

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

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

I am,

Sir,

Your friend, though not admirer,

JOHN WESLEY.

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## AN ANSWER TO A LETTER

PUBLISHED IN THE BATH JOURNAL, APRIL 17, 1749,

SIGNED, N. D.

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

LIMERICK, *May* 27, 1749.

SIR,

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

But you say, "Many persons of great eminence among you have been publicly charged with the commission of these crimes." But will you undertake to make those charges good? Whenever your "Christian charity, and hearty desire for our success in so important a work," shall oblige you to instance particulars, I do hereby promise to give you a particular answer.

"But has not a Preacher of your sect preached and printed to prove the lawfulness of polygamy?" I answer, No Preacher in connexion with me has ever done any such thing. What Mr. Hall of Salisbury has done, is no more to me than it is to you; only that I am a greater sufferer by it. For he renounced all the Methodists several years since: And, when I was at Salisbury last, turned both me and my sister out of his house. No man therefore of common, heathen humanity, could ever blame me for the faults of that unhappy man.

In declaring my "abhorrence of all vices of that kind," I cannot be more plain or explicit than I have been. I can only declare again, that I believe neither fornicators, adulterers, nor unclean persons shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; and that I rank together sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and whosoever maketh or loveth a lie.

I well know, "a weak brother," as you define him, that is, a man of "profane eyes, and an unholy imagination," if you talk either of love-feasts, or persons confessing their faults to one another, will immediately run over all the scenes of the "New Atalantis." But I leave that to himself. I must not neglect a scriptural advice, because such an one is offended at my following it.

Your "friendly advice to avoid spiritual selfishness," I will endeavour to follow as soon as I understand it. At present, I do not; neither do I well understand how any "sober Christian should think me guilty of arrogance or self-conceit," because I relate a fact in which I had no share at all; namely, that other men "prayed for one another, that they might be healed of the faults they had confessed; and it was so."

You add, "Dr. Middleton absolves you from all boasting, in relation to the miracle you worked upon Kirkman." Dr. Middleton does me too much honour, in taking any notice

of so inconsiderable a person. But, miracle or no miracle, the fact is plain: William Kirkman is, I apprehend, yet alive, and able to certify for himself, that he had that cough threescore years, and that since that time it has not yet returned. I do not know that any "one patient yet has died under my hands." If any person does, let him declare it, with the time and circumstances.

You conclude: "Let me beg of you, as a fellow-Christian, to remove that great load of scandal that now lies upon your sect; and that you will not, by a careless or premeditated silence, bring yourself and your followers under a just suspicion of not being enemies to certain vices which you seem afraid even to name."

Alas, Sir, is your "hearty wish for my success" dwindled down to this? and your "sorrow for any oversight that should afford ground of cavil to those who are disposed to think unfavourably of me?" Sir, I take knowledge of you. I no longer wonder at your so readily answering for Dr. Middleton. I am persuaded none has a better right so to do: No, not the gentleman who lately printed in the public papers a letter to the Lord Bishop of Exeter. Well, Sir, you may now lay aside the mask. I do not require you to style yourself my "fellow-Christian." But we are fellow-creatures, at least fellow-servants of the great Lord of heaven and earth! May we both serve him faithfully! For his sake, I remain,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

P. S.—I did not receive yours till last night.