

# AN ANSWER

TO

## THE REV. MR. CHURCH'S REMARKS ON THE REV. MR. JOHN WESLEY'S LAST JOURNAL.

IN A LETTER TO THAT GENTLEMAN.

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*"Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off."*  
(1 Kings xx. 11.)

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REVEREND SIR,

1. MY first desire and prayer to God is, that I may live peaceably with all men: My next, that if I must dispute at all, it may be with a man of understanding. Thus far, therefore, I rejoice on the present occasion. I rejoice also in that I have confidence of your sincerity, of your real desire to promote the glory of God, by peace and good-will among men. I am likewise thankful to God for your calm manner of writing; (a few paragraphs excepted;) and yet more for this,—that such an opponent should, by writing in such a manner, give me an opportunity of explaining myself on those very heads whereon I wanted an occasion so to do.

2. I do not want, indeed, (though perhaps you think I do,) to widen the breach between us, or to represent the difference of the doctrines we severally teach as greater than it really is. So far from it, that I earnestly wish there were none at all; or, if there must be some, that it may be as small as possible; being fully persuaded, that, could we once agree in doctrines, other differences would soon fall to the ground.

3. In order to contribute, as I am able, to this, it will be my endeavour to acknowledge what I think you have spoken right, and to answer what I cannot think right as yet, with what

brevity and clearness I can. I desire to do this in as inoffensive a manner as the nature of the thing will bear, and consistently with that brotherly love which I cannot deny you without wronging my own soul.

4. You sum up your charge thus: "You have now, Sir, my sentiments.—It is impossible for you to put an entire stop to the enormities of the Moravians, while you still, I. Too much commend these men: II. Hold principles in common with them, from which these enormities naturally follow: And, III. Maintain other errors more than theirs, and are guilty of enthusiasm to the highest degree." (*Remarks*, pp. 73, 74.)

I. 1. You, First, charge me with too much commending the Moravians. That the case may be fully understood, I will transcribe the passages which you cite from the Journal concerning them, and then give a general answer:—

"She told me Mr. Molther had advised her, till she received faith, to be still, ceasing from outward works. In the evening, Mr. Bray also was highly commending the being still: He likewise spoke largely of the great danger that attended the doing of outward works, and of the folly of people that keep running about to church and sacrament." (Vol. I. p. 247.)

"Sunday, November 4. Our society met, and continued silent till eight." (*Ibid.*)

"Sunday, June 22. I spoke thus: Eight or nine months ago, certain men arose, who affirmed that there is no such thing as any means of grace, and that we ought to leave off these works of the law." (*Ibid.* p. 275.)

"You, Mr. Molther, believe that the way to attain faith, is, not to go to church, not to communicate, not to fast, not to use so much private prayer, not to read the Scripture, not to do temporal good, or attempt to do spiritual good." (*Ibid.* p. 257.)

You undervalue good works, especially works of outward mercy, never publicly insisting on the necessity of them." (*Ibid.* p. 330.)

"Some of our brethren asserted, (1.) That till they had true faith, they ought to be still; that is, (as they explained themselves,) to abstain from the means of grace, as they are called, the Lord's supper in particular. (2.) That the ordinances are not means of grace, there being no other means than Christ." (*Ibid.* p. 247.)

"I could not agree, either that none has any faith, so long

as he is liable to any doubt or fear ; or that, till we have it, we ought to abstain from the ordinances of God." (*Ibid.*)

"Mr. Br—d speaks so slightingly of the means of grace, that many are much grieved to hear him ; but others are greatly delighted with him. Ten or fourteen of them meet at our brother Clarke's, with Mr. Molther, and make a mere jest of going to the church or to the sacrament." (*Ibid.* p. 255.)

"You, Mr. Molther, believe it is impossible for a man to use these means, without trusting in them." (*Ibid.* p. 258.)

"'Believers,' said Mr. Simpson, 'are not subject to ordinances, and unbelievers have nothing to do with them.'" (*Ibid.* p. 269.)

"'Believers need not, and unbelievers may not, use them. These do not sin when they abstain from them ; but those do sin when they do not abstain.'" (*Ibid.* p. 277.)

"'For one who is not born of God to read the Scriptures, or to pray, or to communicate, or to do any outward work, is deadly poison. If he does any of these things, he destroys himself.' Mr. Bell earnestly defended this." (*Ibid.* p. 281.)

"At eight, the society at Nottingham met : I could not but observe that not one who came in used any prayer at all. I looked for one of our Hymn-books ; but both that and the Bible were vanished away, and in the room thereof lay the Moravian Hymns and the Count's Sermons." (*Ibid.* p. 314.)

"One of our English brethren, joined with you, said in his public expounding, 'As many go to hell by praying as by thieving.' Another, 'I knew one who, leaning over the back of a chair, received a great gift. But he must kneel down to give God thanks : So he lost it immediately ; and I know not whether he will ever have it again.' And yet another : 'You have lost your first joy. Therefore, you pray : That is the devil. You read the Bible : That is the devil. You communicate : That is the devil.'" (*Ibid.* p. 329.)

"They affirmed that there is no commandment in the New Testament but to believe ; that no other duty lies upon us ; and that, when a man does believe, he is not bound or obliged to do anything which is commanded there." (*Ibid.* p. 275.)

"Mr. St— told me, 'No one has any degree of faith till he is perfect as God is perfect.'" (*Ibid.* p. 270.)

"You believe there are no degrees in faith." (*Ibid.*)

"I have heard Mr. Molther affirm, that there is no justifying faith where there is ever any doubt." (*Ibid.* p. 328.)

“The moment a man is justified, he is sanctified wholly. Thenceforth, till death, he is neither more nor less holy.” (*Ibid.* p. 324.)

“We are to grow in grace, but not in holiness.” (*Ibid.* p. 325.)

2. I have frequently observed that I wholly disapprove of a these positions: “That there are no degrees in faith; that in order to attain faith we must abstain from all the ordinances of God; that a believer does not grow in holiness; and that he is not obliged to keep the commandments of God.” But I must also observe, (1.) That you ought not to charge the Moravian Church with the first of these; since in the very page from which you quote those words, “There is no justifying faith where there is ever any doubt,” that note occurs: “In the preface to the Second Journal, the Moravian Church is cleared from this mistake.” (2.) That with respect to the ordinances of God, their practice is better than their principle. They do use them themselves, I am a witness; and that with reverence and godly fear. Those expressions, however, of our own countrymen are utterly indefensible; as I think are Mr. Molther’s also; who was quickly after recalled into Germany. The great fault of the Moravian Church seems to lie in not openly disclaiming all he had said; which in all probability they would have done, had they not leaned to the same opinion. I must, (3.) Observe that I never knew one of the Moravian Church, but that single person, affirm that a believer does not grow in holiness. And perhaps he would not affirm it on reflection. But I am still afraid their whole Church is tainted with Quietism, Universal Salvation, and Antinomianism: I speak, as I said elsewhere, of Antinomian opinions, abstracted from practice, good or bad.

3. But I should rejoice if there lay no other objection against them, than that of erroneous opinions. I know in some measure how to have compassion on the ignorant: I know the incredible force of prepossession. And God only knows, what ignorance or error (all things considered) is invincible; and what allowance his mercy will make, in such cases, to those who desire to be led into all truth. But how far what follows may be imputed to invincible ignorance or prepossession, I cannot tell.

Many of “you greatly, yea, above measure, exalt yourselves, (as a Church,) and despise others. I have scarce heard one Moravian brother own his Church to be wrong in anything. Many of you I have heard speak of it, as if it were infallible,

Some of you have set it up as the judge of all the earth, of all persons as well as doctrines. Some of you have said, that there is no true Church but yours; yea, that there are no true Christians out of it. And your own members you require to have implicit faith in her decisions, and to pay implicit obedience to her directions." (Vol. I. p. 329.)

I can in no degree justify these things. And yet neither can I look upon them in the same light that you do, as "some of the very worst things which are objected to the Church of Rome." (*Remarks*, p. 7.) They are exceeding great mistakes: Yet in as great mistakes have holy men both lived and died;—Thomas à Kempis, for instance, and Francis Sales. And yet I doubt not they are now in Abraham's bosom.

4. I am more concerned for their "despising and decrying self-denial;" for their "extending Christian liberty beyond all warrant of holy writ;" for their "want of zeal for good works;" and, above all, for their supposing, that "we may, on some accounts, use guile;" in consequence of which they do "use guile or dissimulation in many cases." "Nay, in many of them I have found" (not in all, nor in most) "much subtlety, much evasion and disguise; so 'becoming all things to all men,' as to take the colour and shape of any that were near them." (*Ibid.* pp. 307, 258, 332, 327.)

I can neither defend nor excuse those among the Moravians whom I have found guilty of this. But neither can I condemn all for the sake of some. Every man shall give an account of himself to God.

But you say, "Your protesting against some of their opinions is not sufficient to discharge you. Have you not prepared the way for these Moravians, by countenancing and commending them; and by still speaking of them as if they were in the main the best Christians in the world, and only deluded or mistaken in a few points?" (*Remarks*, pp. 11, 12.)

I cannot speak of them otherwise than I think. And I still think, (1.) That God has some thousands in our own Church who have the faith and love which is among them, without those errors either of judgment or practice. (2.) That, next to these, the body of the Moravian Church, however mistaken some of them are, are in the main, of all whom I have seen, the best Christians in the world.

5. Because I am continually charged with inconsistency

herein, even by the Moravians themselves, it may be “needful to give a short account of what has occurred between us from the beginning.

“My first acquaintance with the Moravian brethren began in my voyage to Georgia. Being then with many of them in the same ship, I narrowly observed their whole behaviour. And I greatly approved of all I saw.” (The particulars are related in the First Journal.)

“From February 14, 1735, to December 2, 1737, being with them (except when I went to Frederica or Carolina) twice or thrice every day, I loved and esteemed them more and more. Yet a few things I could not approve of. These I mentioned to them from time to time, and then commended the cause to God.

“In February following I met with Peter Böhler. My heart clave to him as soon as he spoke. And the more we conversed, so much the more did I esteem both him and the Moravian Church. So that I had no rest in my spirit till I executed the design which I had formed long before; till, after a short stay in Holland, I hastened forward, first to Marienborn, and then to Hernhuth.”\*

It may be observed, that I had before seen a few things in the Moravians which I could not approve of. In this journey I saw a few more, in the midst of many excellent things; in consequence whereof, “in September, 1738, soon after my return to England, I began the following letter to the Moravian Church. But being fearful of trusting my own judgment, I determined to wait yet a little longer, and so laid it by unfinished:—

“MY DEAR BRETHREN,

“I CANNOT but rejoice in your steadfast faith, in your love to our blessed Redeemer, your deadness to the world, your meekness, temperance, chastity, and love of one another. I greatly approve of your Conferences and Bands,† of your methods of instructing children; and, in general, of your great care of the souls committed to your charge.

“But of some other things I stand in doubt, which I will mention in love and meekness. And I wish that, in order to

\* These are the words of the Fourth Journal, Vol. I. page 331, &c.

† The Band society in London began May 1, some time before I set out for Germany.

remove those doubts, you would, on each of those heads, First, plainly answer whether the fact be as I suppose; and if so, Secondly, consider whether it be right.

“‘Is not the Count all in all among you?”

“‘Do you not magnify your own Church too much?”

“‘Do you not use guile and dissimulation in many cases?”

“‘Are you not of a close, dark, reserved temper and behaviour?”

“‘It may easily be seen, that my objections then were nearly the same as now.” Only with this difference,—I was not then assured that the facts were as I supposed. “‘Yet I cannot say my affection was lessened at all: (For I did not dare to determine anything:) But from November 1, I could not but see more and more things which I could not reconcile with the gospel.”

“‘These I have set down with all simplicity. Yet do I this, because I love them not? God knoweth: Yea, and in part, I esteem them still; because I verily believe they have a sincere desire to serve God; because many of them have tasted of his love, and some retain it in simplicity; because they love one another; because they have so much of the truth of the gospel, and so far abstain from outward sin. And lastly, because their discipline is, in most respects, so truly excellent; notwithstanding that visible blemish, the paying too much regard to their great patron and benefactor, Count Zinzendorf.”

6. I believe, if you coolly consider this account, you will not find, either that it is inconsistent with itself, or that it lays you under any necessity of speaking in the following manner: “‘What charms there may be in a demure look and a sour behaviour, I know not. But sure they must be in your eye very extraordinary, as they can be sufficient to cover such a multitude of errors and crimes, and keep up the same regard and affection for the authors and abettors of them. I doubt your regard for them was not lessened, till they began to interfere with what you thought your province. You was influenced, not by a just resentment to see the honour of religion and virtue so injuriously and scandalously trampled upon, but by a fear of losing your own authority.” (*Remarks*, pp. 18, 19.)

I doubt, there is scarce one line of all these which is consistent either with truth or love. But I will transcribe a few more, before I answer: “‘How could you so long and so intimately converse with, so much commend, and give such countenance to,

such desperately wicked people as the Moravians, according to your own account, were known by you to be? And you still speak of them, as if they were, in the main, the best Christians in the world. In one place you say, 'A few things I could not approve of;' but in God's name, Sir, is the contempt of almost the whole of our duty, of every Christian ordinance, to be so gently touched? Can detestation in such a case be too strongly expressed? Either they are some of the vilest wretches in the world, or you are the falsest accuser in the world. Christian charity has scarce an allowance to make for them as you have described them. If you have done this truly, they ought to be discouraged by all means that can be imagined."

7. Let us now weigh these assertions. "They" (that is, "the charms of their *sour* behaviour") "must be in your eye very extraordinary."—Do not you stumble at the threshold? The Moravians excel in sweetness of behaviour. "As they can be sufficient to cover such a multitude of errors and crimes." *Such a multitude of errors and crimes!* I believe, as to errors, they hold universal salvation, and are partly Antinomians, (in opinion,) and partly Quietists; and for this cause I cannot join with them. But where is the multitude of errors? Whosoever knows two or three hundred more, let him please to mention them. *Such a multitude of crimes* too! That some of them have used guile, and are of a close reserved behaviour, I know. And I excuse them not. But to this multitude of crimes I am an utter stranger. Let him prove this charge upon them who can. For me, I declare I cannot.

"To keep up the same regard and affection."—Not so. I say, my affection was not lessened, till after September, 1739, till I had proof of what I had feared before. But I had not the same degree of regard for them when I saw the dark as well as the bright side of their character. "I doubt your regard for them was not lessened till they began to interfere with what you thought your province." If this were only a doubt, it were not much amiss; but it presently shoots up into an assertion, equally groundless: For my regard for them lessened, even while I was in Georgia; but it increased again after my return from thence, especially while I was at Hernhuth; and it gradually lessened again for some years, as I saw more and more which I approved not. How then does it appear that "I was influenced herein by a fear of losing my own authority; not by a just resentment to see



the honour of religion and virtue so scandalously trampled upon?"—*Trampled upon!* By whom? Not by the Moravians: I never saw any such thing among them.

But what do you mean by "a just resentment?" I hope you do not mean what is commonly called *zeal*; a flame which often "sets on fire the whole course of nature, and is itself set on fire of hell!" "Rivers of water run from my eyes, because men keep not thy law." This resentment on such an occasion I understand. From all other may God deliver me!

8. You go on: "How could you so long and so intimately converse with—such desperately wicked people as the Moravians, according to your own account, were known by you to be?" O Sir, what another assertion is this! "The Moravians, according to your *own account*, were known by you to be desperately wicked people, while you intimately conversed with them!" Utterly false and injurious. I never gave any such account. I conversed intimately with them, both at Savannah and Hernhuth. But neither then, nor at any other time, did I know, or think, or say, they were "desperately wicked people." I think and say, nay, you blame me for saying, just the reverse, viz., that though I soon "found among them a few things which I could not approve;" yet I believe they are "in the main some of the best Christians in the world."

You surprise me yet more in going on thus: "In God's name, Sir, is the contempt of almost the whole of our duty, of every Christian ordinance, to be so very gently touched?" Sir, this is not the case. This charge no more belongs to the Moravians, than that of murder. Some of our countrymen spoke very wicked things. The Moravians did not sufficiently disavow them. These are the premises. By what art can you extort so dreadful a conclusion from them?

"Can detestation, in such a case, be too strongly expressed?" Indeed it can; even were the case as you suppose. "Either they are some of the vilest wretches in the world, or you are the falsest accuser in the world." Neither one nor the other: Though I prove what I allege, yet they may be, in the main, good men. "Charity has scarce an allowance to make for them, as you have described them." I have described them as of a mixed character, with much evil among them, but more good. Is it not a strange kind of charity, which cannot find an allowance to make in such a case? "If you have described

them truly, they ought to be discouraged by all means that can be imagined." *By all means!* I hope not by fire and faggot; though the *house of mercy* imagines these to be, of all means, most effectual.

9. You proceed: "How can you justify the many good things you say of the Moravians, notwithstanding this character? You say they love God: But how can this be, when they even plead against keeping most of his commandments? You say, you believe they have a sincere desire to serve God. How, then, can they despise his service in so many instances? You declare some of them much holier than any people you had yet known. Strange! if they fail in so many prime points of Christian duty, and this not only habitually and presumptuously, but even to the denying their use and necessity. You praise them for trampling under foot 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:' And yet you make them a close, reserved, insincere, deceitful people.

"How you will explain those things, I know not." (*Remarks*, pp 20, 21.) By nakedly declaring each thing as it is. They are, I believe, the most self-inconsistent people now under the sun: And I describe them just as I find them; neither better nor worse, but leaving the good and bad together. Upon this ground I can very easily justify the saying many good things of them, as well as bad. For instance: I am still persuaded that they (many of them) love God; although many others of them ignorantly "plead against the keeping," not "most," but some, "of his commandments." I believe "they have a sincere desire to serve God:" And yet, in several instances, some of them, I think, despise that manner of serving him which I know God hath ordained. I believe some of them are much holier than any people I had known in August, 1740: Yet sure I am that others among them fail, not indeed in the "prime points of Christian duty," (for these are faith, and the love of God and man,) but in several points of no small importance. Not that they herein sin presumptuously, neither; for they are fully, though erroneously, persuaded in their own minds. From the same persuasion they act, when they, in some sense, deny the use or necessity of those ordinances. How far that persuasion will justify or excuse them, I leave to Him who knoweth their hearts. Lastly. I believe they trample under foot, in a good degree, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:" And yet many of

them use reserve, yea, guile. Therefore, my soul mourns for them in secret places.

10. "But I must observe," you say, "that you fall not only into inconsistencies, but into direct contradictions. You commend them for 'loving one another in a manner the world knoweth not of;' and yet you charge them with being 'in the utmost confusion, biting and devouring one another.' You say, 'They caution us against natural love of one another; and had well-nigh destroyed brotherly love from among us.'

"You praise them for 'using no diversions, but such as become saints;' and for 'not regarding outward adorning:' Yet you say they 'conform to the world in wearing gold and costly apparel; and by joining in worldly diversions, in order to do good.'

"You call their discipline, 'in most respects, truly excellent.' I wish you had more fully explained yourself. I am sure it is no sign of good discipline, to permit such abominations. And you tell them yourself, 'I can show you such a subordination as answers all Christian purposes, and yet is as distant from that among you as the heavens are from the earth.'

"You mention it as a good effect of their discipline, that 'every one knows and keeps his proper rank.' Soon after, as if it were with a design to confute yourself, you say, 'Our brethren have neither wisdom enough to guide, nor prudence enough to let it alone.'

"And now, Sir, how can you reconcile these opposite descriptions?" (*Ibid.* pp. 21, 22.) Just as easily as those before, by simply declaring the thing as it is. "You commend them" (the Moravians) "for loving one another; and yet charge them with biting and devouring one another." (Vol. I. pp. 245, 256.) *Them!* Whom? Not the Moravians; but the English brethren of Fetter-Lane, before their union with the Moravians. Here, then, is no shadow of contradiction. For the two sentences do not relate to the same persons.

"You say, 'They had well-nigh destroyed brotherly love from among us;' partly by 'cautions against natural love.'" (*Ibid.* p. 330.) It is a melancholy truth; so they had. But we had then no connexion with them. Neither, therefore, does this contradict their "loving one another in a manner the world knoweth not of."

"You praise them for using no diversions but such as become saints;" (*Ibid.* p. 245;) "and yet say," (I recite the whole sen-

tence,) "I have heard some of you affirm, that 'Christian salvation implies liberty to conform to the world, by joining in worldly diversions in order to do good.'" (*Ibid.* p. 327.) And both these are true. The Moravians, in general, "use no diversions but such as become saints;" and yet I have heard some of them affirm, in contradiction to their own practice, that "one then mentioned did well, when he joined in playing at tennis in order to do good."

11. "You praise them for not 'regarding outward adorning.'" (*Ibid.* p. 245.) So I do, the bulk of the congregation. "And yet you say," (I again recite the whole sentence,) "I have heard some of you affirm, that 'Christian salvation implies liberty to conform to the world, by putting on of gold and costly apparel.'" (*Ibid.* p. 327.) I have so. And I blame them the more, because they are condemned by the general practice of their own Church.

"You call their discipline 'in most respects truly excellent.'" (*Ibid.* p. 245.) I could wish you had more fully explained yourself." I have, in the Second Journal. (*Ibid.* pp. 115-147.) "It is no sign of good discipline to permit such abominations;" that is, error in opinion, and guile in practice. True, it is not; nor is it any demonstration against it. For there may be good discipline even in a College of Jesuits. Another fault is, too great a deference to the Count. And yet, "in most respects, their discipline is truly excellent."

"You mention it as a good effect of their discipline, that 'every one knows and keeps his proper rank.'" (*Ibid.* p. 245.) Soon after, as it were with a design to confute yourself, you say, 'Our brethren have neither wisdom enough to guide, nor prudence enough to let it alone.'" (*Ibid.* p. 255.) Pardon me, Sir. I have no design either to confute or to contradict myself in these words. The former sentence is spoken of the Moravian brethren; the latter, of the English brethren of Fetter-Lane.

12. You need not therefore "imagine, that either the strong pretences or warm professions of the Moravians," or their "agreeing with me on some favourite topics," (for my love to them was antecedent to any such agreement,) "induce me to overlook their iniquity, and to forgive their other crimes." (*Remarks*, p. 23.) No. I love them upon quite different grounds; even because I believe, notwithstanding all their faults, they "love the Lord Jesus in sincerity," and have a measure of "the mind that was in him." And I am in great earnest when I declare once more,

that I have a deep, abiding conviction, by how many degrees the good which is among them overbalances the evil; that I cannot speak of them but with tender affection, were it only for the benefits I have received from them; and that, at this hour, I desire union with them (were those stumbling-blocks once put away, which have hitherto made that desire ineffectual) above all things under heaven.

II. 1. Your second charge is, "That I hold, in common with them, principles from which their errors naturally follow." You mean justification by faith alone. To set things in the clearest light I can, I will first observe what I hold, and what you object; and then inquire what the consequences have been.

First. As to what I hold. My latest thoughts upon justification are expressed in the following words:—

"Justification sometimes means our acquittal at the last day. But this is out of the present question; that justification whereof our Articles and Homilies speak, meaning present pardon and acceptance with God; who therein declares his righteousness and mercy, by or for the remission of the sins that are past.

"I believe, the condition of this is faith: I mean, not only, that without faith we cannot be justified; but also, that, as soon as any one has true faith, in that moment he is justified.

"Good works follow this faith, but cannot go before it. Much less can sanctification, which implies a continued course of good works, springing from holiness of heart. But—entire sanctification goes before our justification at the last day.

"It is allowed, that repentance, and 'fruits meet for repentance,' go before faith. Repentance absolutely must go before faith; fruits meet for it, if there be opportunity. By repentance I mean, conviction of sin, producing real desires and sincere resolutions of amendment; and by 'fruits meet for repentance,' forgiving our brother, ceasing from evil, doing good, using the ordinances of God, and, in general, obeying him according to the measure of grace which we have received. But these I cannot, as yet, term good works, because they do not spring from faith and the love of God." (*Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, pp. 46, 47.)

2. "Faith, in general, is a divine, supernatural *ελεγχος* (evidence or conviction) of things not seen, not discoverable by our

bodily senses, as being either past, future, or spiritual. Justifying faith implies, not only a divine ελεγγχος that God 'was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,' but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for my sins, that he loved me, and gave himself for me. And the moment a penitent sinner thus believes, God pardons and absolves him." (*Ibid.* p. 48.)

Now, it being allowed, that both inward and outward holiness are the stated conditions of final justification, what more can you desire, who have hitherto opposed justification by faith alone merely upon a principle of conscience, because you was zealous for holiness and good works? Do I not effectually secure these from contempt, at the same time that I defend the doctrines of the Church? I not only allow, but vehemently contend, that none shall ever enter into glory, who is not holy on earth, as well in heart as "in all manner of conversation." I cry aloud, "Let all that have believed, be careful to maintain good works;" and, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from all iniquity." I exhort even those who are conscious they do not believe, "Cease to do evil, learn to do well. The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" therefore, "repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Are not these directions the very same, in substance, which you yourself would give to persons so circumstanced?

3. "Many of those who are perhaps as zealous of good works as you, think I have allowed you too much. Nay, my brethren, but how can we help allowing it, if we allow the Scriptures to be from God? For is it not written, and do not you yourselves believe, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord?' And how then, without fighting about words, can we deny, that holiness is a condition of final acceptance? And as to the first acceptance or pardon, does not all experience as well as Scripture prove, that no man ever yet truly believed the gospel who did not first repent? Repentance therefore we cannot deny to be necessarily previous to faith. Is it not equally undeniable, that the running back into wilful, known sin (suppose it were drunkenness or uncleanness) stifles that repentance or conviction? And can that repentance come to any good issue in his soul, who resolves not to forgive his brother? or who obstinately refrains from what God convinces him is right, whether it be prayer or hearing his word? Would you scruple yourself to tell one of these, 'Unto him that hath shall be given;

but from him that hath not,' that is, uses it not, 'shall be taken even that which he hath?' Would you scruple to say this? But in saying this, you allow all which I have said, viz., that previous to justifying faith, there *must* be repentance, and, if opportunity permit, 'fruits meet for repentance.'

"And yet I allow you this, that although both repentance and the fruits thereof are in some sense necessary before justification, yet neither the one nor the other is necessary in the same sense, or in the same degree, with faith. Not in the same degree. For in whatever moment a man believes, (in the Christian sense of the word,) he is justified, his sins are blotted out, 'his faith is counted to him for righteousness.' But it is not so, at whatever moment he repents, or brings forth any or all the fruits of repentance. Faith alone therefore justifies; which repentance alone does not; much less any outward work. And consequently, none of these are necessary to justification, in the same degree with faith.

"No in the same sense. For none of these has so direct, immediate a relation to justification as faith. This is proximately necessary thereto; repentance remotely, as it is necessary to the increase or continuance of repentance.\* And even in this sense, these are only necessary on supposition,—if there be time and opportunity for them; for in many instances there is not; but God cuts short his work, and faith prevents the fruits of repentance: So that the general proposition is not overthrown, but clearly established, by these concessions; and we conclude still, that faith alone is the proximate condition of justification."

4. This is what I hold concerning justification. I am next briefly to observe what you object. "If faith," say you, "is the sole condition of justification, then it is our sole duty." (*Remarks*, p. 25.) I deny the consequence. Faith may be, in the sense above described, the sole condition of justification; and yet not only repentance be our duty before, but all obedience after, we believe.

You go on: "If good works are not conditions of our justification, they are not conditions of our (final) salvation." (Page 25.) I deny the consequence again. Good works, properly so called, cannot be the conditions of justification; because it

\* See this glaring misprint of one of the earliest editions corrected by Mr. Wesley himself in a subsequent part of this volume, page 428.—EDIT.

is impossible to do any good work before we are justified. And yet, notwithstanding, good works may be, and are, conditions of final salvation. For who will say it is impossible to do any good work before we are finally saved?

You proceed: "Can we be saved in the contemptuous neglect of repentance, prayer," &c.? (Page 26.) No, nor justified neither; but while they are previous to faith, these are not allowed to be good works.

You afterwards argue from my own concessions, thus: "Your notion of true stillness is, 'a patient waiting upon God, by lowliness, meekness, and resignation, in all the ways of his holy law, and the works of his commandments.' But how is it possible to reconcile to this, the position, that these duties are not conditions of our justification? If we are justified without them, we may be saved without them. This consequence cannot be too often repeated." (Page 26.)

Let it be repeated ever so often, it is good for nothing. For, far other qualifications are required in order to our standing before God in glory, than were required in order to his giving us faith and pardon. In order to this, nothing is indispensably required, but repentance, or conviction of sin. But in order to the other it is indispensably required, that we be fully "cleansed from all sin;" that the "very God of peace sanctify us wholly," even to *το ὅλοκληρον ἡμῶν*, "our entire body, soul, and spirit." It is not necessary, therefore, (nor indeed possible,) that we should, before justification, "patiently wait upon God, by lowliness, meekness, and resignation, in all the ways of his holy law." And yet it is necessary, in the highest degree, that we should thus wait upon him after justification: Otherwise, how shall we be "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?"

5. Soon after, you add: "In the passages last cited, you plead for the necessity of a good life: But in others, the force of your principles shows itself. An answer approved by you, is, 'My heart is desperately wicked; but I have no doubt or fear; I know my Saviour loves me, and I love him.' Both these particulars are impossible, if the Scripture be true." (Page 29.)

You amaze me! Is it possible you should be ignorant that your own heart is desperately wicked? Yet I dare not say, either that God does not love you, or that you do not love him.

"Again: You say, you described the state of those who have forgiveness of sins, but not a clean heart;" (page 30;)



not in the full, proper sense. Very true; but even then they had power over both inward and outward corruptions; far from being, as you suppose, "still wedded to their vices, and resolved to continue in them."

"In another place, after having observed that 'sin does remain in one that is justified, though it has not dominion over him,' you go on: 'But fear not, though you have an evil heart; yet a little while, and you shall be endued with power from on high, whereby ye may purify yourselves, even as he is pure.' Sinners, if they believe this, may be quite secure, and imagine they have nothing to fear, though they continue in their iniquities. For God's sake, Sir, speak out. If they that have an evil heart have not, who has reason to fear?" (Page 31.) All who have not dominion over sin; all who continue in their iniquities. You, for one, if any sin has dominion over you. If so, I testify against you this day, (and you will not be quite secure, if you believe me,) "The wrath of God abideth on you!"

"What do you mean by, 'sin remains in one that is justified?' that he is guilty of any known, wilful, habitual sin?" (Page 32.) Judge by what is gone before:—I mean the same as our Church means by, "sin remains in the regenerate."

6. You proceed to another passage, which in the Journal stands thus:—

"After we had wandered many years in the new path of salvation by faith and works, about two years ago it pleased God to show us the old way of salvation by faith only. And many soon tasted of this salvation, being justified freely, having peace with God, 'rejoicing in hope of the glory of God,' and having 'his love shed abroad in their hearts.'" (Vol. I. p. 275.) Thus I define what I mean by this salvation, viz., "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

But you object, "Here you deny the necessity of good works in order to salvation." (*Remarks*, p. 33.) I deny the necessity, nay, possibility, of good works, as previous to this salvation; as previous to faith or those fruits of faith, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." This is my real sentiment, not a slip of my pen, neither any proof of my want of accuracy.

7. "I shall now," you say, "consider the account you give, in this Journal, of the doctrine of justification." (*Remarks*, p. 30.)

I will recite the whole, just as it stands, together with the occasion of it:—

“In the afternoon I was informed how many who cannot, in terms, deny it,—explain justification by faith. They say, ‘(1.) Justification is two-fold; the first in this life, the second at the last day. (2.) Both these are by faith alone, that is, by objective faith, or by the merits of Christ, which are the object of our faith.’ And this, they say, is all that St. Paul and the Church mean by, ‘we are justified by faith only.’ But they add, (3.) ‘We are not justified by subjective faith alone, that is, by the faith which is in us. But good works also must be added to this faith, as a joint condition both of the first and second justification.’

“In flat opposition to this, I cannot but maintain, (at least, till I have clearer light,) (1.) That the Justification which is spoken of by St. Paul to the Romans, and in our Articles, is not two-fold. It is one, and no more. It is the present remission of our sins, or our first acceptance with God. (2.) It is true, that the merits of Christ are the sole cause of this our justification. But it is not true, that this is all which St. Paul and our Church mean by our being justified by faith only; neither is it true, that either St. Paul or the Church mean, by faith, the merits of Christ. But, (3.) By our being justified by faith only, both St. Paul and the Church mean that the condition of our justification is faith alone, and not good works; inasmuch as all works done before justification have in them the nature of sin. Lastly. That faith which is the sole condition of justification, is the faith which is wrought in us by the grace of God. It is a sure trust which a man hath, that Christ hath loved him and died for him.” (Vol. I. pp. 254, 255.)

8. To the first of these propositions you object, “that justification is not only two-fold, but manifold. For a man may possibly sin many times, and as many times be justified or forgiven.” (*Remarks*, pp. 37–39.)

I grant it. I grant also, that justification sometimes means a state of acceptance with God. But all this does not in the least affect my assertion, that “that justification which is spoken of by St. Paul to the Romans, and by our Church in the Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Articles, is not our acquittal at the last day, but the present remission of our sins.”

You add, “You write in other places so variously about this matter, that I despair to find any consistency. Once you held

' a degree of justifying faith short of the full assurance of faith, the abiding witness of the Spirit, or the clear perception that Christ abideth in him ;' and yet you afterwards ' warned all not to think they were justified before they had a clear assurance, that God had forgiven their sins.' What difference there is between this clear assurance, and the former full assurance and clear perception, I know not." (Page 40.)

Let us go on step by step, and you will know. "Once you held ' a degree of justifying faith, short of the full assurance of faith, the abiding witness of the Spirit, or the clear perception that Christ abideth in him.' " And so I hold still, and have done for some years. "And yet you afterwards warned all not to think they were justified before they had a clear assurance that God had forgiven their sins." I did so. "What difference there is between this clear assurance, and that full assurance and clear perception, I know not." Sir, I will tell you. The one is an assurance that my sins are forgiven, clear at first, but soon clouded with doubt or fear. The other is such a plerophory or full assurance that I am forgiven, and so clear a perception that Christ abideth in me, as utterly excludes all doubt and fear, and leaves them no place, no, not for an hour. So that the difference between them is as great as the difference between the light of the morning and that of the mid-day sun.

9. On the second proposition you remark, (1.) That I "ought to have said, the merits of Christ are (not the *sole* cause, but) the *sole meritorious* cause of this our justification." (Page 41.) (2.) That " St. Paul and the Church, by justifying faith, mean, faith in the gospel and merits of Christ." The very thing; so I contend, in flat opposition to those who say they mean only the object of this faith.

Upon the third proposition, " By our being justified by faith only, both St. Paul and the Church mean, that the condition of our justification is faith alone, and not good works ;" you say, "Neither of them mean any such thing. You greatly wrong them, in ascribing so mischievous a sentiment to them." (*Ibid.*) Let me beg you, Sir, to have patience, and calmly to consider, (1.) What I mean by this proposition. Why should you any longer run as uncertainly, and fight as one that beateth the air? (2.) What is advanced touching the sentiments of the Church, in the tract referred to above. Till you have done this, it would be mere loss of time to dispute with you on this head.

I wave, therefore, for the present, the consideration of some of your following pages. Only I cannot quite pass over that (I believe, new) assertion, "that the Thirteenth Article, entitled, 'Of Works done before Justification,' does not speak of works done before justification, but of works before grace, which is a very different thing!" (Page 45.) I beseech you, Sir, to consider the Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Articles, just as they lie, in one view: And you cannot but see that it is as absolutely impossible to maintain that proposition, as it is to prove that the Eleventh and Twelfth Articles speak not of justification, but of some very different thing.

10. Against that part of the fourth proposition, "Faith is a sure trust which a man hath, that Christ loved him and died for him," you object, "This definition is absurd; as it supposes that such a sure trust can be in one who does not repent of his sins." (Page 48.) I suppose quite the contrary, as I have declared over and over; nor, therefore, is there any such danger as you apprehend.

But you say, "There is nothing distinguishing enough in this to point out the true justifying faith." (*Ibid.*) I grant it; supposing a man were to write a book, and say this of it, and no more. But did you ever see any treatise of mine, wherein I said this of faith, and no more? nothing whereby to distinguish true faith from false? Touching this Journal, your own quotations prove the contrary. Yea, and I everywhere insist, that we are to distinguish them by their fruits, by inward and outward righteousness, by the peace of God filling and ruling the heart, and by patient, active joy in the Holy Ghost.

You conclude this point: "I have now, Sir, examined at large your account of justification; and, I hope, fully refuted the several articles in which you have comprised it." (Page 49.) We differ in our judgment. I do not apprehend you have refuted any one proposition of the four. You have, indeed, amended the second, by adding the word *meritorious*; for which I give you thanks.

11. You next give what you style, "the Christian scheme of justification;" (page 50;) and afterwards point out the consequences which you apprehend to have attended the preaching justification by faith; the Third point into which I was to inquire.

You open the cause thus: "The denying the necessity of

good works, as the condition of justification, directly draws after it, or rather includes in it, all manner of impiety and vice. It has often perplexed and disturbed the minds of men, and in the last century occasioned great confusions in this nation. These are points which are ever liable to misconstructions, and have ever yet been more or less attended with them. And it appears from what you have lately published, that since you have preached the doctrine, it has had its old consequences, or rather worse ones; it has been more misunderstood, more perverted and abused, than ever." (Pages 1, 2.)

"The denying the necessity of good works, as the condition of justification, draws after it, or rather includes in it, all manner of impiety and vice." Here stands the proposition; but where is the proof? Till that appears, I simply say, It does not.

"It has often perplexed and disturbed the minds of men." And so have many other points in St. Paul's Epistles.

"But these are points which are ever liable to misconstructions; and have ever yet, more or less, been attended with them." And what points of revealed religion are those which are not ever liable to misconstructions? Or of what material point can we say, that it has not ever yet, more or less, been attended with them?

"In the last century it occasioned great confusions in this nation." *It occasioned!* No; in no wise. It is demonstrable, the occasions of those confusions were quite of another kind.

"And it appears, that since you have preached the doctrine, it has had its old consequences, or rather worse. It has been more misunderstood, more perverted and abused, than ever." What! worse consequences than regicide, (which, you say, was the old one,) and making our whole land a field of blood? Or has it been more perverted and abused than when (in your account) it overturned the whole frame both of Church and State?

12. You go on: "The terms of the gospel are, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. But when we undervalue either of these terms, we involve the consciences of the weak in fatal perplexities; we give a handle to others to justify their impieties; we confirm the enemies of religion in their prejudices." (*Remarks*, p. 2.)

All this I grant. But it affects not me. For I do not undervalue either faith or repentance.

“Was not irreligion and vice already prevailing enough in the nation, but we must—throw snares in people’s way, and root out the remains of piety and devotion, in the weak and well-meaning? That this has been the case, your own confessions put beyond all doubt. And you even now hold and teach the principles from which these dangerous consequences do plainly and directly follow.” (Page 3.)

“Was not irreligion and vice already prevailing enough,” (whether I have increased them, we will consider by and by,) “but we must throw snares in people’s way?” God forbid! My whole life is employed in taking those snares out of people’s way, which the world and the devil had thrown there. “And root out the remains of piety and devotion in the weak and well-meaning?” Of whom speaketh the Prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? “Your own confessions put this beyond all doubt.” What! that “I root out the remains of piety and devotion?” Not so. The sum of them all recited above amounts to this and no more: “That while my brother and I were absent from London, many weak men were tainted with wrong opinions, most of whom we recovered at our return; but even those who continued therein did, notwithstanding, continue to live a holier life than ever they did before they heard us preach.” “And you even now hold the principles from which these dangerous consequences do plainly and directly follow.” But I know not where to find these consequences, unless it be in your title-page. There indeed I read of the very fatal tendency of justification by faith only: “The divisions and perplexities of the Methodists, and the many errors relating both to faith and practice, which,” as you conceive, “have already arisen among these deluded people.”

However, you “charitably believe, I was not aware of these consequences at first.” (*Remarks*, p. 4.) No, nor am I yet; though it is strange I should not, if they so naturally succeed that doctrine. I will go a step farther. I do not know, neither believe, that they ever did succeed that doctrine, unless perhaps accidentally, as they might have succeeded any doctrine whatsoever. And till the contrary is proved, those consequences cannot show that these principles are not true.

13. Another consequence which you charge on my preaching justification by faith, is, the introducing the errors of the Moravians. “Had the people,” say you, “gone on in a quiet and

regular practice of their duty, as most of them did before you deluded them, it would have been impossible for the Moravian tenets to have prevailed among them. But when they had been long and often used to hear good works undervalued, I cannot wonder that they should plunge into new errors, and wax worse and worse." (Page 12.)

This is one string of mistakes. "Had the people gone on in a quiet and regular practice of their duty, as most of them did before you deluded them." *Deluded them!* Into what? Into the love of God and all mankind, and a zealous care to keep his commandments. I would to God this delusion (if such it is accounted) may spread to the four corners of the earth! But how did most of them go on before they were thus deluded? Four in five, by a moderate computation, even as other baptized Heathens, in the works of the devil, in all the "wretchlessness of most unclean living." "In a quiet and regular practice of their duty!" What duty? the duty of cursing and swearing; the duty of gluttony and drunkenness; the duty of whoredom and adultery; or of beating one another, and any that came in their way? In this (not very "quiet or regular") practice did most of those go on before they heard us, who have now "put off the old man with his deeds," and are "holy in all manner of conversation."

Have these, think you, "been long and often used to hear good works undervalued?" Or are they prepared for receiving the Moravian errors, by the knowledge and love of God? O Sir, the Moravians know, if you do not, that there is no such barrier under heaven against their tenets as those very people whom you suppose just prepared for receiving them.

But "complaints," you say, "of their errors, come very ill from you, because you have occasioned them." Nay, if it were so, for that very cause they ought to come from me. If I had occasioned an evil, surely I am the very person who ought to remove it as far as I can; to recover, if possible, those who are hurt already, and to caution others against it.

14. On some of those complaints, as you term them, you remark as follows:—"Many of those who once knew in whom they had believed" (these are my words) "were thrown into idle reasonings, and thereby filled with doubts and fears." (Page 13.) "This," you add, "it is to be feared, has been too much the case of the Methodists in general.—Accordingly we find, in this Journal, several instances, not barely of doubts and

fears, but of the most desperate despair. This is the consequence of resting so much on sensible impressions.—Bad men may be led into presumption thereby; an instance of which you give, Vol. I. p. 295.”

That instance will come in our way again: “Many of those who once knew in whom they had believed were thrown,” by the Antinomians, “into idle reasonings, and thereby filled with doubts and fears. This,” you fear, “has been the case with the Methodists in general.” You must mean, (to make it a parallel case,) that the generality of the people now termed Methodists were true believers till they heard us preach, but were thereby thrown into idle reasonings, and filled with needless doubts and fears. Exactly contrary to truth in every particular. For, (1.) They lived in open sins till they heard us preach, and, consequently, were no better believers than their father the devil. (2.) They were not then thrown into idle reasonings, but into serious thought how to flee from the wrath to come. Nor, (3.) Were they filled with needless doubts and fears, but with such as were needful in the highest degree, such as actually issued in repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Accordingly, we find in this Journal several instances of the most desperate despair. (*Ibid.* pp. 261, 272, 294.)”

Then I am greatly mistaken. But I will set down at length the several instances you refer to:—

“I was a little surprised, in going out of the room, at one who caught hold of me, and said abruptly, ‘I must speak with you, and will. I have sinned against light and against love.’ (N. B. She was soon after, if not at that very time, a common prostitute.) ‘I have sinned beyond forgiveness. I have been cursing you in my heart, and blaspheming God, ever since I came here. I am damned: I know it: I feel it: I am in hell: I have hell in my heart.’ I desired two or three who had confidence in God, to join in crying to him on her behalf. Immediately that horrible dread was taken away, and she began to see some dawns of hope.” (*Ibid.* p. 261.)

“The attention of all was soon fixed on poor L—— S——. One so violently and variously torn of the evil one did I never see before. Sometimes she laughed till almost strangled; and then broke out into cursing and blaspheming; then stamped, and struggled with incredible strength, so that four or five could



scarce hold her; then cried out, 'O eternity, eternity! O that I had no soul! O that I had never been born!' At last she faintly called on Christ to help her; and the violence of her pangs ceased." (*Ibid.* p. 272.)

It should be remembered, that from that time to this, her conversation has been as becometh the gospel.

"Thursday, December 25, I met with such a case as I do not remembereither to have known or heard of before: L— S—, (the same person,) after many years' mourning, (long before she heard of us,) was filled with peace and joy in believing. In the midst of this, without any discernible cause, such a cloud suddenly overwhelmed her, that she could not believe her sins were ever forgiven at all, nor that there was any such thing as forgiveness of sins. She could not believe that the Scriptures were true; that there was any heaven, or hell, or angel, or spirit, or any God. One more I have since found in the same state: But observe, neither of these continued therein; nor did I ever know one that did. So sure it is that all faith is the gift of God, which the moment he withdraws, the evil heart of unbelief will poison the whole soul." (*Ibid.* p. 294.)

Which of these is an "instance of the most desperate despair?" Surely the most desperate of any, yea, the only one which is properly said to be desperate at all, is that which produces instant self-murder; which causes a poor wretch, by a sin which he cannot repent of, to rush straight through death into hell. But that was not the case in any of these instances; in all which we have already seen the end of the Lord.

15. That I "raise separate societies against the Church," (*Remarks*, p. 14,) is a charge which I need not examine till the evidence is produced. You next cite a Moravian's words to me: (an Englishman joined with the Moravians:) "You have eyes full of adultery, and cannot cease from sin; you take upon you to guide unstable souls, and lead them in the way of damnation;" and remark, "This is only returning some of your own treatment upon yourself. Here also you set the pattern." At what time and place, when and where, were "such abuses as these thrown out by me against our Universities, and against our regular Clergy, not the highest or the worthiest excepted?" I am altogether clear in this matter, as often as it has been objected: Neither do I desire to receive any other treatment from the Clergy, than they have received from me to this day.

You have a note at the bottom of this page which runs thus : " See pages 71, 77, and 73,\* where some Methodists said they had heard both your brother and you many times preach Popery."

I am afraid you advance here a wilful untruth, purely *ad movendam invidiam*.† For you cannot but know, (1.) That there is not one word of preaching Popery, either in page 71 or 77. And (2.) That when Mr. C. and two other Predestinarians (as is related page 73) affirmed they had heard both my brother and me many times preach Popery, they meant neither more nor less thereby than the doctrine of universal redemption.

16. You proceed : " Kingswood you call *your own house* : And when one Mr. C. opposed you there, you reply to him, ' You should not have supplanted me in my own house, stealing the hearts of the people.' The parochial Clergy may call their several districts their own houses, with much more propriety than you could call Kingswood yours. And yet how have you supplanted them therein, and laboured to steal the hearts of the people ! You have suffered by the same ways you took to discharge your spleen and malice against your brethren.

" Your brother's words to Mr. C. are,—' Whether his doctrine is true or false, is not the question. But you ought first to have fairly told him, *I preach contrary to you. Are you willing, notwithstanding, that I should continue in your house, gain-saying you ? Shall I stay here opposing you, or shall I depart ?*' Think you hear this spoken to you by us. What can you justly reply ?—Again, if Mr. C. had said thus to you, and you had refused him leave to stay ; I ask you, whether in such a case he would have had reason to resent such a refusal ? I think you cannot say he would. And yet how loudly have you objected our refusing our pulpits to you !" (*Remarks*, page 15.)

So you judge these to be exactly parallel cases. It lies therefore upon me to show that they are not parallel at all ; that there is, in many respects, an essential difference between them.

(1.) " Kingswood you call your own house." So I do, that is, the school-house there. For I bought the ground where it stands, and paid for the building it, partly from the contribution of my friends, (one of whom contributed fifty pounds,) partly

\* Vol. I. pp. 300, 301, and 305, of the present Edition.—EDIT.

† For the purpose of exciting ill-will.—EDIT.

from the income of my own Fellowship. No Clergyman therefore can call his parish his own house with more propriety than I can call this house mine.

(2.) "Mr. C. opposed you there." True; but who was Mr. C.? One I had sent for to assist me there; a friend that was as my own soul; that, even while he opposed me, lay in my bosom. What resemblance then does Mr. C., thus opposing me, bear to me opposing (if I really did) a parochial Minister?

(3.) "You said to Mr. C., 'You should not have supplanted me in my own house, stealing the hearts of the people.' Yet you have supplanted the Clergy in their own houses." What, in the same manner as Mr. C. did me? Have I done to any of them as he has done to me? You may as justly say I have cut their throats! *Stealing the hearts of their people.* Nor are these their people in the same sense wherein those were mine, viz., servants of the devil brought, through my ministry, to be servants and children of God. "You have suffered by the same ways you took to discharge your spleen and malice against your brethren." *To discharge your spleen and malice!* Say, your muskets and blunderbusses: I have just as much to do with one as the other.

(4.) "Your brother said to Mr. C., 'You ought to have told my brother fairly, *I preach contrary to you. Are you willing I should continue in your house, gainsaying you? Shall I stay here opposing you, or shall I depart?*'" Think you hear this spoken to you by us. What can you justly reply?" I can justly reply, Sir, Mr. C.'s case totally differs from yours. Therefore it makes absolutely nothing to your purpose.

17. A farther consequence (you think) of my preaching this doctrine, is, "the introducing that of absolute predestination. And whenever these errors," say you, "gain ground, there can be no wonder, that confusion, presumption, and despair, many very shocking instances of all which you give us among your followers, should be the consequences." (*Remarks*, p. 52.) You should by all means have specified a few of those instances, or, at least, the pages where they occur. Till this is done, I can look upon this assertion as no other than a flourish of your pen.

To conclude this head: You roundly affirm, once for all, "The grossest corruptions have ever followed the spreading of this tenet. The greatest heats and animosities have been raised thereby. The wildest errors have been thus occasioned. And

in proportion to its getting ground, it has never failed to perplex the weak, to harden the wicked, and to please the profane. Your Journal is a proof that these terrible consequences have of late prevailed, perhaps more than ever." (Page 51.) Suppose that Journal gives a true account of facts, (which you seem not to deny,) could you find there no other fruits of my preaching, than these terrible ones you here mention?

O who so blind, as he that will not see!

18. But that we may not still talk at large, let us bring this question into as narrow a compass as possible. Let us go no farther as to time, than seven years last past; as to place, than London and the parts adjoining; as to persons, than you and me, Thomas Church preaching one doctrine, John Wesley the other. Now then, let us consider with meekness and fear, what have been the consequences of each doctrine.

You have preached justification by faith and works, at Battersea, and St. Ann's, Westminster; while I preached justification by faith alone, near Moorfields, and at Short's Gardens. I beseech you then to consider, in the secret of your heart, how many sinners have you converted to God? By their fruits we shall know them. This is a plain rule. \* By this test let them be tried. How many outwardly and habitually wicked men have you brought to uniform habits of outward holiness? It is an awful thought! Can you instance in a hundred? in fifty? in twenty? in ten? If not, take heed unto yourself and to your doctrine. It cannot be that both are right before God.

Consider now (I would not speak, but I dare not refrain) what have been the consequences of even my preaching the other doctrine. By the fruits shall we know those of whom I speak; even the cloud of witnesses, who at this hour experience the gospel I preach to be the power of God unto salvation. The habitual drunkard, that was, is now temperate in all things. The whoremonger now flees fornication. He that stole, steals no more, but works with his hands. He that cursed or swore, perhaps at every sentence, has now learned to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with reverence. Those formerly enslaved to various habits of sin, are now brought to uniform habits of holiness. These are demonstrable facts. I can name the men, with their several places of abode. One of them was an avowed Atheist for many years; some were Jews; a cou-

siderable number Papists; the greatest part of them as much strangers to the form, as to the power, of godliness.

When you have weighed these things touching the consequences of my preaching, on the one hand, (somewhat different from those set down in your *Remarks*,) and of your preaching, on the other, I would earnestly recommend the following words to your deepest consideration:—"Beware of false prophets; ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree" (every true Prophet or Teacher) "bringeth forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." (Matt. vii. 15, &c.)

III. 1. Having spoken more largely than I designed on the principle I hold in common with the Moravians, I shall touch very briefly on those errors (so called) which you say I hold more than theirs. (*Remarks*, page 55.)

You name, as the first, my holding that "a man may have a degree of justifying faith before he has, in the full, proper sense, a new, a clean heart." (*Ibid.*)

I have so often explained this, that I cannot throw away time in adding any more now; only this,—that the moment a sinner is justified, his heart is cleansed in a low degree. But yet he has not a clean heart, in the full, proper sense, till he is made perfect in love.

2. Another error you mention is this doctrine of perfection. (Page 60.) To save you from a continual *ignoratio elenchi*, I wave disputing on this point also, till you are better acquainted with my real sentiments. I have declared them on that head again and again; particularly in the sermon on "Christian Perfection."

3. Into this fallacy you plunge from the beginning to the end of what you speak on my third error, (so you term it,) relating to the Lord's supper; confuting, as mine, notions which I know not. (Pages 56, 57.) I cannot think any farther answer is needful here, than the bare recital of my own words:—

"Friday, June 27. I preached on, 'Do this in remembrance of me.'

"It has been diligently taught among us, that none but those who are converted, who 'have received the Holy Ghost,' who are believers in the full sense, ought to communicate.

"But experience shows the gross falsehood of that assertion,

that the Lord's supper is not a converting ordinance. Ye are witnesses: For many now present know, the very beginning of your conversion to God (perhaps in some the first deep conviction) was wrought at the Lord's supper. Now, one single instance of this kind overthrows that whole assertion.

"The falsehood of the other assertion appears both from Scripture precept and example. Our Lord commanded those very men who were then unconverted, who had not yet 'received the Holy Ghost,' who, in the full sense of the word, were not believers, to do this in remembrance of him. Here the precept is clear. And to these he delivered the elements with his own hands. Here is example equally indisputable.

"Sat. 28.—I showed at large, (1.) That the Lord's supper was ordained by God to be a means of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace, according to their several necessities. (2.) That the persons for whom it was ordained, are all those who know and feel that they want the grace of God, either to restrain them from sin, or to show their sins forgiven, or to renew their souls in the image of God. (3.) That, inasmuch as we come to his table, not to give him anything, but to receive whatsoever he sees best for us, there is no previous preparation indispensably necessary, but a desire to receive whatsoever he pleases to give. And, (4.) That no fitness is required at the time of communicating, but a sense of our state, of our utter sinfulness and helplessness; every one who knows he is fit for hell, being just fit to come to Christ, in this as well as all other ways of his appointment." (Vol. I. p. 279.)

4. "A stoical insensibility," you add, "is the next error I have to charge you with. You say, 'The servants of God suffer nothing;' and suppose that we ought to be here so free as, in the strongest pain, not once to desire to have a moment's ease.

"At the end of one of your hymns, you seem to carry this notion to the very height of extravagancy and presumption. You say,—

'Doom, if thou canst, to endless pains,  
And drive me from thy face.' " \*

"A stoical insensibility is the next error I have to charge you with." And how do you support the charge? Why thus:

\* Remarks, p. 58.

“You say, ‘The servants of God suffer nothing.’” (Vol. I. p. 290.) And can you possibly misunderstand these words, if you read those that immediately follow?—“His body was well-nigh torn asunder with pain: But God made all his bed in his sickness; so that he was continually giving thanks to God, and making his boast of his praise.”

“You suppose we ought to be so free, as in the strongest pain not once to desire to have a moment’s ease.” O Sir, with what eyes did you read those words?—

“I dined with one who told me, in all simplicity, ‘Sir, I thought last week, there could be no such rest as you describe; none in this world, wherein we should be so free as not to desire ease in pain. But God has taught me better; for on Friday and Saturday, when I was in the strongest pain, I never once had one moment’s desire of ease, but only that the will of God might be done.’” (*Ibid.* p. 283.) Do I say here, that “we ought not in the strongest pain once to desire to have a moment’s ease?” What a frightful distortion of my words is this! What I say is, “A serious person affirmed to me, that God kept her for two days in such a state.” And why not? Where is the absurdity?

“At the end of one of your hymns, you seem to carry this notion to the very height of extravagancy and presumption. You say,

‘Doom, if thou canst, to endless pains,  
And drive me from thy face.’”

*If thou canst*; that is, if thou canst deny thyself, if thou canst forget to be gracious, if thou canst cease to be truth and love. So the lines both preceding and following fix the sense. I see nothing of stoical insensibility, neither of extravagancy or presumption, in this.

5. Your last charge is, that I am guilty of enthusiasm to the highest degree. “Enthusiasm,” you say, “is a false persuasion of an extraordinary divine assistance, which leads men on to such conduct as is only to be justified by the supposition of such assistance. An enthusiast is, then, sincere, but mistaken. His intentions are good, but his actions most abominable. Instead of making the word of God the rule of his actions, he follows only that secret impulse which is owing to a warm imagination. Instead of judging of his spiritual estate by the improvement of his heart, he rests only on ecstasies, &c. He is very liable to err, as not considering things coolly and carefullv.

He is very difficult to be convinced by reason and argument, as he acts upon a supposed principle superior to it, the directions of God's Spirit. Whoever opposes him is charged with resisting the Spirit. His own dreams must be regarded as oracles. Whatever he does is to be accounted the work of God. Hence he talks in the style of inspired persons; and applies Scripture phrases to himself, without attending to their original meaning, or once considering the difference of times and circumstances." (*Remarks*, pp. 60, 61.)

You have drawn, Sir, (in the main,) a true picture of an enthusiast. But it is no more like me, than I am like a centaur. Yet you say, "They are these very things which have been charged upon you, and which you could never yet disprove." I will try for once; and, to that end, will go over these articles one by one.

"Enthusiasm is a false persuasion of an extraordinary divine assistance, which leads men on to such conduct as is only to be justified by the supposition of such assistance." Before this touches me, you are to prove, (which, I conceive, you have not done yet,) that my conduct is such as is only to be justified by the supposition of an extraordinary divine assistance. "An enthusiast is, then, sincere, but mistaken." That I am mistaken, remains also to be proved. "His intentions are good; but his actions most abominable." Sometimes they are; yet not always. For there may be innocent madmen. But, what actions of mine are most abominable? I wait to learn. "Instead of making the word of God the rule of his actions, he follows only his secret impulse." In the whole compass of language, there is not a proposition which less belongs to me than this. I have declared again and again, that I make the word of God the rule of all my actions; and that I no more follow any secret impulse instead thereof, than I follow Mahomet or Confucius.

Not even a word or look  
Do I approve or own,  
But by the model of thy book,  
Thy sacred book alone.

"Instead of judging of his spiritual estate by the improvement of his heart, he rests only on ecstasies." Neither is this my case. I rest not on them at all. Nor did I ever experience any. I do judge of my spiritual estate by the improvement of my heart and the tenor of my life conjointly. "He is very liable



to err." So indeed I am. I find it every day more and more. But I do not yet find, that this is owing to my want of "considering things coolly and carefully." Perhaps you do not know many persons (excuse my simplicity in speaking it) who more carefully consider every step they take. Yet I know I am not cool or careful enough. May God supply this and all my wants! "He is very difficult to be convinced by reason and argument, as he acts upon a supposed principle superior to it, the direction of God's Spirit." I am very difficult to be convinced by dry blows or hard names, (both of which I have not wanted,) but not by reason and argument. At least that difficulty cannot spring from the cause you mention; for I claim no other direction of God's Spirit, than is common to all believers. "Whoever opposes him is charged with resisting or rejecting the Spirit." What! whoever opposes me, John Wesley? Do I charge every such person with rejecting the Spirit? No more than I charge him with robbing on the highway. I cite you yourself, to confute your own words. For, do I charge you with rejecting the Spirit? "His own dreams must be regarded as oracles." Whose? I desire neither my dreams nor my waking thoughts may be regarded at all, unless just so far as they agree with the oracles of God. "Whatever he does, is to be accounted the work of God." You strike quite wide of me still. I never said so of what I do. I never thought so. Yet I trust what I do is pleasing to God. "Hence he talks in the style of inspired persons." No otherwise inspired than you are, if you love God. "And applies Scripture phrases to himself, without attending to their original meaning, or once considering the difference of times and circumstances." I am not conscious of any thing like this. I apply no Scripture phrase either to myself or any other, without carefully considering both the original meaning, and the secondary sense, wherein (allowing for different times and circumstances) it may be applied to ordinary Christians.

6. So much for the bulk of your charge. But it concerns me, likewise, to gather up the fragments of it. You say, "We desire no more than to try your sentiments and proceedings by the written word." (Page 63.) Agreed. Begin when and where you please. "We find there good works as strongly insisted on as faith." I do as strongly insist on them as on faith. But each in its own order. "We find all railing, &c., condemned therein." True; and so you may in all I write or preach, "We are

assured, that the doing what God commands is the sure way of knowing that we have received his Spirit." We have doubtless received it, if we love God (as he commands) with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. "And not by any sensible impulses or feelings whatsoever." *Any sensible impulses whatsoever!* Do you then exclude all sensible impulses? Do you reject inward feelings *toto genere*? Then you reject both the love of God and of our neighbour. For, if these cannot be inwardly felt, nothing can. You reject all joy in the Holy Ghost; for if we cannot be sensible of this, it is no joy at all. You reject the peace of God, which, if it be not felt in the inmost soul, is a dream, a notion, an empty name. You therefore reject the whole inward kingdom of God; that is, in effect, the whole gospel of Jesus Christ.

You have therefore yourself abundantly shown (what I do not insinuate, but proclaim on the house-top) that I am charged with enthusiasm for asserting the power as well as the form of godliness.

7. You go on: "The character of the enthusiast above drawn will fit, I believe, all such of the Methodists as can be thought sincere." (Page 63.) I believe not. I have tried it on one, and it fitted him just as Saul's armour did David. However, a few instances of enthusiasm you undertake to show in this very Journal.

And first, "You give us one" (these are your words) "of a private revelation, which you seem to pay great credit to." You partly relate this, and then remark, "What enthusiasm is here! To represent the conjectures of a woman, whose brain appears to have been too much heated, as if they had been owing to a particular and miraculous spirit of prophecy!" Descant, Sir, as you please on this enthusiasm; on the credit I paid to this private revelation; and my representing the conjectures of this brain-sick woman as owing to the miraculous power of the Spirit of God: And when you have done, I will desire you to read that passage once more, where you will find my express words are, introducing this account: "Sunday, 11. I met with a surprising instance of the power of the devil." (Vol. I. p. 295.) Such was the credit I paid to this revelation! All which I ascribe to the Spirit of God is, the enabling her to strive against the power of the devil and at length restoring peace to her soul,

8. As a second instance of enthusiasm, you cite those words: "I expounded out of the fulness which was given me." (*Ibid.* p. 295.) The whole sentence is, "Out of the fulness that was given me, I expounded those words of St. Paul, (indeed of every true believer,) 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'" I mean, I had then a fuller, deeper sense of that great truth, than I ordinarily have. And I still think it right to ascribe this, not to myself, but to the "Giver of every good and perfect gift."

You relate what follows as a third "very extraordinary instance of enthusiasm:" (*Remarks*, p. 65 :) "Tuesday, Feb. 17. I left London. In the afternoon, I reached Oxford; and leaving my horse there, (for he was tired, and the horse-road exceeding bad, and my business admitted of no delay,) set out on foot for Stanton-Harcourt. The night overtook me in about an hour, accompanied with heavy rain. Being wet and weary, and not well knowing my way, I could not help saying in my heart, (though ashamed of my want of resignation to God's will,) 'O that thou wouldst stay the bottles of heaven! or at least give me light, or an honest guide, or some help in the manner thou knowest.' Presently the rain ceased, the moon broke out, and a friendly man overtook me, who set me on his own horse, and walked by my side, till we came to Mr. Gambold's door." (*Ibid.* p. 298.)

Here you remark, "If you would not have us look on this as miraculous, there is nothing in it worthy of being related." It may be so; let it pass then as a trifle not worth relating: But still it is no proof of enthusiasm. For I would not have you look on it as miraculous. I do not myself look upon it as such; but as a signal instance of God's particular providence over all those who call upon him.

9. "In the same spirit of enthusiasm," (you go on, citing this as a fourth instance,) "you describe Heaven as executing judgments, immediate punishments, on those who oppose you. You say, 'Mr. Molther was taken ill this day. I believe it was the hand of God that was upon him.'" (*Remarks*, p. 66.) I do; but I do not say, as a judgment from God for opposing me: That you say for me. "Again, you tell us of 'one who was exceeding angry at those who pretended to be in fits; and was just going to kick one of them out of the way, when she dropped down herself, and was in violent agonies for an hour.' And you say you 'left her under a deep sense of the just judgment of God.'" So she termed it;

and so I believe it was. But observe, not for opposing me. "Again, you mention, 'as an awful providence, the case of a poor wretch, who was last week cursing and blaspheming, and had boasted to many that he would come again on Sunday, and no man should stop his mouth then.'" His mouth was stopped before, in the midst of the most horrid blasphemies, by asking him, *if he was stronger than God*. "'But on Friday, God laid his hand upon him, and on Sunday he was buried.'" I do look on this as a manifest judgment of God on a hardened sinner, for his complicated wickedness. "Again, 'one being just going to beat his wife, (which he frequently did,) God smote him in a moment; so that his hand dropped, and he fell down upon the ground, having no more strength than a new-born child.'" (Page 67.) And can you, Sir, consider this as one of the common dispensations of Providence? Have you known a parallel one in your life? But it was never cited by me, as it is by you, as an immediate punishment on a man for opposing me. You have no authority, from any sentence or word of mine, for putting such a construction upon it; no more than you have for that strange intimation, (how remote both from justice and charity!) that "I parallel these cases with those of Ananias and Sapphira, or of Elymas the sorcerer!"

10. You proceed to what you account a fifth instance of enthusiasm: "With regard to people's falling in fits, it is plain, you look upon both the disorders and removals of them to be supernatural." (*Remarks*, pp. 68, 69.) It is not quite plain. I look upon some of these cases as wholly natural; on the rest as mixed, both the disorder and the removal being partly natural and partly not. Six of these you pick out from, it may be, two hundred; and add, "From all which, you leave no room to doubt, that you would have these cases considered as those of the demoniacs in the New Testament; in order, I suppose, to parallel your supposed cures of them with the highest miracles of Christ and his disciples." I should once have wondered at your making such a supposition; but I now wonder at nothing of this kind. Only be pleased to remember, till this supposition is made good, it is no confirmation at all of my enthusiasm.

You then attempt to account for those fits by "obstructions or irregularities of the blood and spirits, hysterical disorder, watchings, fastings, closeness of rooms, great crowds, violent heat." And, lastly, by "terrors, perplexities, and doubts, in

weak and well-meaning men ;” which, you think, in many of the cases before us, have “ quite overset their understandings.”

As to each of the rest, let it go as far as it can go. But I require proof of the last way whereby you would account for these disorders. Why, “The instances,” you say, “of religious madness have much increased since you began to disturb the world.” (*Remarks*, pp. 68, 69.) I doubt the fact. Although, if these instances had increased lately, it is easy to account for them another way. “Most have heard of, or known, several of the Methodists thus driven to distraction.” You may have heard of five hundred ; but how many have you known ? Be pleased to name eight or ten of them. I cannot find them, no, not one of them to this day, either man, woman, or child. I find some indeed, whom you told, they would be distracted if they “continued to follow these men,” and whom, at that time, you threw into much doubt, and terror, and perplexity. But though they did continue to hear them ever since, they are not distracted yet.

As for the “abilities, learning, and experience” of Dr. M—, (page 70,) if you are personally acquainted with him, you do well to testify them. But if not, permit me to remind you of the old advice :—

*Qualem commendes, etiam atque etiam aspice, ne mor  
Incutiant aliena tibi peccata pudorem.\**

In endeavouring to account for the people’s recovery from those disorders, you say, “I shall not dispute how far prayer may have naturally a good effect.” Nay, I am persuaded you will not dispute but it may have supernatural good effects also. “However, there is no need of supposing these recoveries miraculous.” (Page 71.) Who affirms there is ? I have set down the facts just as they were, passing no judgment upon them myself ; (consequently, here is no foundation for the charge of enthusiasm ;) and leaving every man else to judge as he pleases.

11. The next passage you quote as a proof of my enthusiasm, taking the whole together, runs thus: “After communicating at St. James’s, our parish church, I visited several of the sick. Most of them were ill of the spotted fever, which, they informed

\* Beware whom you commend, lest you should be blamed for the faults of another man.

me, had been extremely mortal, few persons recovering from it. But God had said, 'Hitherto shalt thou come.' I believe there was not one with whom we were, but recovered." (Vol. I. p. 291.) On which you comment thus: "Here is indeed no intimation of any thing miraculous." No! not so much as an intimation! Then why is this cited as an instance of my enthusiasm? Why, "You seem to desire to have it believed, that an extraordinary blessing attended your prayers; whereas, I believe they would not have failed of an equal blessing and success, had they had the prayers of their own parish Ministers." I believe this argument will have extraordinary success, if it convince any one that I am an enthusiast.

12. You add, "I shall give but one account more, and this is what you give of yourself." (*Remarks*, p. 72.) The sum whereof is, "At two several times, being ill and in violent pain, I prayed to God, and found immediate ease." I did so. I assert the fact still. "Now, if these," you say, "are not miraculous cures, all this is rank enthusiasm."

I will put your argument in form:—

He that believes those are miraculous cures which are not so is a rank enthusiast:

But you believe those to be miraculous cures which are not so:

Therefore, you are a rank enthusiast.

Before I answer, I must know what you mean by miraculous. If you term everything so, which is not strictly accountable for by the ordinary course of natural causes, then I deny the latter part of the minor proposition. And unless you can make this good, unless you can prove the effects in question are strictly accountable for by the ordinary course of natural causes, your argument is nothing worth.

You conclude this head with, "Can you work miracles? All your present pretences to the Spirit, till they are proved by miracles, cannot be excused, or acquitted from enthusiasm." (Page 73.)

My short answer is this: I pretend to the Spirit just so far as is essential to a state of salvation. And cannot I be acquitted from enthusiasm till I prove by miracles that I am in a state of salvation?

13. We now draw to a period: "The consequences of Methodism," you say, that is, of our preaching this doctrine,

“ which have hitherto appeared, are bad enough to induce you to leave it. It has, in fact, introduced many disorders; enthusiasm, Antinomianism, Calvinism, a neglect and contempt of God’s ordinances, and almost all other duties.” (Page 75.)

That, whenever God revives his work upon earth, many tares will spring up with the wheat, both the word of God gives us ground to expect, and the experience of all ages. But where, Sir, have you been, that you have heard of the tares only; and that you rank among the consequences of my preaching, “ a neglect and contempt of God’s ordinances, and almost of all duties?” Does not the very reverse appear at London, at Bristol, at Kingswood, at Newcastle? In every one of which places, multitudes of those (I am able to name the persons) who before lived in a thorough neglect and contempt of God’s ordinances and all duties, do now zealously discharge their duties to God and man, and walk in all his ordinances blameless.

And as to those drunkards, whoremongers, and other servants of the devil, as they were before, who heard us a while and then fell to the Calvinists or Moravians, are they not even now in a far better state than they were before they heard us? Admit they are in error, yea, and die therein, yet, who dares affirm they will perish everlastingly? But had they died in those sins, we are sure they had fallen into “ the fire that never shall be quenched.”

I hope, Sir, you will rejoice in considering this, how much their gain still outweighs their loss; as well as in finding the sentiments you could not reconcile together clearly and consistently explained. I am very willing to consider whatever farther you have to offer. May God give us both a right judgment in all things! I am persuaded you will readily join in this prayer with,

Reverend Sir,

Your servant for Christ’s sake,

JOHN WESLEY.

BRISTOL,

February 2, 1744-5.