

Reviewers,) it is not fit for me to judge. Let all lovers of truth, of humanity, and candour, determine. At present, I have no more to add, than that I beseech the Father of everlasting compassion to show more mercy to you, than you have shown to,

Reverend Sir,

Your servant for Christ's sake,

JOHN WESLEY.

A LETTER

TO

THE AUTHOR OF "THE CRAFTSMAN,"

CONCERNING

REAL CHRISTIANITY, DISPARAGED UNDER THE NAME
OF METHODISM.

[PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1745.]

TO THE AUTHOR OF "THE CRAFTSMAN."

SIR,

IN your late paper of June 22, I find (among many to the same effect) these words: "Methodists place all merit in *faith*, and *grace*, and none in good works. This unwarrantable strange sect of a religion, founded on madness and folly, hold that there is no justification by good works, but by faith and grace only. They hereby banish that divine part of our constitution, *reason*, and cut off the most essential recommendation to heaven, *virtue*."

"Men who are far gone in their mad principles of religion, suspend the hand of industry, become inactive, and leave all to Providence, without exercising either their heads or hands."

"The doctrine of regeneration is essential with political Methodists;—who are now regenerated, place all merit in *faith*, and have thrown good works aside."

I am pressed by those to whose judgment I pay great regard, to take some notice of these assertions; and the rather, because

you sometimes seem as if you thought the Christian institution was of God.

Now, if you really think so, or if you desire that any man should believe you do, you must not talk so ludicrously of regeneration; for it is an essential doctrine of Christianity. And you may probably have heard, or even read in former years, that it was the Author of this institution who said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

This he represents as the only possible entrance into the experimental knowledge of that religion, which is not founded (whatever you may suppose) on either madness or folly, but on the inmost nature of things, the nature of God and man, and the immutable relations between them.

By this religion, we do not banish reason, but exalt it to its utmost perfection; this being in every point consistent therewith, and in every step guided thereby.

But you say, "They hereby cut off the most essential recommendation to Heaven, *virtue*." What virtue? that of self-murder; that of casting their own infants to be devoured by beasts or wolves; that of dragging at their chariot-wheels those whose only crimes were the love of their parents, or children, or country? These Roman virtues our religion does cut off; it leaves no place for them. And a reasonable Deist will allow, "that these are not the most essential recommendation to Heaven." But it is far from cutting off any sort, degree, or instance of genuine virtue; all which is contained in the love of God and man, producing every divine and amiable temper.

And this love we suppose (according to the Christian scheme) to flow from a sense of God's love to us; which sense and persuasion of God's love to man in Christ Jesus, particularly applied, we term *faith*; a thing you seem to be totally unacquainted with. For it is not the faith whereof we speak, unless it be a "faith working by love," a faith "zealous of good works," careful to maintain, nay, to excel in them. Nor do we acknowledge him to have one grain of faith, who is not continually doing good, who is not willing "to spend and be spent in doing all good, as he has opportunity, to all men."

Whoever therefore they are, that "throw aside good

works ; that suspend " (as you prettily phrase it) " the hand of industry, become inactive, and leave all to Providence, without exercising either their heads or hands ;" they are no more led into this by any doctrine of ours, than by the writings of Paul of Tarsus.

And yet " this unaccountable strange sect " (so I believe we appear to you) " place no merit at all in good works." Most true. No, nor in faith neither ; (which you may think more unaccountable still ;) but only in " the blood of the everlasting covenant." We do assuredly hold, (which I beg to leave with you, and to recommend to your deepest consideration,) that there is no justification, in your sense, either by faith or works, or both together ; that is, that we are not pardoned and accepted with God for the merit of either, or both ; but only by the grace or free love of God, for the alone merits of his Son Jesus Christ.

I am,

Sir,

Your friend, though not admirer,

JOHN WESLEY.

AN ANSWER TO A LETTER

PUBLISHED IN THE BATH JOURNAL, APRIL 17, 1749,

SIGNED, N. D.

TO THE AUTHOR OF " A LETTER," &c.

LIMERICK, *May* 27, 1749.

SIR,

You ask, why I " do not warn the members of our society against fornication and adultery." I answer, For the same reason that I do not warn them (in those short hints) against rebellion or murder ; namely, because I do not apprehend them to be in immediate danger thereof. Whereas many of them are in continual danger, either of " taking the name of God in vain, of profaning the day of the Lord, or of drunkenness, or brawling, or of uncharitable or unprofitable conversation."