

A

## SECOND LETTER

TO

THE REVEREND DR. FREE.

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FONMON CASTLE,  
*August 24, 1758.*

REVEREND SIR,

IN the preface to your Sermon, lately printed, you mention your having received my former letter, and add, that "if the proofs you have now brought do not satisfy me as to the validity of your former assertions; if I am not yet convinced that such positions are held by people who pass under the denomination of Methodists, and will signify this by a private letter, I shall have a more particular answer." I desire to live peaceably with all men; and should therefore wish for no more than a private answer to a private letter, did the affair lie between you and me. But this is not the case: You have already appealed to the Archbishop, the University, the nation. Before these judges you have advanced a charge of the highest kind, not only against me, but a whole body of people.

Before these, therefore, I must either confess the charge, or give in my answer.

But you say, "I charge blasphemy, impiety, &c., upon the profession of Methodism in general. I use no personal reflections upon you, nor any invective against you, but in the character of a Methodist." That is, you first say, "All Methodists are pickpockets, rebels, blasphemers, Atheists;" and then add, "I use no reflections upon you, but in the character of a Methodist;" but in the character of a pickpocket, blasphemer, Atheist. *None but!* What can you do more?

But this, you say, is the practice of all honest men, and a part of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. Nay, surely there are some honest men who scruple using their opponents in this manner. At least, I do: Suppose you was an

Atheist, I would not bring against you a railing accusation. I would still endeavour to "treat you with gentleness and meekness," and thus to "show the sincerity" of my faith. I leave to you that exquisite "bitterness of spirit, and extreme virulence of language," which, you say, is your duty, and term *zeal*. (*Preface*, p. 5.) And certainly zeal, fervour, heat, it is. But is this heat from above? Is it the offspring of heaven, or a smoke from the bottomless pit?

O Sir, whence is that zeal which makes you talk in such a manner to his Grace of Canterbury? "I lay before you the disposition of an enemy who threaten our Church with a general alteration or total subversion; who interrupt us as we walk the streets," (Whom? When? Where?) "in that very dress which distinguishes us as servants of the state," (altogether servants of the state?) "in the now sad capacity of Ministers of the falling Church of England. Such being the prostrate, miserable condition of the Church, and such the triumphant state of its enemies, none of the English Priesthood can expect better security or longer continuance than the rest. They all subsist at mercy. Your Grace and those of your order will fare no better than those of our own." Sir, are you in earnest? Do you really believe Lambeth is on the point of being blown up?

You go on: "In the remote counties of England, I have seen a whole troop of these divines on horseback, travelling with each a sister behind him." O Sir, O Sir,

What should be great you turn to farce!

Have you forgot, that the Church and nation are on the brink of ruin? But pray when and where did you see this? in what year, or in what county? I cannot but fear you take this story on trust; for such a sight, I will be bold to say, was never seen.

With an easy familiarity you add: "My Lord, permit me here to whisper a word" (Is not this whispering in print something new?) "that may be worth remembering. In our memory, some of the Priesthood have not proved so good subjects as might have been expected, till they have been brought over with preferments, that were due to other people." Meaning, I presume, to yourself. Surely his Grace will remember this, which is so well worth remembering, and dispose of the next preferment in his gift where it is so justly due. If he does not, if he either forgets this or your other directions, you tell

him frankly what will be the consequence: "We must apply to Parliament;" (p. 6;) or to His Majesty; and, indeed, how can you avoid it? "For it would be using him," you think, "extremely ill, not to give him proper information, that there" are now a set of people offering such indignity to his crown and government.

However, we are not to think your opposing the Methodists was "owing to self-interest" alone. Though, what if it was? "Was I to depart from my duty, because it happened to be my interest? Did these saints ever forbear to preach to the mob in the fields, for fear lest they should get the pence of the mob? Or do not" the pence and the preaching "go hand in hand together?" No, they do not; for many years neither I, nor any connected with me, have got any "pence," as you phrase it, "in the fields." Indeed, properly speaking, they never did. For the collections which Mr. Whitefield made, it is well known, were not for his own use, either in whole or part. And he has long ago given an account, in print, of the manner wherein all that was received was expended.

But it is not my design to examine at large, either your dedication preface, or Sermon. I have only leisure to make a few cursory remarks on your "definition" of the Methodists, (so called,) and on the account you give of their first rise, of their principles and practice; just premising, that I speak of those alone who began, as you observe, at Oxford. If a thousand other sets of men "pass under that denomination," yet they are nothing to me. As they have no connexion with me, so I am in no way concerned to answer either for their principles or practice, any more than you are to answer for all who "pass under the denomination of Church-of-England men."

The account you give of their rise, is this: The Methodists began at Oxford. "The name was first given to a few persons, who were so uncommonly methodical, as to keep a diary of the most trivial actions of their lives, as how many slices of bread and butter they ate, how many country dances they danced at their dancing club, or after a fast how many pounds of mutton they devoured. For upon these occasions they ate like lions, having made themselves uncommonly voracious." Of this, not one line is true; for, (1.) It was from an ancient sect of Physicians, whom we were supposed to resemble in our regular diet and exercise, that we were originally styled Methodists. (2.) Not

one of us ever kept a diary of "the most trivial actions" of our lives. (3.) Nor did any of us ever set down, what, or how much, we ate or drank. (4.) Our "dancing club" never existed; I never heard of it before. (5.) On our "fast-days" we used no food but bread; on the day following, we fed as on common days. (6.) Therefore our voraciousness and eating like lions is also pure, lively invention.

You go on: "It was not long before these gentlemen began to dogmatize in a public manner, feeling a strong inclination to new-model almost every circumstance or thing in the system of our national religion." Just as true as the rest. These gentlemen were so far from feeling any inclination at all "to new-model" any "circumstance or thing," that, during their whole stay at Oxford, they were High Churchmen in the strongest sense; vehemently contending for every "circumstance" of Church order, according to the old "model." And in Georgia too, we were rigorous observers of every Rubric and Canon; as well as (to the best of our knowledge) every tenet of the Church. Your account, therefore, of the rise of the Methodists is a mistake from beginning to end.

I proceed to your definition of them: "By the Methodists, was then and is now understood, a set of enthusiasts, who, pretending to be members of the Church of England, either offend against the order and discipline of the Church, or pervert its doctrines relating to faith and works, and the terms of salvation."

Another grievous mistake. For whatever "is now, by the Methodists then was" not "understood any set of enthusiasts," or not enthusiasts, "offending against the order and discipline of the Church." They were tenacious of it to the last degree, in every the least jot and tittle. Neither were they "they understood to pervert its doctrines, relating to faith and works, and the terms of salvation." For they thought and talked of all these, just as you do now, till some of them, after their return from Georgia, were "perverted" into different sentiments, by reading the book of Homilies. Their perversion, therefore, (if such it be,) is to be dated from this time. Consequently, your definition by no means agrees with the persons defined.

However, "as a Shibboleth to distinguish them at present, when they pretend to conceal themselves, throw out this, or such like proposition, 'Good works are necessary to

salvation.” You might have spared yourself the labour of proving this: For who is there that denies it? Not I: Not any in connexion with me. So that this Shibboleth is just good for nothing.

5. And yet we firmly believe, that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law; that to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith, without any good work preceding, is counted to him for righteousness. We believe (to express it a little more largely) that we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Good works follow after justification, springing out of true, living faith; so that by them living faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit. And hence it follows, that as the body without the soul is dead, so *that* faith which is without works is dead also. This, therefore, properly speaking, is not faith; as a dead man is not properly a man.

You add, “The original Methodists affect to call themselves Methodists of the Church of England; by which they plainly inform us, there are others of their body who do not profess to belong to it. Whence we may infer, that the Methodists who take our name, do yet, by acknowledging them as namesakes and brethren, give themselves the lie when they say they are of our communion.” *Our name! Our communion! Apuge cum istâ tuâ magnificentiâ!* \* How came it, I pray, to be *your* name any more than Mr. Venn’s? But waving this: Here is another train of mistakes. For, (1.) We do not call ourselves Methodists at all. (2.) That we call ourselves members of the Church of England is certain. Such we ever were, and such we are at this day. (3.) Yet we do not by this plainly inform you, that there are others of our body who do not belong to it. By what rule of logic do you infer this conclusion from those premises? (4.) You have another inference full as good: “Hence one may infer, that, by acknowledging them as namesakes and brethren,

\* Mr. Wesley seems in this instance, as in several others, to have been purposely inaccurate in his quotation, to avoid the malediction couched in the original words of Terence:—

*In malam rem hinc cum istâ magnificentiâ,*

*Fugitive!*

(Phormio. Act. v. sc. 6, v. 37.)

which Dr. Patrick has rather broadly translated: “Go, be hanged, you rascal, with your vain rodomontades!”

Mr. Wesley’s accommodated quotation of it may be thus rendered:—

“Away with this your grandiloquent verbiage!”—EDIT.

they give themselves the lie when they say they are of our communion." As we do not take the name of Methodists at all, so we do not acknowledge any "namesakes" in this. But we acknowledge as "brethren" all Dissenters (whether they are called Methodists or not) who labour to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man. What lies upon you to prove, is this: Whoever acknowledges any Dissenters as brethren, does hereby give himself the lie, when he says he is a member of the Church of England.

However, you allow, there may be place for repentance: "For if any of the founders of this sect renounce the opinions they once were charged with, they may be permitted to lay aside the name." But what are the opinions which you require us to renounce? What are, according to you, the principles of the Methodists?

You say in general, "They are contradictory to the gospel, contradictory to the Church of England, full of blasphemy, impiety, and ending in downright Atheism:"—

For, "(1.) They expound the Scripture in such a manner as to make it contradict itself.

"(2.) With blasphemy, impiety, and diabolical frenzy, they contradict our Saviour, by denying that he will judge man according to his works.

"(3.) By denying this they destroy the essential attributes of God, and ruin his character as Judge of the world."

In support of the First charge, you say, "It is notorious; and few men of common sense attempt to prove what is notorious, till they meet with people of such notorious impudence as to deny it."

I must really deny it. Why, then, you will prove it by Mr. Mason's own words. Hold, Sir: Mr. Mason's words prove nothing. For we are now speaking of original Methodists; but he is not one of them; nor is he in connexion with them; neither with Mr. Whitefield nor me. So that what Mr. Mason speaks, be it right or wrong, is nothing to the present purpose. Therefore, unless you can find some better proof, this whole charge falls to the ground.

Well, "here it is: Roger Balls."—Pray who is Roger Balls? No more a Methodist than he is a Turk. I know not one good thing he ever did or said, beside the telling all men, "I am no Methodist," which he generally does in the first sentence he

speaks, when he can find any one to hear him. He is therefore one of your own allies; and a champion worthy of his cause!

If then you have no more than this to advance in support of your first charge, you have alleged what you are not able to prove. And the more heavy that allegation is, the more unkind, the more unjust, the more unchristian, the more inhuman, it is to bring it without proof.

In support of the Second charge, you say, "Our Saviour declares our works to be the object of his judgment. But the Methodist, for the perdition of the souls of his followers, says our works are of no consideration at all."

Who says so? Mr. Whitefield, or my brother, or I? We say the direct contrary. But one of my "anonymous correspondents says so." Who is he? How do you know he is a Methodist? For aught appears, he may be another of your allies, a brother to Roger Balls.

Three or threescore anonymous correspondents cannot yield one grain of proof, any more than an hundred anonymous remarkers on *Theron* and *Aspasio*. Before these can prove what the Methodists hold, you must prove that these are Methodists; either that they are *original* Methodists, or in connexion with them.

Will you say, "If these were not Methodists themselves, they would not defend the Methodists?" I deny the consequence: Men may be far from being Methodists, and yet willing to do the Methodists justice. I have known a Clergyman of note say to another, who had just been preaching a very warm sermon, "Sir, I do not thank you at all for this. I have no acquaintance with Mr. Whitefield or Mr. Wesley; and I do not agree with them in opinion; but I will have no more railing in my pulpit."

From the principles of the Methodists, you proceed to their practice: "They hunt," say you, "for extraordinary marks and revelations, whereby to know the state of the soul." The marks by which I know the state of any soul, are the inward fruit of the Spirit,—love, joy, peace, and meekness, gentleness, goodness, longsuffering, temperance, patience; shown, not by words only, but by the genuine fruit of outward holiness.

Again: "They magnify their office beyond the truth, by high pretences to miraculous inspiration." To this assertion, we have answered over and over, We pretend to no other inspi-

ration than that which, not only every true gospel Minister, but every real Christian, enjoys.

Again: "The end of all impostors is some kind of worldly gain; and it is difficult for them to conceal their views entirely. The love of filthy lucre will appear, either by the use they make of it, or the means of getting it." As to the use made of it, you are silent. But as to the means of getting it, you say, "Besides inhumanly wringing from the poor, the helpless widows, the weeping orphans," (the proof! the proof!) "they creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with divers lusts." It is easy to say this, and ten times more; but can you prove it? And ought you to say it, till you can?

I shall not concern myself with anything in your *Appendix*, but what relates to me in particular. This premised, I observe on No. I. There are several instances in my Journals, of persons that were in agonies of grief or fear, and roared for the disquietness of their heart; of some that exceedingly trembled before God, perhaps fell down to the ground; and of others whom God, in his adorable providence, suffered to be lunatic and sore vexed. The particular instances hereof, to which you refer, have been largely vindicated already, in the *Two Letters to the Rev. Dr. Church*, as well as that to the late Bishop of London.

In the six following numbers I am not concerned. The Eighth contains those words from my *Second Journal*: "The rest of the day we spent in hearing the wonderful work which God is beginning to work all over the earth." Of this likewise I have spoken at large to Dr. Church and Bishop Gibson. The sum is, it is a great work when one notorious sinner is thoroughly changed in heart and life. It is wonderfully great, when God works this entire change in a large number of people; particularly when it is done in a very short time: But so he hath wrought in Kingswood, Cornwall, Newcastle. It is therefore a truly wonderful work, which God hath now more than begun to work upon earth.

I have now, Sir, briefly answered for myself, which, if required, I will do more at large. But I trust it does already appear, to every impartial reader, that of the many and heavy allegations you have brought with an unparalleled bitterness of spirit, and an acrimony of language almost without precedent, you have not yet proved one. How far you are to be commended for this, (unless by Messrs. Balls and the Monthly



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.

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## A LETTER

TO

THE AUTHOR OF "THE CRAFTSMAN,"

CONCERNING

REAL CHRISTIANITY, DISPARAGED UNDER THE NAME  
OF METHODISM.

[PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1745.]

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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