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A
L E T T E R

T O

The Rev. Mr. THOMAS MAXFIELD.

OCCASIONED

By a late PUBLICATION.

By JOHN WESLEY, M.A.

L O N D O N :

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L E T T E R

T O

The Rev. Mr. THOMAS MAXFIELD, &c.

I WAS a little surprized to read, in a late publication of yours, the following Assertions :

1. *Thomas Maxfield* was “ some of the first fruits of Mr. *Whitefield*’s Ministry.” P. 18.

2. “ When he went abroad, he delivered me, and many thousands more, into the hands of those, he thought he could have trusted them with, and who would have given *them back to him again*, at his return. But, *alas! it was not so.*” *Ib.*

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

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

" It was Doctrine, that caused the Difference; or, at least, it was so pretended." *Ib.*

" He preached a few times, in connection with his old Friends. But, ah! how soon was the sword of Contention drawn!" P. 19.

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

" Read their vile Contentions, and the *evil Characters*, they give of each other, raking the filthiest ashes, to find some black Story against their fellow-preachers." P. 20.

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

To satisfy both Friends and Foes, I propose a few Queries on each of these four heads.

I. As to the first, I read a remarkable Passage in the third Journal, p. 50. the truth of which may be still attested by Mr. *Durbin*, Mr. *Westell*, and several others then present, who are yet alive. " A young man, who stood behind, sunk down, as one dead

dead; but soon began to roar out, and beat himself against the ground, so that six men could scarce hold him. This was *Thomas Maxfield*." Was this *You*? If it was, how are you "the first-fruits of Mr *Whitefield's* Ministry?" And how is it, that neither I, nor your Fellow-labourers, ever heard one word of this, during all those years, wherein you laboured in connection with us?

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

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

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

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

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"I heard,

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

foundation. *A dispensation of the Gospel was given me* also; and my labour was not in vain. I was constrained to cry out, (and *you* yourself used the same words to God, in *my* behalf)

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

With what view then can you charge me, with that Perfidy, which I am no more guilty of, than of High Treason? For what end can you affirm, "When he went abroad, he delivered many thousands into the hands of those, he thought he could have trusted them with."—Delivered! When? Where? How? What can you mean? I flatly deny, that ever he delivered one thousand, or one hundred, souls into *my* hands. Do you mean, "He spoke honourably of you to them at *Kennington-Common*, and *Rose-Green*?" True: but not so honourably, as I spoke of *you*, even at *London*; yea, as late as the year 1763! Yet was this the same thing with 'delivering the people at *London* "into your hands!" Nay, but 'Mr. *Whitefield* trusted, that you would have given them back, at his return.' Them! Whom? His Society at *London*, or *Bristol*? I had them not to give. He never intrusted me with them. Therefore I could not "give them back."

But

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

III. So much for the second Article. As to the third, your words are, "I heard Mr. *Whitefield* say, 'O that Division, that Division! What slaughter it has made!'"

But who made that Division? It was not I: it was not my Brother. It was Mr. *Whitefield* himself: and that, notwithstanding all admonitions, arguments, and intreaties. Mr. *Whitefield* first wrote a treatise against me by name: He sent it to my Brother, who indorsed it with these words, *Put up again thy sword into its place.* It slept a while; but, after a time, he published it. I made no reply. Soon after, Mr. *Whitefield* preached against my Brother and me, by name. This he did constantly, both in *Moorfields*, and in all other public places. We never returned railing for railing; but spoke honourably of Him, at all times, and in all places. But is it any wonder, that those, who loved Us, should no longer chuse to hear him? Mean time, was it *we*, that "turned their hearts against him?" Was it not *himself*?

But you say, "It was Doctrine, that caused the Difference;" (oddly enough expressed!) "at least, it was so pretended!" It was so *pretended!* What do
you

you mean? That Difference of Doctrine was only *pretended*? That we were agreed at the bottom, and only fought, like Prize-fighters, to shew our skill? Nay, here was no Pretence: the thing was as plain as the Sun at noon-day. Did not Mr. *Whitefield* proclaim, upon the house-top, the Difference between Us and Him? And yet it was not merely the *difference* of *Doctrine*, that caused the Division. It was rather the *manner*, wherein he maintained his Doctrine, and treated us in every place. Otherwise, Difference of Doctrine would not have created any Difference of Affection: but he might *lovingly* have held *Particular* Redemption, and we *General*, to our lives' end.

He did indeed "preach a few times, in connection with his old Friends. But how soon was the sword of contention drawn?" By whom? Truly, by Himself. Do not you know, (thousands do, if you do not) that, when he preached in the very Foundery, and my Brother sat by him, he preached the absolute Decrees, in the most peremptory and offensive manner? What was this, but drawing the sword, and throwing away the scabbard? Who then is chargeable with the Contention and Division, that ensued?

IV. "But where, you ask, can you now find any loving ones, of either party?" Blessed be God, I can find many thousands, both in *London*, in *Bristol*, in *Kingswood*, and in various parts, not only of *England*, but also of *Scotland* and *Ireland*: persons

as full of Love, both to God, and man, as any I knew forty years ago.

Some of these I find, (and much rejoice to find) in Mr. *Whitefield's* Societies. And I pray God, they may increase a thousand fold, both in number, and in strength. "Nay, they have no more love to *each other*, than Turks." They! Who? This is not the case with our Societies. They not only love each other, but love their enemies, even those, that still despitefully use them. But "read their vile contentions, and the *evil character* they give *each other*, raking the filthiest ashes, to find some black story." I will answer for one: I give no "*evil character* of my fellow-preachers:" I rake into no "filthy ashes, for black stories:" let him, who does, take it to himself. "They slay with the sword of bitterness, wrath, and envy." I do not: I plead, Not guilty. As I envy no man, so neither my wrath nor bitterness, slays any human creature. "Still more to their shame, is what they have sent out into the world, against each other, *on both sides*, about five or six years ago, and till this very day."

"What they have sent out against each other, *on both sides*, about five or six years ago." Within five or six years, I have been vehemently called to answer for myself; twice by Mr. *Richard Hill*, and, afterwards, by his Brother. Have you read what we "have sent out into the world, against each other, *on both sides*?" - If you have not, how can you so peremptorily affirm what *both sides* have done? You cannot

cannot possibly be a judge of what you have not read: and if you *had* read, you could not have passed such a sentence. Three tracts I have wrote; but in none of these do I “slay with the sword of bitterness, or wrath, or envy.” In none of them do I speak one bitter, or passionate, or disrespectful word. Bitterness and wrath, yea, low, base, virulent invective, both Mr. *Richard* and Mr. *Rowland Hill*, (as well as Mr. *Toplady*) have poured out upon me, in great abundance. But where have I, in one single instance, returned them railing for railing? I have not so learned Christ. I dare not rail, either at them, or you. I return not cursing, but blessing. That the God of Love may bless both them and you, is the Prayer of

Your injured,

Yet still affectionate Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

February 14, 1778.

F I N I S.

