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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letter from Charles Nisbet to Selina Hastings

**Date:** July 26, 1771

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Madam,

It must give Pleasure to every Lover of Christ & of true Religion, to

hear that a Person of your Ladyship's Rank & Consequence in the World is so interested in the Affairs of Christ's Kingdom, in so degenerate an Age as ours is. It would seem that Mr. Wesley by his Preaching & Conferences has been but too successful in seducing many of the ignorant & unwary into his Notions. He has been long suspected of teaching Doctrines inconsistent with the Gospel of Christ, & tending to encourage false Sinners in a Reliance on their Works & Merits for Justification. In his last Conference he seems to have taken off the Mask, & openly to inculcate the old Popish Doctrine of the Merit of good Works wrought by Sinners in a false State, in direct Opposition to ye Articles of the Church of England which he must have sign'd, & to the Doctrine which he has many times preach'd. It is easy to revive an old exploded Heresy when one takes no Notice of what has been said against it, by torturing an innocent single Expression in Holy Scripture to give it Countenance. The Obscurity & ambiguity <sup>with which</sup> Mr. Wesley expresses himself gives strong Suspicion against his Sincerity as well as his Orthodoxy. If I had all Mr. Wesley's Publications by me, I think it would be easy to prove that every Doctrine asserted & countenanced in his last Conference, is directly contrary to what he himself has often preach'd & published to the World as the true Gospel of Christ: But I see that he is already provided with an Answer to this, by acknowledging that he & his Brethren have been disputing only about Words for these thirty Years past. It is true that General Councils & public Conferences have ~~usually~~ seldom been favourable to the Interests of true Religion, when his private Prejudices & Attachments to these Assemblies, & were resolv'd to maintain their former Opinions, whatever may be said against them; not to add that these Meetings have led many to place their Faith in human Authority rather than the Testimony of God in the Holy Scriptures. But as the present Conference is proposed by the acknowledged Friends of true Religion, who must know the Situation of things in South Britain, & besides as it must tend to illustrate the Point of Fact, viz. that the Doctrines now taught by Mr. Wesley & his Brethren, are contrary to what is taught & believed by the truly Orthodox Ministers of Christ in Great Britain for these Reasons, I rejoice that it is to be held, & cheerfully contribute my poor Testimony in Support of the Truth. None can have the Vanity to believe that Scripture, Reason & Argument will have the Effect to enlighten Mr. Wesley, who is a Person of great Learning and Ingenuity, & can not be supposed to err from Ignorance. But perhaps the concurring Testimony of many acknowledged Orthodox Ministers of Christ, may be sufficient to open the Eyes of some

C. L.

The Reverend  
Mr Charles Wesley  
of the Gospel at  
Montro

of his followers & to convince them that Mr Wesley's new Doctrines are countenanced only by the Papists & some Arminians. - I shall be glad to hear of the Issue of the intended Conference. & pray that God by his Spirit may direct his faithful Servants, that they may be enabled to bear honourable Testimony to the truths of Christ, & in weakness to resist those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth. - I am,

Madam,  
Your Ladyship's

Montrope, 26<sup>th</sup> July, 1771.

most obedient humble Servant,



Madam,

It must give Pleasure to every Lover of Christ & of true Religion, to hear that a Person of your Ladyship's Rank & Consequence in the World is so interested in the Affairs of Christ's Kingdom, in so degenerate an Age as ours is. It would seem that Mr. Wesley by his Preaching & Conferences has been but too successful in seducing many of the ignorant & unwary into his Notions. He has been long suspected of teaching Doctrines inconsistent with the Gospel of Christ, & tending to encourage false Sinners in a Reliance on their Works & Merits for Justification. In his last Conference he seems to have taken off the Mask, & openly to inculcate the old Popish Doctrine of the Merit of good Works wrought by Sinners in a false State, in direct Opposition to y<sup>e</sup> Articles of the Church of England which he must have sign'd, & to the Doctrine which he has many times preach'd. It is easy to revive an old exploded Heresy when one takes no Notice of what has been said against it, by torturing an innocent single Expression in Holy Scripture to give it Countenance. The Obscurity & ambiguity with which Mr. Wesley expresses himself gives Strong Suspicions against his Sincerity as well as his Orthodoxy. If I had all Mr. Wesley's Publications by me, I think it would be easy to shew that every Doctrine affected & countenanced in his last Conference, is directly contrary to what he himself has often preached & published to the World as the true Gospel of Christ: But, I see that he is already provided with an Answer to this, by acknowledging that he & his Brethren have been disputing only about Words for these thirty Years past. It is true that General Councils & public Conferences have seldom been favourable to the Interests of true Religion, as Men bring their private Prejudices & Attachments to these Assemblies, & come resolved to maintain their former Opinions, whatever may be said against them; not to add that these Meetings have led many to place their Faith in human Authority rather than the Testimony of God in the Holy Scripture. But as the present Conference is proposed by the Acknowledged Friends of true Religion, who must know the Situation of things in South Britain, & besides as it must tend to illustrate & Point of Fact, viz. that the Doctrines now taught by Mr. Wesley & his Brethren, are contrary to what is taught & believed by the truly Orthodox Minister of Christ in Great Britain for these Reasons, I rejoice that it is to be held, & cheerfully contribute my poor Testimony in support of the

Truth. None can have the Vanity to believe that Scripture, Reason & Argument will have the Effect to enlighten Mr. Wesley, who is a Person of great Learning and Ingenuity, & can not be supposed to err from Ignorance. But perhaps the concurring Testimony of many acknowledged Orthodox Ministers of Christ, may be sufficient to open the Eyes of some of his followers & to convince them that Mr. Wesley's new Doctrines are countenanced only by the Papists & some Arminians. - I shall be glad to hear of the Issue of the intended Conference, & pray that God by his Spirit may so direct his faithful Servants, that they be enabled to bear honourable Testimony to the Truths of Christ, & in meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Resistance to the acknowledging of the Truth. - I am,

Madam,

Your Ladyship's

most obedient humble Servant,

Montrose, 26<sup>th</sup> July, 1771.

To

The Reverend

M<sup>r</sup> Charles Nisbet Min<sup>r</sup>

of the Gospel at

Montrose