

Benjamin Ingham to John Wesley

Ossett October 3, 1740

My Dear Brother,

I have received yours, and I intend to deal plainly with you, and to tell you what I think sincerely.

You say the Moravians (you think) have done much hurt among us; there is guile and dissimulation from end to end. As they are men, no doubt they are liable to mistake, as well as others. It may be that hurt incidentally may have arisen from what they have done, but I cannot think they intended to do any. And I do believe they are men of great sincerity and truth. You say either I do not see through them, or I dissemble it. Indeed, my brother, I do not dissemble. I do not pretend to know what is in anybody's heart, but to the best of my judgment they are true children of God, a pure church of Christ, worthy to be loved and highly honoured and esteemed of all that know the truth. I believe they are sound at the heart, and are what they pretend to be. I am not of the same opinion with them in everything, as I have told you before. But I agree with them in the main substance of things, and our differences are so small and trivial that they ought to make no separation, and I trust they never will.

I once had several jealousies and suspicions in my heart about them, but the cause was more in my own wicked heart than in what they did. When our own hearts are not right, we are very apt to find faults with other people; and if we can but find the least flaw, we make a great deal of it. And if we once begin to harbour evil surmisings, jealousies, and fears about good people, the devil pushes us forward, gets great advantage over us, and brings us into darkness, confusion, and perplexity. We should therefore always be watchful over our own hearts, and search diligently whether all be right there.

My dear brother, I fear all is not right in your own breast, otherwise you would not think so hardly of them. Is there not envy, self-love, emulation, jealousy? Are you not afraid lest they should eclipse your own glory, or lessen your own praise? Do you not give too much credit to all that you only hear of them? I am sure they are a true people of God. There is life and power amongst them.

How things may be at Oxford I do not know. This I know, the brethren have the greatest respect for the ordinances of the Lord. Four times I received the Lord's Supper with them, and I never see that sacred mystery so solemnly celebrated anywhere else; neither did I ever feel so great power and grace. If they are at variance at Oxford, it may

not come from Mr. [Richard] Viney's preaching, but from the people's unmortified passions and tempers. There were great envyings, jealousies, etc., at Corinth among the believers there; yet no one will say that St. Paul's doctrine was the cause of it. Wherever several ministers come, the people will be divided about them; one will be for this, another for that.

I wish all that labour in Christ's vineyard were entirely of one heart, and one mind, and one judgment. I wish we may all love one another; so shall we be disciples of Jesus. I remain,

Yours affectionately,

B. Ingham

My love to your brother, mother, etc.