as, particularly, where persons appeared agitated or convulsed under the ministry; which might be owing to other causes, rather than any regenerating work of God's Spirit." (Page 385.)

Is this true? In what one part of my Journals do I lay down any doubtful, much less exceptionable, marks of the new birth? In no part do I lay down those agitations or convulsions as any marks of it at all. Nay, I expressly declare the contrary in those very words which the Bishop himself cites from my Journal. I declare, "These are of a disputable nature: They may be from God; they may be from nature; they may be from the devil." How is it, then, that you tell all the world, Mr. W. lays them down in his Journals as marks of the new birth?

Is it kind? Would it not have been far more kind, suppose I had spoken wrong, to tell me of it in a private manner? How much more unkind was it to accuse me to all the world of a fault which I never committed!

Is it wise thus to put a sword into the hands of our common enemy? Are we not both fighting the battle of our Lord, against the world, as well as the flesh and the devil? And shall I furnish them with weapons against you; or you against me? Fine diversion for the children of the devil! And how much more would they be diverted, if I would furnish my quota of the entertainment, by falling upon you in return! But I bewail the change in your spirit: You have not gained more lowliness or meekness since I knew you. O beware! You did not use to despise any one. This you have gained from the authors you admire. They do not express anger toward their opponents, but contempt in the highest degree. And this, I am afraid, is far more antichristian, more diabolical, than the other. The God of love deliver you and me from this spirit, and fill us with the mind that was in Christ. So prays,

Dear Sir,

Your still affectionate brother.

CCX.—*To the Rev. Mr. Plenderlieth.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

May 23, 1768.

SOME years ago, it was reported that I recommended the use of a crucifix to a man under sentence of death. I traced this up to its author, Dr. Stennett, an Anabaptist Teacher. He was charged with it. He answered, "Why, I saw a crucifix in his cell;" (a picture of Christ on the cross;) "and I knew Mr. Wesley used to visit him; so I supposed he had brought it." This is the whole of the matter. Dr. Stennett himself I never yet saw; nor did I ever see such a picture in the cell; and I believe the whole tale is pure invention.

I had for some time given up the thought of an interview with Mr. Erskine, when I fell into the company of Dr. Oswald. He said, "Sir, you do not know Mr. Erskine. I know him perfectly well. Send and desire an hour's conversation with him, and I am sure he will understand you

better." I am glad I did send. I have done my part, and am now entirely satisfied.

I am likewise glad that Mr. E. has spoke his mind. I will answer with all simplicity, in full confidence of satisfying you, and all impartial men.

He objects, first, that I attack predestination, as subversive of all religion, and yet suffer my followers in Scotland to remain in that opinion. Much of this is true. I did attack predestination eight-and-twenty years ago; and I do not believe now any predestination which implies irrespective reprobation. But I do not believe it is necessarily subversive of all religion. I think hot disputes are much more so; therefore, I never willingly dispute with any one about it. And I advise all my friends, not in Scotland only, but all over England and Ireland, to avoid all contention on the head, and let every man remain in his own opinion. Can any man of candour blame me for this? Is there anything unfair or disingenuous in it?

He objects, secondly, that I "assert the attainment of sinless perfection by all born of God." I am sorry Mr. E. should affirm this again. I need give no other answer than I gave before, in the seventh page of the little tract I sent him two years ago.

I do not maintain this. I do not believe it. I believe Christian perfection is not attained by any of the children of God till they are what the Apostle John terms fathers. And this I expressly declare in that sermon which Mr. E. so largely quotes.

He objects, thirdly, that I "deny the imputation of Christ's active obedience." Since I believed justification by faith, which I have done upwards of thirty years, I have constantly maintained that we are pardoned and accepted wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath both done and suffered for us.

Two or three years ago, Mr. Madan's sister showed him what she had wrote down of a sermon which I had preached on this subject. He entreated me to write down the whole, and print it; saying, it would satisfy all my opponents. I was not so sanguine as to expect this: I understood mankind too well. However, I complied with his request: A few were satisfied; the rest continued just as they were before.

As long as Mr. E. continues of the mind expressed in his

"Theological Essays," there is no danger that he and I should agree, any more than light and darkness. I love and reverence him, but not his doctrine. I dread every approach to Antinomianism. I have seen the fruit of it over the three kingdoms. I never said that Mr. E. and I were agreed. I will make our disagreement as public as ever he pleases; only I must, withal, specify the particulars. If he will fight with me, it must be on this ground; and then let him do what he will, and what he can.

Retaining a due sense of your friendly offices, and praying for a blessing on all your labours,

I remain, Rev. and dear Sir,

Your affectionate brother and servant.

CCXI.—*To Mr. S., at Armagh.*

DEAR BROTHER,

April 24, 1769.

I SHALL NOW tell you the things which have been more or less upon my mind ever since I have been in the north of Ireland. If you forget them, you will be a sufferer, and so will the people: If you observe them, it will be good for both.

1. To begin with little things. If you regard your health, touch no supper, but a little milk, or water-gruel. This will entirely, by the blessing of God, secure you from nervous disorders; especially if you rise early every morning, whether you preach or no.

2. Be steadily serious. There is no country upon earth where this is more necessary than Ireland; as you are generally encompassed with those who, with a little encouragement, would laugh or trifle from morning to night.

3. In every town, visit all you can from house to house. I say, "all you can;" for there will be some whom you cannot visit: And if you examine, instruct, reprove, exhort, as need requires, you will have no time hanging on your hands. It is by this means that the societies are increased wherever T. R. goes: He is preaching from morning to night; warning every one, that he may present every one perfect in Christ Jesus.

4. But on this and every other occasion, avoid all familiarity with women. This is deadly poison both to them and

you. You cannot be too wary in this respect ; therefore, begin from this hour.

5. The chief matter of your conversation, as well as your preaching, should doubtless be, the weightier matters of the law. Yet there are several (comparatively) little things which you should earnestly inculcate from time to time ; for “ he that despiseth small things, shall fall by little and little.” Such are,—

(1.) Be active, be diligent ; avoid all laziness, sloth, indolence. Fly from every degree, every appearance of it ; else you will never be more than half a Christian.

(2.) Be cleanly. In this let the Methodists take pattern by the Quakers. Avoid all nastiness, dirt, slovenliness, both in your person, clothes, house, and all about you. Do not stink above ground. This is a bad fruit of laziness ; use all diligence to be clean, as one says,—

“ Let thy mind’s sweetness have its operation
Upon thy person, clothes, and habitation.”

(3.) Whatever clothes you have, let them be whole ; no rents, no tatters, no rags. These are a scandal to either man or woman ; being another fruit of vile laziness. Mend your clothes, or I shall never expect you to mend your lives. Let none ever see a ragged Methodist.

(4.) Clean yourselves of lice. These are a proof both of uncleanness and laziness : Take pains in this. Do not cut off your hair ; but clean it, and keep it clean.

(5.) Cure yourself and your family of the itch : A spoonful of brimstone will cure you. To let this run from year to year, proves both sloth and uncleanness. Away with it at once. Let not the north be any longer a proverb of reproach to all the nation.

(6.) Use no tobacco, unless prescribed by a Physician. It is an uncleanly and unwholesome self-indulgence ; and the more customary it is, the more resolutely should you break off from every degree of that evil custom.

(7.) Use no snuff, unless prescribed by a Physician. I suppose no other nation in Europe is in such vile bondage to this silly, nasty, dirty custom as the Irish are. But let Christians be in this bondage no longer. Assert your liberty, and that all at once : Nothing will be done by degrees. But just now you may break loose, through Christ strengthening you.

(8.) Touch no dram. It is liquid fire. It is a sure, though slow, poison. It saps the very springs of life. In Ireland, above all countries in the world, I would sacredly abstain from this, because the evil is so general; and to this, and snuff, and smoky cabins, I impute the blindness which is so exceeding common throughout the nation.

I might have inserted under the second article, what I particularly desire wherever you have preaching; namely, that there may be a little-house. Let this be got without delay. Wherever it is not, let none expect to see me.

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CCXII.—*To* ———.

DEAR SIR,

———, 1770.

I BLESS God that you are not disgusted at the great plainness with which I wrote. Indeed I know not but it might be termed roughness; which was owing partly to the pressure of mind I then felt, and partly to my being straitened for time; otherwise I might have found softer expressions. I am thankful likewise for your openness; which obliges me to be open and unreserved, and to say all I mean, and that in the most simple manner, on each of the articles that lie before us.

I must do this, even with regard to my fellow-labourers, lest I should seem to mean more than I do. But I am sensible this is a tender point, and one so extremely difficult to treat upon, that I should not venture to say one word, did I not know to whom I speak. What I mean is this: From many little circumstances which have occurred, I have been afraid (just so far it went) that those Clergymen with whom you are most acquainted, were jealous of your being acquainted with me. I was the more afraid, when I heard the sudden exclamation of one whom you well know: "Good God! Mr. Wesley is always speaking well of these gentlemen, and they can never speak well of him." But I am entirely satisfied by that full declaration which you make: "I do not know of any impression that has been made upon me to your disadvantage."

I had once the opportunity of speaking a few minutes to

you on the head of Christian perfection ; and I believe you had not much objection to anything which was then spoken. When I spoke nearly to the same effect to one of the late Bishops of London, Bishop Gibson, he said earnestly, “ Why, Mr. Wesley, if this is what you mean by perfection, who can be against it ? ” I believe, verily, there would need no more than a single hour, spent in free and open conversation, to convince you that none can rationally or scripturally say anything against the perfection I have preached for thirty years.

The union which I desire among the persons I mentioned is an entire union of heart, constraining them to labour together as one man, in spreading vital religion through the nation. But this I do not hope for, though I know a few who would cordially rejoice therein. The union which I proposed is of a lower kind : I proposed that they should love as brethren, and behave as such. And I particularized what I think is implied in this ; I imagined, in so plain a manner, as was hardly possible, without great skill, to be either misunderstood or misrepresented. I really do not conceive what ambiguity there can be in any part of this proposal ; or what objection can lie against our going thus far, whether we go farther or no.

With regard to you, I have frequently observed that there are two very different ranks of Christians, both of whom may be in the favour of God,—a higher and a lower rank. The latter avoid all known sin, do much good, use all the means of grace, but have little of the life of God in their souls, and are much conformed to the world. The former make the Bible their whole rule, and their sole aim is the will and image of God. This they steadily and uniformly pursue, through honour and dishonour, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily ; considering one point only, “ How may I attain most of the mind that was in Christ, and how may I please him most ? ” Now I verily believe, never was a person of rank more prepared for this state than you were the first time I had the pleasure of seeing you. Nay, I doubt not but you pant after it now ; your soul is athirst to be all devoted to God. But who will press you forward to this ? Rather, who will not draw you back ? It is in this respect that I think one that uses plain dealing is needful for you in the highest degree ; so needful, that

without this help you will inevitably stop short : I do not mean, stop short of heaven ; but of that degree of holiness, and, consequently, of happiness both in time and eternity, which is now offered to your acceptance.

It is herein that I am jealous over you. I am afraid of your sinking beneath your calling, degenerating into a common Christian, who shall indeed be saved, but saved as by fire. I long to see both you and your lady a little more than common Christians ; Christians of the first rank in the kingdom of God, full of all goodness and truth. I want you to be living witnesses of all Gospel holiness ! And what shall hinder, if you seek it by faith ? Are not all things ready ? The Lord God give you to experience that all things are possible to them that believe !

O God, let all their life declare,
How happy these thy servants are ;
How far above these earthly things ;
How pure when wash'd in Jesu's blood ;
How intimately one with God,
A heaven-born race of Priests and Kings !

I am, honoured Sir,
Your friend and servant.

CCXIII.—*To Mr. John Trembath.*

TIVERTON, *September 21, 1755.*

THE plain reason why I did not design to speak with you at Launceston was, because I had no hope of doing you good. I observed long ago, that you are not patient of reproof ; and I fear you are less so now than ever. But since you desire it, I will tell you once more what I think, fear, or hear concerning you.

I think you tasted of the powers of the world to come thirteen or fourteen years ago, and was then simple of heart, and willing to spend and be spent for Christ. But not long after, not being sufficiently on your guard, you suffered loss by being applauded. This revived and increased your natural vanity ; which was the harder to be checked, because of your constitutional stubbornness ;—two deadly enemies which have lain in wait for you many years, and have given you many deep, if not mortal, wounds.

I fear, it is near ten years since you was so weakened by these, that you no longer set a watch over your mouth, but began frequently to speak what was not strictly true, to excuse yourself, divert others, or gain applause. I am afraid this has prevailed over you more and more, as there was less and less of the life of God in the soul; so that I should almost wonder if you do not judge a diverting lie to be a very innocent thing.

After your first marriage, being not used to nor fond of reading, and not spending many hours in private prayer, time grew heavy on your hands; especially as you could not bear the cross of being a regular Travelling Preacher: So you betook yourself to farming, and other country employments, and grew more and more dead to God. Especially when you began to keep company (whether by necessity or choice) with the men "whose talk is of bullocks;" who have little to do either with religion or reason; and have but just wit enough to smoke, drink, and flatter you.

By these dull wretches you have been an unspeakable loser. Perhaps it was in company with some of these, that you first thought of taking a little sport, and catching a few fish, or killing a partridge or a hare. Miserable employment for a Preacher of the Gospel! for a Methodist Preacher, above all others! Though I do not at all wonder, if, after practising it for some time, you should be so infatuated as even to defend it. I am afraid these same poor creatures afterwards taught you (if that report be true) even to countenance that wickedness for which Cornwall stinks in the nostrils of all who fear God, or love King George; I mean that of smuggling: Though surely they could not persuade you to receive stolen goods! That is an iniquity to be punished by the Judges. Is there any truth in that other charge, (you must not ask who tells me so; if so, I have done,) that you imposed on Mrs. H——, in the writings; and fraudulently procured £100 a year to be engaged for, instead of fourscore? I hope this was a mistake; as well as that assertion, that you encouraged drunkenness, by suffering it in your company, if not in your own house.

O remember from whence you are fallen? Repent, and do the first works! First recover the life of God in your own soul, and walk as Christ walked. Walk with God as you did twelve years ago. Then you might again be useful

to his children. Supposing you was truly alive to God yourself, how profitably then (leaving the dead to bury their dead) might you spend three months in a year at Bristol, or London, three in Cornwall, and six in spreading the Gospel wherever it might be needful. I have now told you all that is in my heart: I hope you will receive it, not only with patience, but profit.

You must be much in the way, or much out of the way; a good soldier for God, or for the devil. O choose the better part!—now!—to-day!

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CCXIV.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

CORK, *August 17, 1760.*

THE conversation I had with you yesterday in the afternoon, gave me a good deal of satisfaction. As to some things which I had heard, (with regard to your wasting your substance, drinking intemperately, and wronging the poor people at Silberton,) I am persuaded they were mistakes; as I suppose it was, that you converse much with careless, unawakened people. And I trust you will be more and more cautious in all these respects, abstaining from the very appearance of evil.

That you had not always attended the preaching when you might have done it, you allowed; but seemed determined to remove that objection; as well as the other, of using such exercises or diversions as give offence to your brethren. I believe you will likewise endeavour to avoid light and trifling conversation, and to talk and behave in all company with that seriousness and usefulness which become a Preacher of the Gospel.

Certainly some years ago you was alive to God. You experienced the life and power of religion. And does not God intend that the trials you meet with should bring you back to this? You cannot stand still; you know this is impossible. You must go forward or backward. Either you must recover that power, and be a Christian altogether; or in awhile you will have neither power nor form, inside nor outside.

Extremely opposite both to one and the other, is that aptness to ridicule others, to make them contemptible, by

exposing their real or supposed foibles. This I would earnestly advise you to avoid. It hurts yourself; it hurts the hearers; and it greatly hurts those who are so exposed, and tends to make them your irreconcilable enemies. It has also sometimes betrayed you into speaking what was not strictly true. O beware of this above all things! Never amplify, never exaggerate anything. Be rigorous in adhering to truth. Be exemplary therein. Whatever has been in time past, let all men now know, that John Trembath abhors lying; that he never promises anything which he does not perform; that his word is equal to his bond. I pray, be exact in this. Be a pattern of truth, sincerity, and godly simplicity.

What has exceedingly hurt you in time past, nay, and I fear, to this day, is want of reading. I scarce ever knew a Preacher read so little. And perhaps, by neglecting it, you have lost the taste for it. Hence your talent in preaching does not increase. It is just the same as it was seven years ago. It is lively, but not deep; there is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with meditation and daily prayer. You wrong yourself greatly by omitting this. You can never be a deep Preacher without it, any more than a thorough Christian. O begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not: What is tedious at first, will afterwards be pleasant. Whether you like it or no, read and pray daily. It is for your life; there is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a pretty superficial Preacher. Do justice to your own soul; give it time and means to grow. Do not starve yourself any longer. Take up your cross, and be a Christian altogether. Then will all the children of God rejoice (not grieve) over you; and, in particular,

Yours, &c.

CCXV.—*To Mr. Jonathan Maskew.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

LONDON, *February 22, 1753.*

I CANNOT blame you at all for writing to me before you determined anything. I believe your staying so long in the Newcastle Circuit has been for good, both for you, and

for others; and you are still wanted there. But you are wanted more elsewhere. I do not mean you should go to Mr. Grimshaw's Circuit, (although you might stay a fortnight there, not more,) but to Manchester. I promised you should set out to help brother Haughton, as soon as brother Hopper could go to Newcastle. So that you are sadly beyond your time; the blame of which is probably (as usual) laid upon me. Therefore the sooner you are at Manchester, the better. Peace be with your spirit.

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CCXVI.—*To Mr. Knox.*

DEAR SIR,

SLIGO, *May 30, 1765.*

PROBABLY this will be the last trouble of the kind which you will receive from me. If you receive it in the same spirit wherein it is wrote, I shall be glad. If not, my reward is with the Most High. I did not choose it should be delivered till I was gone, lest you should think I wanted something from you. By the blessing of God, I want nothing, only that you should be happy in time and in eternity.

Still I cannot but remember the clear light you had with regard to the nature of real, scriptural Christianity. You saw what heart-religion meant, and the gate of it, justification. You had earnest desires to be a partaker of the whole Gospel blessing: And you discovered the sincerity of those desires, by the steps you took in your family. So that in everything you was hastening to be, not almost, but altogether, a Christian.

Where is that light now? Do you now see that true religion is not a negative or an external thing; but the life of God in the soul of man; the image of God stamped upon the heart? Do you now see, that in order to this, we are justified freely, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus? Where are the desires after this, which you once felt? the hungering and thirsting after righteousness? And where are the outward marks of a soul groaning after God, and refusing to be comforted with anything less than his love?

Will you say, "But if I had gone on in that way, I should have lost my friends and my reputation?" This is partly true. You would have lost most of those friends who neither love nor fear God. Happy loss! These are the men who do you more hurt than all the world besides. These are the men whom, if ever you would be a real Christian, you must avoid as you would avoid hell-fire. "But then they will censure me." So they will. They will say you are a fool, a madman, and what not. But what are you the worse for this? Why, the Spirit of glory and of Christ shall rest upon you. "But it will hurt me in my business." Suppose it should, the favour of God would make large amends. But very probably it would not. For the winds and the seas are in God's hands, as well as the hearts of men. "But it is inconsistent with my duty to the Church." Can a man of understanding talk so, and talk so in earnest? Is it not rather a copy of his countenance? Indeed, if you mean, "inconsistent with my pleasing this or that Clergyman," I allow it. But let them be pleased, or displeased, please thou God. But are these Clergymen the Church? Unless they are holy men, earnestly loving and serving God, they are not even members of the Church; they are no part of it. And unless they preach the doctrines of the Church, contained in her Articles and Liturgy, they are no true Ministers of the Church, but are eating her bread and tearing out her bowels!

"But you will not leave the Church." You never will by my advice: I advise just the contrary: I advise you to lose no opportunity of attending the service of the Church, and receiving the Lord's supper, and of showing your regard for all her appointments. I advise, steadily to adhere to her doctrine in every branch of it; particularly with regard to the two fundamental points,—justification by faith, and holiness. But above all, I cannot but earnestly entreat you, not to rest till you experience what she teaches; till (to sum up all in one word) God cleanses the thoughts of your heart by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that you may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name. Unless this be done, what will it profit you to increase your fortune, to preserve the fairest reputation, and to gain the favour of the most learned, the most ingenious, and the most

honourable Clergymen in the kingdom? What will it profit a man to gain all these, and to lose his own soul?

I know that to God all things are possible: Therefore it is possible you may take this kindly. If so, I shall hope to receive a line from you. If not, let it be forgotten till we meet at the judgment-seat of Christ.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate servant.

CCXVII.—*To Mrs. Maitland.*

DEAR MADAM,

May 12, 1763.

BOTH in the former and in the "Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection," I have said all I have to say on that subject. Nevertheless, as you seem to desire I should, I will add a few words more.

As to the word "perfection," it is scriptural: Therefore neither you nor I can in conscience object to it, unless we would send the Holy Ghost to school, and teach Him to speak who made the tongue.

By Christian perfection, I mean (as I have said again and again) the so loving God and our neighbour, as to "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks." He that experiences this, is scripturally perfect. And if you do not, yet you may experience it: You surely will, if you follow hard after it; for the Scripture cannot be broken.

What then does their arguing reprove, who object against Christian perfection? Absolute or infallible perfection I never contended for. Sinless perfection I do not contend for, seeing it is not scriptural. A perfection, such as enables a person to fulfil the whole law, and so needs not the merits of Christ,—I acknowledge no such perfection; I do now, and always did, protest against it.

"But is there no sin in those who are perfect in love?" I believe not: But be that as it may, they feel none; no temper contrary to pure love, while they rejoice, pray, and give thanks continually. And whether sin is suspended, or extinguished, I will not dispute: It is enough that they feel nothing but love. This you allow we should daily press

after. And this is all I contend for. O may the Lord give you to taste of it to-day !

I am, dear Madam,

Your very affectionate servant.

CCXVIII.—*To Mr. Hart.*

DEAR SIR,

July 11, 1763.

ABUNDANCE of business has prevented my writing so soon as I desired and intended ; nor have I time now to write so largely as I could wish, and as your openness and frankness would otherwise constrain me to do. But I cannot delay any longer to write a little, lest I should seem to slight your correspondence.

What you before observed is of great importance ; namely, “ If it be the professed aim of the Gospel to convince us that Jesus is the Christ : If I, a sinner, am convinced of the reality of this fact, am not I, who believe, authorized to expect life, not through any condition, or any act, inward or outward, performed by me, but singly through the name which Jesus assumed, which stands for his whole character or merit ? ”

Here is the hinge on which Mr. Sandiman’s whole system turns. This is the strength of his cause, and you have proposed it with all the strength and clearness which he himself could devise.

Yet suffer me to offer to your consideration a few queries concerning it :—

Is every one who is convinced of the reality of this fact, “ Jesus is the Christ,” a Gospel believer ? Is not the devil convinced of the reality of this fact ? Is then the devil a Gospel believer ?

I was convinced of the reality of this fact when I was twelve years old, when I was without God in the world. Was I then a Gospel believer ? Was I then a child of God ? Was I then in a state of salvation ?

Again, you say, “ I who believe am authorized to expect life, not through any condition or act, inward or outward, performed by me.”

“ I who believe.” But cannot you as well expect it without believing ? If not, what is believing but a condition ?

For it is something *sine quâ non*. And what else do you, or I, or any one living, mean by a condition? And is not believing an inward act? What is it else? But you say, "Not performed by me." By whom then? God gives me the power to believe. But does he believe for me? He works faith in me. But still is it not I that believe? And if so, is not believing an inward act performed by me?

Is not then this hypothesis (to wave all other difficulties) contradictory to itself?

I have just set down a few hints as they occurred. Wishing you an increase of every blessing,

I am, dear Sir,

Your very affectionate brother.

CCXIX.—*To Miss T——.*

DEAR SISTER,

BRISTOL, *September 29, 1764.*

IN the "Thoughts upon Christian Perfection," you have a clear and consistent account of it. I have been grieved at the danger I saw you in, of stopping short of it. Certainly you may attain that blessing soon. And I am thoroughly persuaded, you did taste of it; though how you lost it, I know not.

It will be eternally true, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Have this faith, and you have salvation. And this is the very thing you want. When this is joined with a strong understanding, it is well; but it may exist with a very weak one. This is the case with Mrs. W——, whose understanding is extremely weak; and yet she has strong faith, and such as exceedingly profits me; though I take knowledge, that the treasure is in an earthen vessel. I see all that is of nature; but this does not hinder my rejoicing in that which is of grace. This is one branch of Christian simplicity. While reason, assisted from above, enables me to discern the precious from the vile, I make my full use of the former, without losing one moment in thinking upon the latter. Perhaps reason enlightened makes me simple. If I knew less of human nature, (forgive me for talking so much of myself,) I should be more apt to stumble at the weaknesses of it: And if I have (by nature or by grace) some clearness of apprehension,

it is owing to this (under God) that I never staggered at all the reveries of George Bell. I saw instantly at the beginning, and from the beginning, what was right, and what was wrong. But I saw withal, "I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." Hence many imagined I was imposed upon, and applauded themselves for their greater perspicuity, as they do at this day. "But if you knew it," says his friend to Gregory Lopez, "why did you not tell me?" I answer with him, "I do not speak all I know, but all I judge needful." Still I am persuaded, there is no state under heaven from which it is not possible to fall. But I wish you was all love, and then you would not need to take any thought for the morrow.

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CCXX.—*To Miss L——.*

1. You want to know God, in order to enjoy him in time and in eternity.

2. All that you want to know of him is contained in one book, the Bible. Therefore your one point is, to understand this. And all you learn is to be referred to this, as either directly or remotely conducive to it.

3. Might it not be well then to spend at least two hours every day, in reading and meditating upon the Bible? reading every morning (if not every evening too) a portion of the Old and then of the New Testament? If you would save yourself the trouble of thinking, add Mr. Henry's comment: If you would only be assisted in thinking, add the "Explanatory Notes."

4. But I find a difficulty already. Can you help me over it? Have you more candour than almost any one in the world? Will you not blame me for recommending, as they come in the way, tracts published by myself? I think you will not. So I will set down these (in their place) as freely as other books.

5. Your studying hours (if your constitution will bear it) might be five or six hours a day. Perhaps from nine to twelve in the morning, and from two to four or five in the afternoon. And whenever you begin to be tired with books,

that require a strong and deep attention, relax your mind by interposing history or poetry, or something of a lighter nature.

6. The first thing you should understand a little of is Grammar; in order to which it will suffice to read first the Kingswood "English Grammar," (which is exceeding short,) and then Bishop Lowth's "Introduction."

7. Next, it would be worth your while to acquire a little knowledge in Arithmetic; and Dilworth's Arithmetic would give you full as much as you want.

8. You might proceed to Geography. But in this I would not advise you to encumber yourself with many books. You need only master one, Randal's "Geographical Grammar;" and then betake yourself to the Globes. I believe those of Mr. Adams are the best; to which you may add his little book of Instructions.

9. Logic naturally follows; and I really think it is worth all the rest put together. But here I am at a full stop; for I know no good treatise on the subject in English, except Aldrich's Logic, and that, I am afraid, you cannot understand without an instructor. I shall be glad to give you a little assistance in the short time we have together.

10. As to Ethics (or Moral Philosophy) there is full as much of it as you want in Langbain's "Compendium."

11. In Natural Philosophy you have a larger field. You may begin with a "Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation." This contains the substance of Ray, Derham, Niewentyt, "Nature Displayed," and all the other celebrated books on the subject. You may add that fine book, Mr. Jones's "Principles of Natural Philosophy." Thence you will easily pass to the Glasgow abridgment of Mr. Hutchinson's Works. The abridgers give not only all his sense, but all his spirit. You may add to these, the beautiful tracts of Lord Forbes; and if you would go a little farther, Mr. Baker's ingenious "Treatise on the Microscope."

12. With any or all of the foregoing studies, you may intermix that of History. Geography and Chronology are termed the two eyes of History. Geography has been mentioned before; and I think all you want of Chronology may be learned from Marshal's "Chronological Tables."

13. You may begin with Rollin's "Ancient History;" and afterwards read in order, Puffendorf's "Introduction

to the History of Europe," the "Concise Church History," Burnet's "History of the Reformation," the "Concise History of England," Clarendon's "History of the Great Rebellion," Neal's "History of the Puritans," his "History of New-England," and Solis's "History of the Conquest of Mexico."

14. Whitby's "Compendium of Metaphysics" will introduce you to that science. You may go on with Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding;" Bishop Browne on the "Nature, Procedure, and Limits of Human Understanding;" and Malebranche's "Search after Truth."

15. For Poetry, you may read Spencer's "Fairly Queen;" Fairfax's or Hoole's "Godfrey of Bulloign;" select parts of Shakspeare; "Paradise Lost;" the "Night Thoughts;" and "Moral and Sacred Poems."

16. You are glad to begin and end with Divinity. But I must not expatiate here. I will only recommend to your careful perusal, Bishop Pearson upon the Creed, Mr. Nalson's "Sermons," and the "Christian Library."

This course of study, if you have the resolution to go through it, will, I apprehend, take you up three, four, or five years, according to the degree of your health and of your application. And you will then have knowledge enough for any reasonable Christian. But remember, before all, in all, and above all, your great point is, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

I am, dear Miss L——,

Your affectionate brother.

CCXXI.—*To the Rev. Mr. G——.*

REV. SIR,

April 2, 1761.

I HAVE no desire to dispute; least of all with one whom I believe to fear God and work righteousness. And I have no time to spare. Yet I think it my duty to write a few lines, with regard to those you sent to Mr. Bennet.

You therein say, "If you sent me the books to inform me of an error which I had publicly advanced, pardon me if I say, I know numbers who call themselves Methodists assert their assurance of salvation at the very time they wallow in sins of the deepest dye." Permit me, Sir, to

speaking freely. I do not doubt the fact. But, 1. Those who are connected with me do not call themselves Methodists. Others call them by that nickname, and they cannot help it; but I continually warn them not to pin it upon themselves. 2. We rarely use that ambiguous expression of "Christ's righteousness imputed to us." 3. We believe a man may be a real Christian without being "assured of his salvation." 4. We know no man can be assured of salvation while he lives in any sin whatever. 5. The wretches who talk in that manner are neither Methodists nor Moravians, but followers of William Cudworth, James Rely, and their associates, who abhor us as much as they do the Pope; and ten times more than they do the devil. If you oppose these, so do I; and have done privately and publicly for these twenty years.

But you say, "Such as do not profess this doctrine will not be affected by my sermon." Indeed they will; for the world (as you yourself did) lump all that are called Methodists together. Consequently, whatever you then said of Methodists in general, falls on us as well as them; and so we are condemned for those very principles which we totally detest and abhor: A small part of the "Preservative" (had you taken the pains to read it) would have convinced you of this. "Did you send them to convince me of some important truth? I have the New Testament." So have I; and I have read it for above these fifty years; and for near forty, with some attention. Yet I will not say, that Mr. G—— may not convince me of some truth, which I never yet learned from it. I want every help; especially from those who strive both to preach and to live the Gospel. Yet certainly I must dissent from you, or you from me, wherever either conceives the other to vary from it. Some of my writings you "have read." But allow me to ask, Did not you read them with much prejudice, or little attention? Otherwise surely you would not have termed them "perplexing." Very few lay obscurity or intricacy to my charge. Those who do not allow them to be true, do not deny them to be plain. And if they believe me to have done any good at all by writing, they suppose it is by this very thing; by speaking on practical and experimental religion more plainly than others have done.

I quite agree, we "neither can be better men, nor better

Christians, than by continuing members of the Church of England." And not only her doctrines, but many parts of her discipline, I have adhered to at the hazard of my life. If in any point I have since varied therefrom, it was not by choice, but necessity. Judge, therefore, if they do well who throw me into the ditch, and then beat me because my clothes are dirty?

Wishing you much of the love of God in your heart, and much of his presence in your labours,

I remain, Rev. Sir,

Your affectionate brother.

CCXXII.—*To the Rev. Mr. D——.*

DEAR SIR,

LIVERPOOL, April 6, 1761.

LET who will speak, if what is spoken be true, I am ready to subscribe it. If it be not, I accept no man's person. *Magis amica veritas.** I had an agreeable conversation with Mr. Venn, who, I suppose, is now near you. I think, he is exactly as regular as he ought to be. I would observe every punctilio of order, except where the salvation of souls is at stake. There I prefer the end before the means.

I think it great pity, that the few Clergymen in England who preach the three grand scriptural doctrines,—original sin, justification by faith, and holiness consequent thereon,—should have any jealousies or misunderstandings between them. What advantage must this give to the common enemy! What a hinderance is it to the great work wherein they are all engaged! How desirable is it, that there should be the most open, avowed intercourse between them! So far, indeed, as they judge it would be for the glory of God, they may openly declare wherein they disagree.

But surely if they are ashamed to own one another in the faces of all mankind, they are ashamed of Christ; they are ashamed of Him that sends, if they dare not avow whom he has sent. Excuses indeed will never be wanting. But will these avail before God? For many years I have been labouring after this; labouring to unite, not scatter, the

* I prefer truth to the dearest friend.—EDIT.

messengers of God. Not that I want anything from them. As God has enabled me to stand almost alone for these twenty years, I doubt not but he will enable me to stand, either with them or without them. But I want all to be helpful to each other; and all the world to know we are so. Let them know who is on the Lord's side. You, I trust, will always be of that number. O let us preach and live the whole Gospel! The grace of our Lord be with your spirit!

I am, dear Sir,

Your ever affectionate brother and servant.

CCXXIII.—*To Mrs. R——.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

WHITEHAVEN, *June 28, 1766.*

FOR some time I have been convinced it was my duty to tell you what was on my mind. I will do it with all plainness. You may answer or not, as you judge best.

Many things I have observed in you which gave me pleasure; some which gave me concern: The former I need not mention; the latter I must, or I should not myself be clear before God.

The first of these is something which looks like pride. You sometimes seem to think too highly of yourself, and (comparatively) to despise others. I will instance in two or three particulars:

1. You appear to be above instruction, I mean instruction from man. I do not doubt but you are taught of God. But that does not supersede your being taught by man also. I believe there is no saint upon earth whom God does not teach by man.

2. You appear to think, (I will not affirm you do,) that none understands the doctrine of sanctification like you. Nay, you sometimes speak as if none understood it besides you: Whereas (whether you experience more or less of it than some) I know several, both men and women, who both think and speak full as scripturally of it as you do; and perhaps more clearly; for there is often something dark and confused in your manner of speaking concerning it.

3. You appear to undervalue the experience of almost every one in comparison of your own. To this it seems to

be owing, that you, some way or other, beat down almost all who believe they are saved from sin. And so some of them were, in the only sense wherein I either teach or believe it, unless they tell flat and wilful lies in giving an account of their experience.

A second thing which has given me concern is, I am afraid you are in danger of enthusiasm. We know there are divine dreams and impressions. But how easily may you be deceived herein! How easily, where something is from God, may we mix something which is from nature! especially if we have a lively imagination, and are not aware of any danger.

I will mention one thing more. It has frequently been said, and with some appearance of truth, that you endeavour to monopolize the affections of all that fall into your hands; that you destroy the nearest and dearest connexion they had before, and make them quite cool and indifferent to their most intimate friends. I do not at all speak on my own account; I set myself out of the question. But if there be anything of the kind with regard to other people, I should be sorry, both for them and you.

I commend you all to God, and to the word of his grace.

I am, my dear sister,

Your affectionate brother.

CCXXIV.—*To Mr. ———.*

SIR,

BRISTOL, *October 20, 1759.*

SINCE I came to Bristol I heard many terrible accounts concerning the French prisoners at Knowle; as, that "they were so wedged together, that they had no room to breathe;" that "the stench of the rooms where they lodged was intolerable;" that "their food was only fit for dogs;" that "their meat was carrion, their bread rotten and unwholesome;" and that, "in consequence of this inhuman treatment, they died in whole shoals."

Desiring to know the truth, I went to Knowle on Monday, and was showed all the apartments there. But how was I disappointed! 1. I found they had large and convenient space to walk in, if they chose it, all the day 2. There

was no stench in any apartment which I was in, either below or above. They were all sweeter and cleaner than any prison I have seen either in England or elsewhere. 3. Being permitted to go into the larder, I observed the meat hanging up, two large quarters of beef. It was fresh and fat, and I verily think as good as I ever desire to eat. 4. A large quantity of bread lay on one side. A gentleman took up and cut one of the loaves. It was made of good flour, was well baked, and perfectly well tasted. 5. Going thence to the hospital, I found that, even in this sickly season, there are not thirty persons dangerously ill, out of twelve or thirteen hundred. 6. The hospital was sweeter and cleaner throughout than any hospital I ever saw in London. I think it my duty to declare these things, for clearing the innocent, and the honour of the English nation.

Yet one thing I observed with concern. A great part of these men are almost naked; and winter is now coming upon them in a cold prison, and a colder climate than most of them have been accustomed to. But will not the humanity and generosity of the gentlemen of Bristol prevent or relieve this distress? Did they not make a notable precedent during the late war? And surely they are not weary of well-doing. Tuesday night *we* did a little according to our power; but I shall rejoice if this be forgotten through the abundance administered by their liberality, in a manner which they judge most proper. Will it not be both for the honour of their city and country? for the credit of our religion, and for the glory of God, who knows how to return it sevenfold into their bosom?

I am

Your humble servant.

CCXXV.—*To the Society at Monyash, Derbyshire.*

MY DEAR BRETHREN,

POOLE, *March 25, 1752.*

I SHOULD very willingly have spent a little time among you; but at present my time will not permit, I have so many places to visit, between Manchester, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and so on, to Berwick-upon-Tweed. Blessed be God, that you are not yet moved from the hope of the Gospel.

He has permitted a fiery trial to fall upon you ; * but I trust the sharpest part of it is past. May God enable you to stand fast together, in one mind and in one judgment ! Watch over one another in love ; and let not that which is lame be turned out of the way. Do all things without murmurings and disputings, following peace with all men ; and the God of peace be with you !

I am, my dear brethren,
Your affectionate brother.

CCXXVI.—*To the Rev. Mr. Wanley, Dean of Ripon.*

REVEREND SIR,

YARM, July 9, 1766.

THE regard which I owe to a fellow-Christian, and much more to a Clergyman and a Magistrate, constrains me to trouble you with a few lines, though I have no personal acquaintance with you. Ralph Bell has just been giving me an account of the late affair at Ripon. What he desires is, 1. To have the loss he has sustained repaired : And, 2. Liberty of conscience ; that liberty which every man may claim as his right, by the law of God and nature ; and to which every Englishman, in particular, has a right by the laws of his country. I well know the advantage these laws give us in the present case : I say us, because I make the case my own ; as I think it my bounden duty to do. I have had many suits in the King's Bench ; and, blessed be God, I never lost one yet. But I would far rather put an amicable end to any dispute, where it can be done. Not that I am afraid of being overborne by the expense : If I am not, I know them that are, able to bear it. But I love peace. I love my neighbour as myself ; and would not willingly bring loss or trouble upon any man. Be so good as to impute to this motive my interfering in this matter.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your servant for Christ's sake.

* Probably the conduct of John Bennet, who renounced his connexion with Mr. Wesley about this period, and vehemently preached against him in that part of the country.—EDIT.

CCXXVII.—*To Mary Yeoman, of Mousehole, Cornwall.*

MY DEAR SISTER,

ST. IVES, *September 2, 1769.*

YOUR case is not peculiar. I have known many who were just as you are now : And the same God who delivered them is as ready to deliver you. I advise you to continue in the way, whether you find any benefit or not. Pray, as you can, though you are ever so cold or dead. Hear the preaching; keep to your class. The Lord is at hand : He will abundantly pardon.

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CCXXVIII.—*To Mr. Merryweather, of Yarm.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

LONDON, *January 16, 1758.*

IF the work of God does so increase at Yarm, we must not let the opportunity slip. Therefore let the Travelling Preacher be there either every Sunday evening, or at least every other Sunday.

No person must be allowed to preach or exhort among our people, whose life is not holy and unblamable ; nor any who asserts anything contrary to the Gospel which we have received. And if he does not own his fault, and amend it, he cannot be a Leader any longer.

Peace be with you all.

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CCXXIX.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

BRENTFORD, *January 24, 1760.*

I RECEIVED yours, with the bill, a day or two ago. I wish you would everywhere recommend two books in particular, "The Christian Pattern," and the "Primitive Physic." It is a great pity that any Methodist should be without them.

I wonder brother Mather does not write to me. He should not forget his friends. I hope the gentleman with whom I breakfasted at Yarm has not forsaken you. Even the rich *may* enter into the kingdom : For with God all things are possible.

See that you stir up the gift of God that is in you. What is our Lord's word to *you*?—"Let the dead bury their dead: But follow thou me!"

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CCXXX.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

LONDON, *October 5, 1763.*

YOUR letter was sent from hence to Bristol. But I had left Bristol before it came. I have no objection to Mr. Jaco's coming to Yarm to open the house: But I suppose he cannot stay long. He will soon be wanted again in his own Circuit.

It is strange that the number of hearers should decrease, if you have regular preaching. I hope the morning preaching is never omitted. If it be, everything will droop.

What relates to the account I will give to Mr. Franks. Probably he will find where the mistake lies. O be in earnest.

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CCXXXI.—*To the Same.*

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, *May 7, 1764.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I THANK you for the receipts. There is nothing more sure, than that God is able and willing to give always what he gives once. And it is most certainly his design, that whatever he has given you should abide with you for ever. But this can only be by simple faith. In this, reasoning is good for nothing. See that both of you be as little children. Your help is all laid up above, in the hand of Him that loves you. Look unto Him, and receive what you want! Believe yourselves to heaven!

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CCXXXII.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

February 8, 1766.

WHERE Christian perfection is not strongly and explicitly preached, there is seldom any remarkable blessing from

God ; and, consequently, little addition to the Society, and little life in the members of it. Therefore, if Jacob Rowell is grown faint, and says but little about it, do you supply his lack of service. Speak and spare not. Let not regard for any man induce you to betray the truth of God. Till you press the believers to expect full salvation *now*, you must not look for any revival.

It is certain, God does at some times, without any cause, known to us, shower down his grace in an extraordinary manner. And he does, in some instances, delay to give either justifying or sanctifying grace, for reasons which are not discovered to us. These are some of those secrets of his government, which it hath pleased him to reserve in his own breast. I hope you and your wife keep all you have, and gasp for more.

I am

Your affectionate brother.

CCXXXIII.—*To the Same.*

MY DEAR BROTHER, LEWISHAM, *December 10, 1768.*

THE matter is short : All things in divine worship must "be done decently and in order." Two must never pray at the same time, nor one interrupt another. Either Alice Brammah must take advice, or the Society must be warned to keep away from her. These are the very things which were the beginning of poor George Bell's fall.

I am, with love to sister Merryweather,

Your affectionate brother.

CCXXXIV.—*To the Same.*

DEAR GEORGE, LONDON, *October 9, 1786.*

Do not wish to have a grain less of sensibility than you have. I love you the better for it : And so does He that is greater than all. That family I know and love well : We will help them all we can. I have no access to Mr. Thornton : The Calvinists take care to keep him to themselves. But if you will give them five pounds from me, John Atlay will answer your draft here.

I am, with best wishes to all the family, dear George,

Your affectionate brother.