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LETTERS

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FROM THE

Rev. SAMUEL DAVIES, &c.

S H E W I N G

The State of Religion in *Virginia*,
particularly among the Negroes.

L I K E W I S E

An Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman in LONDON to his Friend in the Country,

Containing some Observations on the same.

As cold Water to a thirsty Soul, so is good News from a far Country. PROV. xxv. 25.

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Copy of a Letter from the Rev.
Mr. Todd at Hanover in Virginia
to Mr. C. Feb. 3, 1757.

Dear SIR,

A FEW Weeks ago I received a Box OF BOOKS sent to me by you, and other good Friends to the immortal interests of the *Negroes* and *Poor* in this distant Part of the world.

I was very much struck, upon first receiving the BOOKS, with a sense of the marvellous Goodness of God, in putting it into the hearts of his people, to present so large and bounteous a Charity, so unexpectedly ; where it is so much wanted, and of that kind which was most needful in these parts, and best calculated to answer the pious and charitable intentions of the Donors.

I have often returned Thanks to the God of all Goodness for the favour, and feel myself under greater obligations to improve this, with the other favours received from him, to the honour of his Name and the good of my fellow creatures. Nothing could have more seasonably answered my wishes for the good of the *POOR* within the sphere of my labours, both *Negroes* and *white* People, than this.

Many among the *white* People are amazingly ignorant, and many are very poor, and some very desirous of improvement in
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the knowledge of God and Religion. The *Negroes* are generally desirous of knowledge, and have often applied to me for Books, as they had none, and had no way to get any. I furnished them as well as I could, but neither to their satisfaction, or my own, and their want still increases, as their sense of Religion increases. Now this will be a very great relief to them, and me, and I have great hopes a remarkable Blessing will attend it.

From the little experiments I have already made, I know they will very thankfully receive the books, and many will carefully improve them. I had a few of the books sent to *Virginia* to my favourite Brother Mr. *Davies*, from that Society, which I believe, and am persuaded, God has raised up for the most important purposes: And as they were calculated to do much good, so my People, both white and black, were so taken with them, that they appointed, with my approbation, to meet on the LORD'S DAY in private societies, to *read*, and *pray*, and *sing Praises*.

This is the more necessary, as the three Places where I statedly preach, are so far distant from each other, that it is impossible for them to hear me at all of them, being fourteen or twenty miles distant from each other at the least; so that the *Sabbath* which used to be spent in idle visits, or meetings for diversion, or servile business (which has been very common among the Slaves) is now spent in societies for *religious Worship*, when they cannot attend upon the Preaching of the Word,

36 LETTERS from the

Word, and *these Books* will greatly promote this work by the blessing of God.

About *two hundred*, or *more*, attend my ministry in good weather, at each of my places, to whom I often lower my style in my Sermons, and address them in a plain and pathetic manner: I sometimes give previous notice, that I intend to preach particularly to them; then vast crouds attend with remarkable seriousness, and shew themselves very thankful for such a favour, and some are deeply impressed with divine things. At such Sermons, the bulk of my *white* hearers are generally much affected, and manifest great satisfaction; which, by the way, is an additional conviction to me, that the most plain, pathetic, and solemn discourses, warmly addressed to the Conscience, are most likely to save perishing sinners of *all* colours.

I intend to preach a Sermon to the *Negroes*, and let them know the great obligations they are under to God for his goodness, in making this *additional Provision* for them, and the importance of making a right improvement of *this Donation*, and I shall examine them as to the knowledge they gain hereby, and am not without hopes, that many will improve in the knowledge of God and true Religion by *these helps*. I have had the pleasure of hearing them sing the Praises of God, and praying together, when others have been in their beds; and now they will have a variety of good helps, I hope the work will go on with *greater advantage*.

I acknow-

Rev. Mr. DAVIES, &c. 37

I acknowledge myself, and do in the name of your poor Beneficiaries acknowledge the great obligations we are under to our *London Friends*. I believe a Charity was never better bestowed, and doubt not but that these Poor will put up many earnest Prayers for their good Friends beyond the great waters.

I am, &c.

JOHN TODD.

Copy of a Letter from the Rev.
Mr. *Davies* at *Hanover* in *Virginia* to J. F. Feb. 15, 1757.

Dear S I R,

IN my Letters to my other correspondents who are Members of the Society, there are so many paragraphs relating to the reception and distribution of the books I lately received, that I need not enlarge in my account to you.

Such *liberal Assistance* to me in the discharge of my office, especially that branch of it which relates to the *Negroes*, could not fail of affecting me with the most ardent gratitude to God and man. And my pleasure has been much increased by the promising appearances of *its Success* among multitudes.

Every new benefaction of Books sets hundreds upon attempting to read with fresh ea-