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LETTER FROM SAMUEL DAVIES TO A FRIEND IN LONDON.

*Charlotte, 15th November, 1819.*

[REVEREND SIR,

I think somewhere in your magazine you requested that all persons having in their possession any of Mr. Davies' letters, would favour you with them. In a pamphlet I have found among the old papers of a deceased relative, entitled, "A Compassionate Address to the Christian Negroes in Virginia, &c. by Benjamin Fawcet; there is a letter of Mr. Davies', which I do not recollect seeing published yet in the magazine. And it does not appear that Mr. Gillies had the advantage of it in his Historical Collections; for although Mr. Fawcet makes several extracts from Mr. Davies' letters found in that work; yet he does not refer the reader to that work for this, but only says it was written to a correspondent in London, in the same year, in which this address was written, as you will see in his own words.

He is speaking of Mr. Tennent and Davies.—"After these gentlemen had successfully finished the business of their late mission in this part of the world; Mr. Davies gave the following particulars to his correspondent in London, in a letter which he wrote in the spring of the present year, six weeks after his safe return to his family and friends."]

"The inhabitants of Virginia are computed to be about 300,000 men, the one half of which number are supposed to be negroes. The number of those who attend my ministry at particular times is uncertain; but generally about three hundred who give a stated attendance. And never have I been so much struck with the appearance of an assembly, as when I have glanced my eye to that part of the meeting-

“house where they usually sit; ADORNED, for so it has appeared to me, with so many black countenances, eagerly attentive to every word they hear, and frequently bathed in tears. A considerable number of them, about a hundred, have been baptized, after a proper time for instruction, and having given credible evidences, not only of their acquaintance with the important doctrines of the christian religion, but also of a deep sense of them upon their minds, attested by a life of the strictest piety and holiness. As they are not sufficiently polished to dissemble with a good grace, they express the sentiments of their souls, so much in the language of simple nature, and with such genuine indications of sincerity, that it is imposible to suspect their professions, especially when attended, with a truly christian life and exemplary conduct. My worthy friend Mr. Todd, minister of the next congregation, has near the same number under his instructions, who, he tells me, discover the same serious turn of mind. In short sir, there are multitudes of them in different places, who are willing, and eagerly desirous to be instructed, and embrace every opportunity of acquainting themselves with the doctrines of the gospel; and though they have generally very little help to learn to read, yet to my agreeable surprise, many of them by the dint of application in their leisure hours, have made such a progress, that they can intelligibly read a plain author and especially their bibles; and pity it is that any of them should be without them. Before I had the pleasure of being admitted a member of your society,” (Mr. Davies here means the society for promoting religious knowledge among the poor, which was first begun in August 1750.) “The negroes were wont frequently to come to me, with such moving accounts of their necessities in this respect, that I could not help supplying them with books to the utmost of my small ability, and when I distributed those among them, which my friends with you sent over, I had reason to think that I never did an action in all my life, that met with so much gratitude from the receivers. I have already distributed all the books I brought over, which were proper for them. Yet still on Saturday evenings, the only time they can spare,” (they are allowed some short time, viz. Saturday afternoon, and Sundays, says Dr. Douglass in his summary. See monthly review for Oct. 1755, page 274.) “my house is crouded with numbers of them, whose very countenances still carry the air of importunate petitioners, for the same favours, with those who came before them. But alas! my stock is exhausted, and I must send them away grieved and disappointed.

"Permit me sir, to be an advocate with you, and by your  
 "means, with your generous friends in their behalf. The  
 "books I principally want for them, are Watts' Psalms and  
 "Hymns and Bibles. The two first they cannot be supplied  
 "with any other way than by a collection, as they are not  
 "among the books which your society give away. I am the  
 "rather importunate for a good number of these, as I can not  
 "but observe, that the negroes, above all the human species  
 "that I ever knew, have an ear for music, and a kind of ex-  
 "tatic delight in psalmody; and there are no books they learn  
 "so soon, or take so much pleasure in, as those used in that  
 "heavenly part of divine worship. Some gentlemen in Lon-  
 "don were pleased to make me a private present of these  
 "books for their use, and from the reception they met with,  
 "and their eagerness for more, I can easily foresee, how ac-  
 "ceptable and useful a larger number would be among  
 "them. Indeed nothing would be a greater inducement  
 "to their industry to learn to read, than the hope of  
 "such a present; which they would consider both as a help  
 "and a reward for their diligence.—I hardly know of any  
 "modern institution which bears so favourable an aspect on  
 "the declining interest of religion as your society. They de-  
 "serve the pleasure of hearing the happy effects of their ge-  
 "nerosity at the distance of 4000 miles, in these ends of the  
 "earth; and it is no small happiness to me, that the strictest  
 "veracity allows me to transmit so agreeable an account. Thus  
 "may the inhabitants of Great Britain receive blessings in  
 "answer to prayers put up for them in America; where I am  
 "sure, they have many affectionate intercessors, among  
 "whom he pleased to number your sincere and much obliged  
 "friend,  
 "SAMUEL DAVIES."

[As a farther specimen of Mr. Davies's epistolary manner we insert two let-  
 ters published in the Assembly's Magazine in the year 1805; but we are  
 well persuaded, new to almost the whole of our readers.]

*An Original Letter, from the Rev. Samuel Davies, president of  
 the College of New-Jersey.*

DEAR SIR,

As I heartily condoled with Mrs. — and yourself, in  
 your affliction, I now allow myself the pleasure to hope your  
 health, the greatest blessing our mortal frames are capable  
 of, is restored: and send you my sincere congratulations.  
 Happy we! if in proportion to the daily augmentation of our