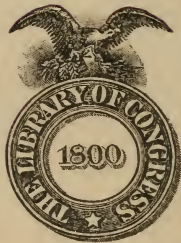


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A LETTER

TO

REV. EDWARD B. PUSEY, D. D.

Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford.

BEING

A VINDICATION

OF THE

TENETS AND CHARACTER OF WESLEYAN METHODISTS,

AGAINST HIS

MISREPRESENTATIONS AND CENSURES.

BY THOMAS JACKSON, D. D.

There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel
of Christ.—ST. PAUL.

NEW-YORK:

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A LETTER

TO

REV. EDWARD B. PUSEY, D. D.

REV. SIR,—Occupying as you do an office of high distinction in one of the first universities in the world, and having acquired no common celebrity as one of the principal leaders of a great ecclesiastical movement, it will perhaps excite your surprise to be thus publicly addressed by a plain Methodist preacher. Should any one blame me for engaging in a public controversy which you have been the first to excite, I can only say, “Is there not a cause?” In the third edition of your “Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury” you have seen it good to assail, in no measured terms of censure, the tenets and character of the Wesleyan body; and it is in defence of my brethren and of myself that I appear as your opponent. Great as is the disparity between us, I venture to “withstand you to the face;” because I conceive you are “to be blamed” for statements which are

at variance with truth, and for aspersions, both harsh and severe, which, not being founded on fact, are unjust and calumnious. On these subjects I shall take the liberty, which is given to me both by the laws of Christ and of my country, of addressing you with all freedom and unreserve; certainly without flattery, and I hope without any approach to unchristian rudeness. If there is "a time to keep silence," there is also "a time to speak." The New Testament Scriptures, which enjoin upon the disciples of the Lord Jesus the exercise of meekness under reproach, contain the command, "Let not your good be evil spoken of." Our blessed Saviour defended himself under false accusation; and St. Paul followed his example, when the cause of evangelical truth and righteousness was likely to be injured by his silence.

The following is that part of your publication upon which I feel it my duty to offer some animadversions:—

"Meaning of the title heresy as applied to Wesleyanism.

"Having been informed, that some have been offended by my having said 'that Wesleyanism is degenerating into developed heresy,' and been requested to explain my meaning, it seems

right to do it, although the statement was made too incidentally to justify in the first instance an explanation, which would have been only a prolonged censure. I may say, then, at once, that the conviction on my mind was, that the result of the present movement in the Wesleyan body would be, that the better part would, sooner or later, return to the Church, the remainder were *in the course* of 'degenerating into developed heresy.' The root of that heresy consists in the way in which the doctrine of justification is held, being in fact, and *practically*, a 'justification by feelings.' 'Believe (not 'in Christ' but) that you will be saved, and you will be saved,' was early a Wesleyan doctrine; but its character was long held in check, partly by the Church system, in which those who adopted it had been educated, partly by the continued use of the sacraments of the Church. In the section of the Wesleyan body which is becoming more alienated from the Church, and ceases to communicate with it, the original error has been more fatally developing itself. They who go over to it, are taught to look for 'present salvation,' that is, a sensible assurance of salvation, such as is vouchsafed often to God's servants on their dying beds, probably but rarely until the close of life, and still less at the

first conversion of a sinner. What (if true) would be a direct revelation from almighty God, persons are taught indiscriminately to expect, as the infallible accompaniment and test of a sincere conversion ; so that they may not hope that they are really converted, or will be saved, unless they obtain it ; what God, when he is pleased to vouchsafe it, ordinarily bestows as the reward at the end, the Wesleyan is taught to look for at the outset, as the very condition of his ultimate salvation, and as securing it. Practically he is taught to hold his salvation to be assured, as soon as he has obtained this first persuasion. The persuasion that a person will be saved is made the condition, and, virtually, the *only* condition, of his salvation. As long as he believes he is saved, so long, according to them, he is so. The workings of repentance and penitence are thus suddenly checked in the convert, as being thought to be attained. It is with them made an object to check the strong emotions of compunction which God has raised in the sinner. To feel 'the burden of our sins to be intolerable' is accounted want of faith.* The mind is worked up until it lose its

* "The following, which has been furnished me out of a very popular Wesleyan book, 'The Life of Carvosso,' a class-leader, may serve as an illustration of what is taking place

fear, and gain what it thinks an assurance of salvation. In other words, permanent repentance, and anxiety and grief for sin, are accounted contrary to the gospel. The penitence of the Psalms, or that praised by St. Paul,—‘Behold this self-same thing, that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what *indignation*, yea, what *fear*, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what *revenge*! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter,’—has no place in this system, except to be effaced. Then, the first persuasion having been obtained by the feelings, these thenceforth—not ‘good works which are the fruits of

daily. The writer knows of similar cases, where the ultimate effect (as was to be expected) was very injurious. ‘I found a poor heavy-laden penitent. I laboured to encourage her; but such were her strong crying and tears, that I thought best to pray with her. Her mind apparently becoming a little more composed, I asked her how she felt? She said, *I see I must go home and pray more.* Aware that this was a snare of Satan’s, [!] I replied, *There is no necessity for that: the Lord is here, and is now waiting to bless you. There is nothing wanting but for you to believe in Jesus as your Saviour. And if he died for you, ought you not at once to believe in him, and to love him?* The light of faith soon appeared, and her soul found liberty through the blood of the Lamb. Full of the assurance of faith, she cried out, *Now I know my sins are forgiven.*’ Belief in Christ, and belief in the individual’s assured personal salvation, are represented as equivalent.”

faith,' Art. xii—are *prominent* in the mind of the Wesleyan as *the* 'fruits of the Spirit,' and the test of a 'lively faith.' Confession, with him, is not a sorrowful acknowledgment of sins, but a recounting of the high feelings, inspired (as he thinks) by God within him; 'experiences' are not the result of 'patience,' which 'the trial of faith worketh,' not the victory won by Christ's strength in our weakness, but what, if real, would be revelations of God's love; 'the means of grace' are, with him, not the sacraments, but the 'class-meeting, bands, love-feasts.' The writer has known such a meeting preferred by a body of Wesleyans to the holy communion, where this could not have been celebrated for nearly a year in a language which they understood, and there was no prospect of its being again for some time administered. 'We relate the state of our feelings,' was the uniform answer to his inquiry as to the subject of their class-meetings. It is too certain that in this way much dangerous self-deceit and unconscious hypocrisy has been fostered, people being led to work themselves up to imagine that they had feelings, equal in spirituality, or yet more spiritual than those of their neighbours, or inventing them when they could not. And this, unhappily, is almost essential

to this system. Self-deceit must come in, whenever the feelings are directly acted upon. People have, for a time at least, the power of exciting their own feelings, of making themselves for the time feel what they habitually do not. And this, with the Wesleyan, is the test of his faith. If he loses these feelings, his faith is for the time supposed to be lost; if he regain them, it is restored, and he is again in a perfect state of justification and acceptance as before. But such a state, as being mostly artificial, must be unreal. Yet further, by substituting another test of acceptance, it even takes people off from considering their practical duties toward God and man, and how they perform these, which our Lord gives us as the test of our love for him—‘If ye love me, keep my commandments.’ Instead of this, it sets them watching for certain feelings only, which, unhappily, man has it in his power, in a great degree, to produce in himself, without their being any criterion of his habitual state, or permanently influencing it,—except for evil, in drugging the conscience. There will, of course, be everywhere individuals better than their system; it is not, therefore, judging individuals, to say, that the Wesleyan standard of morals and holiness is, of necessity, low. The state

of their feelings, not God's commandments, is the standard whereby they try themselves. Hence it has been observed, how very eminent among them have been individuals, known, in no ordinary degree, to be ambitious and worldly. One need but refer to the case of the individual to whom Wesley deputed the organization of their missions. He was known to be ambitious, affecting high titles of honour, to which he had no claim ; was consecrated to the episcopal office, and took its highest spiritual titles ; since his death it has been discovered, that he made application for a bishopric in the Church, being ready on such terms to abandon his Wesleyanism. All this is known, yet he is not disowned, but held in high repute as before. In more private cases, persons, of no very strict lives, have been able to profess that they have been without a sinful thought for weeks together, others, for even twenty years. Again : persons, esteemed sober-minded among them, have held, 'that by one act of faith a person may become perfectly sanctified ; and that it is the privilege of believers, whenever they choose, to claim it.' These things are not said as any reflection on the body, but as pointing out the germ whence a heretical system is springing, which threatens to be more desolating, because

more delusive, than an open Antinomianism. For all these things follow from the first principle, that the feelings, or the persuasion that a man is saved, are the test of his faith. He has no need then to examine himself, except as to this one point; he may take it for granted that he is obedient, humble, meek, has all 'the fruits of the Spirit.' Since, then, life is a daily struggle against the powers of evil, since watchfulness is enjoined as essential, since habitual self-denial and bearing the cross is a test of our Lord's true disciples, how must such a system, in the end, be a delusion?

"Wesleyanism, then, was said to be 'degenerating into a developed heresy,' in that it substitutes for the catholic teaching, a doctrine of justification for which there is 'no warrant in the word of God,' involving the principle of Antinomianism, and, in many cases, practically leading into it, effacing the doctrine of repentance, and the real character of good works, and virtually superseding the sacraments. Painful as it is to say it, on account of the many good men, doubtless, still entangled in it, it 'preaches another gospel from that which has been delivered unto us,' substituting practically the feelings and experiences for repentance, good works, and the sacraments."—*Letter to the*

Archbishop of Canterbury, pp. 159–163. Third edition.

Let us analyze the several allegations which you have here made, and thus endeavour to ascertain whether the tenets and character of the Wesleyan societies generally are what you describe, or whether you have been led by your prejudices to publish statements which are not true, to the injury of an unoffending people. To an impartial reader your whole account must appear very suspicious, in this view,—that while you express the strongest condemnation of what you are pleased to call “Wesleyanism,” you make no reference to the acknowledged writings of its founder. It is well known that he has written largely on all the subjects which you have here mooted, and his Works are accessible to all who choose to read them; yet have you carefully abstained from quoting a single word that he ever uttered. You have not made even an allusion to any authentic publication where he has imbodyed his sentiments; but have ascribed to him and his people just what tenets you pleased, and then, on the authority of your own assertions, and of idle tales which no candid man can by possibility believe, charged them with the An-

tinomian heresy in its worst forms. Such a course, to say the least, is sufficient to awaken an apprehension that all is not fair and honest. If "Wesleyanism" is in itself so essentially erroneous, and immoral in its tendency, why are its recognised formularies concealed? and why does a declared adversary take upon himself to be the sole expounder of its doctrines? The fact is, as you well know, that John Wesley, declaring his own views of religion, is a very different person from Dr. Pusey telling the world, in a party pamphlet, what John Wesley believed and taught. The founder of the Wesleyan societies expresses himself with all possible clearness and simplicity, as if he was wishful to be understood: his interpreter, whatever might be his design, darkens and misrepresents every subject that he professes to explain. We will descend to particulars.

JUSTIFICATION.

ONE of the most momentous doctrines in the entire compass of Christian theology, unquestionably, is that of a sinner's justification before God. This is the principal subject of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and in that to the Galatians. All the Protestant reformers laid the utmost stress upon it, as is manifest

from their writings, and from the confessions of faith drawn up by them for the several churches with which they were connected. This is also well known to have been a leading subject in the ministry of the Wesleys, and of their fellow-labourers in the gospel. You affirm that "Wesleyanism substitutes for the catholic teaching a doctrine of justification for which there is no warrant in the word of God." On one of the most vital points of Christian divinity, you affirm that the Wesleyan tenets are not only unscriptural, but at variance with the "teaching" of the universal church of Christ. This is a fearful charge; and if it could be substantiated, would go far to accomplish an object which you appear to have very much at heart,—the extinction of Wesleyan Methodism throughout the world. What then is the Wesleyan doctrine concerning this great question? You affirm, that it is "practically a justification by feelings." You add, "'Believe (not in Christ, but) that you will be saved, and you will be saved,' was early a Wesleyan doctrine;" and then, with regard to what you call "a section of the Wesleyan body," you add, "The original error has been more fatally developing itself." If this statement were true, there would, indeed, be "no warrant in the word of

God" for the Wesleyan doctrine of justification; and those who "practically" adhere to it would be more fit for an asylum or a penal settlement, than for a place either in the great Christian family, or even in civilized life. But, unhappily for you, the statement which you have put forth is an absolute fiction. On this subject I claim to speak with some confidence, having been connected with the Wesleyan body for nearly half a century, and conversed on this very point with thousands of its members in various parts of the kingdom; having also carefully read every theological book and pamphlet that Mr. Wesley ever wrote, as well as the writings of the principal ministers and laymen who have at any period been connected with his societies; and, in direct opposition to your declaration, I solemnly aver, that I never met with the doctrine that you have propounded, till I saw it in your pamphlet. I never heard it uttered by either man, woman, or child; nor do I believe, that there ever was in the Wesleyan connection a single person that seriously held it. I have, indeed, heard of a few dreaming religionists, not holding the Wesleyan tenets, who have said, "Believe that you are justified, and you are justified;" but that "Wesleyanism" ever taught, "Believe

(not in Christ, but) that you will be saved, and you will be saved," I indignantly deny. With your motives in charging upon the Wesleyan body a tenet which the wildest ranter would be ashamed to avow, I have no concern. I state the fact, and leave motives to Him that judgeth righteously.

For the information of candid persons, who are willing to hear the truth, I will here give, in an authentic form, the genuine doctrine of "Wesleyanism" on the point in question, that they may judge whether or not you are a faithful witness in the case. With respect to the nature of justification, Mr. Wesley says,—

"It sometimes means our acquittal at the last day. Matt. xii, 37. But this is altogether out of the present question; that justification whereof our Articles and Homilies speak, meaning present forgiveness, pardon of sins, and, consequently, acceptance with God; who therein 'declares his righteousness for the remission of the sins that are past; saying, I will be merciful to thy unrighteousness, and thine iniquities I will remember no more,' Rom. iii, 25; Heb. viii, 12.

"I believe the condition of this is faith: (Rom. iv, 5, &c. :) 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 ; (Luke vi, 43 ;) much less can sanctification, which implies a continued course of good works, springing from holiness of heart. But it is allowed that entire sanctification goes before our justification at the last day. Heb. xii, 14.

“ It is allowed also, that repentance, and ‘fruits meet for repentance,’ go before faith. Mark i, 15 ; Matt. iii, 8. Repentance must absolutely 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 ; (Matt. vi, 14, 15 ;) ceasing from evil, doing good ; (Luke iii, 4, 9, &c. ;) using the ordinances of God, and in general obeying him according to the measure of grace which we have received. Matt. vii, 7 ; xxv, 29. But these I cannot as yet term good works ; because they do not spring from faith and the love of God.”*

“ What is it to be justified ? What is justification ? It is not to be made actually just and

* Wesley's Works, vol. v, pp. 34, 35, Am. standard ed.

righteous. This is sanctification ; which is indeed, in some degree, the immediate fruit of justification, but, nevertheless, is a distinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature. The one implies what God does for us by his Son ; the other what he works in us by his Spirit. So that, although some rare instances may be found, wherein the term ' justified ' or ' justification ' is used in so wide a sense as to include sanctification also ; yet, in general use, they are sufficiently distinguished from each other, both by St. Paul and the other inspired writers."

"The plain Scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is that act of God the Father, whereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of his Son, he ' showeth forth his righteousness by the remission of the sins that are past.' This is the easy, natural account of it given by St. Paul throughout this whole epistle. [That to the Romans.] So he explains it himself, more particularly in this, and in the following chapter. Thus in the next verses but one to the text : ' Blessed are they,' saith he, ' whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered ; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.' To him that is justified, or forgiven, God will ' not impute sin ' to his condemnation. He will

not condemn him on that account, either in this world or in that which is to come. His sins, all his past sins, in thought, word, and deed, are covered, are blotted out, shall not be remembered or mentioned against him any more than if they had not been. God will not inflict on that sinner what he deserved to suffer, because the Son of his love hath suffered for him. And from the time we are 'accepted through the Beloved,' 'reconciled to God through his blood,' he loves, and blesses, and watches over us for good, even as if we had never sinned."*

That the Wesleyan Methodists of the present day adhere to these views of the venerated founder of their societies, is known to every one who attends their ministry, or who is acquainted with their publications. The following extract from a sermon which was preached some years ago before the conference, and published at the request of that body, contains direct proof of this fact:—

"To justify a sinner is to account and consider him relatively righteous, and to deal with him as such, notwithstanding his past actual unrighteousness; by clearing, absolving, discharging, and releasing him from various penal

* Wesley's Works, vol. i, pp. 46, 47, 48.

evils, and especially from the wrath of God, and the liability to eternal death, which, by his past unrighteousness, he had deserved; and by accepting him as if just, and admitting him to the state, the privileges, and the rewards of righteousness.

“Hence it appears, that in our opinion, justification and the remission of sin are substantially the same thing. These expressions, I mean to say, relate to one and the same act of God, to one and the same privilege of his believing people. That which, viewed in one aspect, is pardon, viewed in another, is justification. ‘The same act,’ says that profound divine, Mr. John Howe, ‘is pardon, being done by God as a sovereign ruler, acting above law, namely, the law of works, which is justification, being done by him as sustaining the person of a Judge according to law; namely, the law of grace.’ Accordingly St. Paul clearly referred to justification and forgiveness as synonymous terms, when he said, ‘Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses,’ Acts xiii, 38, 39. The word ‘justified,’ in the thirty-

ninth verse, is exegetical, or explanatory of the word 'forgiveness,' in the thirty-eighth. Attend also to the following passage: 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.' Rom. iv, 5-8. Here the justification of the ungodly, the counting or imputation of righteousness, the forgiveness of iniquity, and the covering and non-imputation of sin, are phrases which have all perhaps their different shades of meaning, but which express the very same blessing under different views. Our Saviour uses another phrase, which, however, is substantially equivalent in its import with those which have been already quoted. In his parable of the Pharisee and the publican, he puts into the mouth of the latter this prayer: 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' And what is the mercy which a penitent sinner desires from God? Is it not redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins? Now, that mercy, which this publican implored, he actu-

ally found. And his finding mercy, that is, his obtaining pardon, is expressly called, his going 'down to his house justified.'**

These quotations may suffice to show the true doctrine of "Wesleyanism" concerning the justification of a sinner before God. Still appealing to the same just and unexceptionable authority, let us inquire into the nature of the faith by which this great blessing of the evangelical covenant is obtained. We shall thus see whether or not you are a trustworthy witness in the case.

"What faith is it then," says Mr. Wesley, "through which we are saved? It may be answered, first, in general, It is a faith in Christ: Christ, and God through Christ, are the proper objects of it. Herein, therefore, it is sufficiently, absolutely distinguished from the faith either of ancient or modern heathens. And from the faith of a devil it is fully distinguished by this; it is not barely a speculative, rational thing; a cold, lifeless ascent; a train of ideas in the head; but also a disposition of the heart. For thus saith the Scripture, 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness;' and, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe with

*Dr. Bunting's Sermon on Justification by Faith.

thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.'

"And herein does it differ from that faith which the apostles themselves had while our Lord was on earth, that it acknowledges the necessity and merit of his death, and the power of his resurrection. It acknowledges his death as the only sufficient means of redeeming man from death eternal, and his resurrection as the restoration of us all to life and immortality; inasmuch as he 'was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification.' Christian faith is, then, not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ; a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection, a recumbency upon him as our atonement and our life, as given for us, and living in us; and, in consequence hereof, a closing with him and cleaving to him as our 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' or, in one word, our salvation."*

"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 evidence or conviction that 'God was in Christ, reconciling

* Wesley's Works, vol. i, pp. 14, 15.

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 at what time soever a sinner thus believes, be it in early childhood, in the strength of his years, or when he is old and hoary-haired, God justifieth that ungodly one: God, for the sake of his Son, pardoneth and absolveth him, who had in him, till then, no good thing. Repentance, indeed, God had given him before; but that repentance was neither more nor less than a deep sense of the want of all good, and the presence of all evil. And whatever good he hath or doeth, from that hour, when he first believes in God through Christ, faith does not find, but bring. This is the fruit of faith. First the tree is good, and then the fruit is good also.

“I cannot describe this faith better than in the words of our own Church: ‘The only instrument of salvation’ (whereof justification is one branch) ‘is faith; that is, a sure trust and confidence that God both hath and will forgive our sins, that he hath accepted us again into his favour, for the merits of Christ’s death and passion. But here we must take heed that we do not halt with God, through an inconstant, wavering faith. Peter, coming to Christ upon the water, because he fainted in faith, was in

danger of drowning; so we, if we begin to waver or doubt, it is to be feared that we shall sink as Peter did, not into the water, but into the bottomless pit of hell fire.'—*Second Sermon on the Passion.*

“ ‘Therefore have a sure and constant faith, not only that the death of Christ is available for all the world, but that he hath made a full and sufficient sacrifice for *thee*, a perfect cleansing of *thy* sins; so that thou mayest say, with the apostle, he loved *thee*, and gave himself for *thee*. For this is to make Christ thine own, and to apply his merits unto thyself.’—*Sermon on the Sacrament, First Part.*”*

Speaking on the same subject, the author of the sermon which has been already quoted, says, “Justifying faith has respect, in general, to all that Christ is set forth in the gospel as doing and suffering, by the gracious appointment of the Father, in order to our redemption and pardon. But it has respect, in particular, to the atoning sacrifice of Christ, as exhibited by divine authority in the Scriptures, and as attested to be acceptable and sufficient by his resurrection from the dead, and by his mediatorial exaltation at the right hand of God.

“The acts or exercises of this faith seem to

* Wesley's Works, vol. i, p. 50.

be three ; or, rather, that faith which is required in order to our justification is a complex act of the mind, which includes three distinct but concurrent exertions of its powers. It includes,

“ 1. The assent of the understanding to the truth of the testimony of God in the gospel ; and especially to that part of it which concerns the design and efficacy of the death of Jesus as a sacrifice for sin.

“ 2. The consent of the will and affections to this plan of salvation ; such an approbation and choice of it, as imply a renunciation of every other refuge, and a steady and decided preference of this. Unbelief is called a *disallowing* of the foundation laid in Zion ; whereas faith includes a hearty *allowance* of it, and a thankful acquiescence in God’s revealed method of forgiveness.

“ 3. From this assent of the enlightened understanding, and consent of the rectified will, to the evangelical testimony concerning Christ crucified, results the third thing which I suppose to be implied in justifying faith ; namely, actual trust in the Saviour, and personal apprehension of his merits. When, under the promised leading and influence of the Holy Ghost, the penitent sinner thus confidently relies and individually lays hold on Christ, then the work

of justifying faith is complete. Then, and not till then, he is immediately justified.

“ On the whole, may it not be said, that the faith to which the privilege of justification is annexed, is such a belief of the gospel, by the power of the Spirit of God, as leads us to come to Christ, to receive Christ, to trust in Christ, and to commit the keeping of our souls into his hands, in humble confidence of his ability and willingness to save us ? It will readily occur to you, that the several expressions which I have just used are all employed in Holy Scripture, as synonymous with that believing which is unto righteousness.” John i, 12 ; Matt. xi, 28 ; Eph. i, 12 ; 2 Tim. i, 12.*

The subject is now before the reader, and every one may judge of the question at issue. Mr. Wesley declares, in language the most direct and explicit, that Christ crucified, or God in Christ, is the object of justifying faith. On this point the people who bear his name have not departed a hair's breadth from his views. They declare, with one heart and voice, that there is no way of justification before God, for fallen and guilty men, but that of faith in Christ, as the divinely-appointed sacrifice for sin, or in God through Christ. In opposition to this, you

* Dr. Bunting's Sermon on Justification by Faith.

aver, that, in order to justification, they teach their hearers to "believe (*not in Christ*, but) that they will be saved," and then assure them that salvation will infallibly follow. The belief that the parties "will be saved," you describe as a mere "feeling," and not as either a principle or an act. A more palpable misrepresentation was never palmed upon the world. You declare the thing that is not. Without adducing the slightest proof, and in defiance of the most decisive evidence to the contrary, you describe a body of Christian people, not only as heretics, but as consummate fools, who teach mankind to exercise faith without an object. According to "Wesleyanism," it seems, men are neither justified by faith in God, nor by faith in the one Mediator between God and man, but by faith in a contingency!

This injurious statement is the more inexcusable, because it is positively contradicted by yourself. You have given an extract from the Life of William Carvosso, who says, that he "found a poor heavy-laden penitent," whom he "laboured to encourage." "There is nothing wanting," said he, "but for you *to believe in Jesus as your Saviour*. If he died for you, ought you not *to believe in him*, and love him?" She received this advice, and immediately

experienced the benefit of it. You add, "Belief in Christ, and belief in the individual's personal salvation, are represented as equivalent." If by "equivalent," you mean that they are the same thing, you are greatly mistaken. One is the cause, the other is the effect. The penitent sinner believes in Christ, and then "receives the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul," and "rejoices with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," 1 Pet. i, 8, 9. But I adduce the case of Carvosso, because of your concluding observation. You confess that the honest Cornishman recommended to a broken-hearted penitent, "belief in Christ," as the means of obtaining forgiveness, and the peace which is consequent upon it: a practice which was uniformly adopted in all similar cases by the apostles of our Lord, as we learn from the inspired record of their "Acts." According to your account, therefore, the Wesleyans teach people, in order to their acceptance with God, to "*believe in Christ*," and to "*believe not in Christ*." Pray, sir, what will you say of them next? You are neither just to them nor consistent with yourself.

After what you have said, it will excite no man's surprise that you add, "Wesleyanism substitutes for the catholic teaching a doctrine of justification, for which there is no warrant in

the word of God." If by "Wesleyanism," you mean the fiction which you have invented, and published under this name, you are right. There is, indeed, "no warrant" for it "in the word of God;" nor was it ever held by any man of sane mind. But as to the "teaching" of Mr. Wesley, and of the people who bear his honoured name, the case is very different. Their tenets are essentially Scriptural. According to "the word of God," justification consists in the "remission of sins that are past:" (Acts xiii, 38, 39; Rom. iii, 25:) it is not obtained by works of law, but by faith in the sacrificial blood of Christ: (Rom. iii, 28; Gal. ii, 16; Rom. iii, 25:) it is in no sense the reward of human merit, for it is bestowed upon "the ungodly," and flows from the mere "grace of God:" (Rom. iv, 5; iii, 24:) it is conferred in a manner that fully accords with the inflexible righteousness of God, and the rectitude of his government; and is therefore received through "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," Rom. iii, 24; Gal. iii, 13, 14. These texts are but a small sample of the passages relating to the same subject with which the New Testament abounds, and especially the epistles of St. Paul. To transcribe them would occupy several pages. Such is the

doctrine of "Wesleyanism," and not the tissue of absurdities which you are pleased to call by that name. When you declare that this doctrine has "no warrant in the word of God," you might just as well tell us that the sun never shed a ray of light upon the earth from the beginning of the creation to the present day. It agrees with the very letter of Holy Scripture, the only rule and standard of sacred theology; nor can it be invalidated by any form of sophistry, where the just authority of God's word is acknowledged.

What you mean when you say, that the Wesleyan doctrine of justification is a departure from "catholic teaching," I know not. There is no authentic "teaching" on this great and vital subject, but that which the pen of inspiration supplies; for God only can declare the terms upon which he will show mercy to the convicted transgressors of his law. If our doctrine accord with the "testimony of God," we are perfectly satisfied, although all the world should be against us. "Let God be true, and every man a liar." It is, however, a fact, that the Wesleyan doctrine of justification is in substantial agreement with the creed of every orthodox Protestant church in Christendom. That it is at variance with the doctrine of the

Church of Rome, as represented by the Council of Trent, we are fully aware ; but this is to us rather matter of satisfaction than of uneasiness, convinced as we are that Popery is that great corruption of Christianity of which the prophetic Scriptures have given awful warning. The prelates and cardinals of Trent fulminate their bitterest curses against all who hold the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith ; but, thanks to a merciful Providence, those curses are powerless. Their only value is that of showing the antichristian character of the church which has adopted them, and from which they emanate.

Our tenets may be distorted and caricatured, till they can scarcely be recognised ; nevertheless it remains true, that “ we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.”* It was the study of the Homilies of the Church of England, in connection with the Holy Scriptures, more than any thing besides, that led Mr. Wesley to the practical

* Eleventh Article of the Church of England.

adoption of this great truth of Christianity, which became one of the most prominent subjects of his effective ministry during the last fifty years of his life.

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

ON this subject you have expressed yourself with great freedom ; but whether with truth and consistency, remains to be seen. What you intend to admit, it is difficult to ascertain ; and still more difficult to know, from your representations, what the Wesleyan Methodists really teach. Many of the tenets which you have charged upon them form no part of their creed, and were never held by any of them. The accusations which you have preferred against them are indeed fearful, and advanced with the most perfect confidence, as if they admitted of no doubt ; but they are misapplied, and therefore reflect no dishonour, except upon the party by whom they are advanced. I will take the liberty to correct your misstatements, by an authentic exhibition of the Wesleyan doctrines, referring at the same time to the authority by which they are supported ; and will then inquire whether the doctrine which you assert really has that "warrant in the word of God," of which you declare that of the Wesleyans to be destitute.

With respect to the spiritual state of those who truly believe in Christ, Mr. Wesley says, they are saved "from the guilt of all past sin. For whereas all the world is guilty before God, insomuch that, should he be extreme to mark what is done amiss, there is none that could abide it; and whereas, by the law is only the knowledge of sin, but no deliverance from it; so that, by fulfilling the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified in his sight. Now the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is manifested to all that believe. Now they are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Him God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for (or by) the remission of the sins that are past. Now hath Christ taken away the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. He hath blotted out the hand-writing that was against us, taking it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. There is, therefore, no condemnation now to them which believe in Christ Jesus.

"And, being saved from guilt, they are saved from fear. Not, indeed, from a filial fear of offending; but from all servile fear; from that fear which hath torment; from fear of punishment; from fear of the wrath of God, whom

they now no longer regard as a severe Master, but as an indulgent Father. They have not received the spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itself bearing witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God. They are also saved from the fear, though not from the possibility, of falling away from the grace of God, and coming short of the great and precious promises. Thus have they peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. They rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts, through the Holy Ghost which is given unto them. And hereby they are persuaded, (though perhaps not at all times, nor with the same fulness of persuasion,) that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

“Again, through this faith they are saved from the power of sin, as well as from the guilt of it. So the apostle declares: ‘Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.’ 1 John iii, 5, &c. Again: ‘Little children, let no man deceive you. He that

committeth sin is of the devil. Whosoever believeth is born of God. And whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' Once more: 'We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not: but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not,' 1 John v, 18.

"He that is, by faith, born of God, sinneth not: (1.) By any habitual sin; for all habitual sin is reigning. Nor, (2.) By any wilful sin; for his will, while he abideth in the faith, is utterly set against all sin, and abhorreth it as deadly poison. Nor, (3.) By any sinful desire; for he continually desireth the holy and perfect will of God; and any tendency to an unholy desire, he by the grace of God stifeth in the birth. Nor, (4.) Doth he sin by infirmities, whether in act, word, or thought; for his infirmities have no concurrence of the will; and without this they are not properly sins. Thus, 'he that is born of God, doth not commit sin;' and though he cannot say he hath not sinned, yet now 'he sinneth not.'

"This, then, is the salvation which is through faith, even in the present world: a salvation from sin, and the consequences of sin, both

often expressed in the word 'justification;' which, taken in the largest sense, implies a deliverance from guilt and punishment, by the atonement of Christ actually applied to the soul of the sinner, now believing on him; and a deliverance from the power of sin, through Christ formed in him. So that he who is thus justified, or saved by faith, is indeed born again. He is 'born again of the Spirit,' unto a new 'life,' which is 'hid with Christ in God.' And as a new-born babe, he gladly receives the *αδολον*, 'sincere milk of the word,' and 'grows thereby;' going on in the might of the Lord his God, from faith to faith, from grace to grace, until at length he come unto 'a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'**

In regard to the happiness connected with this state of acceptance with God, and of personal conformity to his will, Mr. Wesley's language is clear and explicit. Having observed, that the children of God are described in Holy Scripture as bearing various characteristic marks, by which they are distinguished from other men, he inquires, "How does it appear that we have these marks? How does it appear that we do love God and our neighbour,

* Wesley's Works, vol. i, pp. 15, 16.

and that we keep his commandments? Observe, that the meaning of the question is, How does it appear to ourselves, not to others? I would ask him, then, who proposes this question, How does it appear to you, that you are alive, and that you are now in ease and not in pain? Are you not immediately conscious of it? By the same immediate consciousness you will know if your soul is alive to God; if you are saved from the pain of proud wrath, and have the ease of a meek and quiet spirit. By the same means you cannot but perceive if you love, rejoice, and delight in God. By the same you must be directly assured if you love your neighbour as yourself; if you are kindly affectioned to all mankind, and full of gentleness and long-suffering. And with regard to the outward mark of the children of God, which is, according to St. John, the keeping his commandments, you undoubtedly know in your own breast, if by the grace of God it belongs to you. Your conscience informs you from day to day, if you do not take the name of God within your lips, unless with seriousness and devotion, with reverence and godly fear; if you remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy; if you honour your father and mother; if you do to all as you would they should do unto you; if you

possess your body in sanctification and honour; and if, whether you eat or drink, you are temperate therein, and do all to the glory of God.

“Now this is properly the testimony of our own spirit; even the testimony of our own conscience, that God hath given to us to be holy of heart, and holy in outward-conversation. It is a consciousness of our having received, in and by the Spirit of adoption, the tempers mentioned in the word of God, as belonging to his adopted children; even a loving heart toward God, and toward all mankind; hanging with child-like confidence on God, our Father, desiring nothing but him, casting all our care upon him, and embracing every child of man with earnest, tender affection; a consciousness that we are inwardly conformed, by the Spirit of God, to the image of his Son, and that we walk before him in justice, mercy, and truth, doing the things which are pleasing in his sight.

“But what is that testimony of God’s Spirit which is superadded to and conjoined with this? How does he ‘bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God?’ It is hard to find words in the language of men to explain the deep things of God. Indeed, there are none that will adequately express what the children

of God experience. But perhaps one might say, (desiring any who are taught of God to correct, to soften, or strengthen the expression,) The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

“That this testimony of the Spirit of God must needs, in the nature of things, be antecedent to the testimony of our own spirit, may appear from this single consideration: We must be holy of heart, and holy of life; before we can be conscious that we are so; before we can have the testimony of our spirit, that we are inwardly and outwardly holy. But we must love God before we can be holy at all, this being the root of all holiness. Now, we cannot love God till we know he loves us. ‘We love him, because he first loved us.’ And we cannot know his pardoning love to us till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. Since, therefore, this testimony of his Spirit must precede the love of God and all holiness, of consequence, it must precede our inward consciousness thereof, or the testimony of our spirit concerning them.

“Then, and not till then,—when the Spirit

of God beareth that witness to our spirit, 'God hath loved thee, and given his own Son to be the propitiation for thy sins; the Son of God hath loved thee, and hath washed thee from thy sins in his blood,'—we love God because he first loved us; and for his sake we love our brother also. And of this we cannot but be conscious to ourselves. 'We know the things that are freely given us of God.' We know that we love God, and keep his commandments; and hereby also we know that we are of God. This is that testimony of our own spirit, which, so long as we continue to love God, and keep his commandments, continues joined with the testimony of God's Spirit, that we are the children of God."*

With respect to the means by which this witness may be clearly and solidly distinguished from the presumption of a natural mind, and the delusion of the wicked one, Mr. Wesley remarks, that the Holy Spirit's witness of adoption is always preceded by true repentance, by which all sin is lamented, confessed, and renounced; and is invariably accompanied by a great inward change from sin to holiness, so that the carnal and devilish mind is exchanged for the mind that was in Christ. He then adds,

* Wesley's Works, vol. i, pp. 87, 88.

“ But waiving the consideration of whatever he has or has not experienced in time past, by the present marks may we easily distinguish a child of God from a presumptuous self-deceiver. The Scriptures describe that joy in the Lord which accompanies the witness of his Spirit, as an humble joy ; a joy that abases in the dust : that makes a pardoned sinner cry out, ‘ I am vile ! What am I, or my father’s house ? Now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes !’ And wherever lowliness is, there is meekness, patience, gentleness, long-suffering. There is a soft, yielding spirit ; a mildness and sweetness, a tenderness of soul, which words cannot express. But do these fruits attend that *supposed* testimony of the Spirit in a presumptuous man ? Just the reverse. The more confident he is of the favour of God, the more is he lifted up ; the more does he exalt himself ; the more haughty and assuming is his whole behaviour. The stronger witness he imagines himself to have, the more overbearing he is to all around him ; the more incapable of receiving any reproof ; the more impatient of contradiction. Instead of being more meek, and gentle, and teachable, more ‘ swift to hear,’ and ‘ slow to speak,’ he is more slow to hear, and swift to speak ; more unready to learn of any

one ; more fiery and vehement in his temper, and eager in his conversation. Yea, perhaps, there will sometimes appear a kind of fierceness in his air, his manner of speaking, his whole deportment, as if he were just going to take the matter out of God's hands, and himself to devour the adversaries.

“ Once more. The Scriptures teach, ‘ This is the love of God,’ the sure mark thereof, ‘ that we keep his commandments,’ 1 John v, 3. And our Lord himself saith, ‘ He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me,’ John xiv, 21. Love rejoices to obey ; to do in every point whatever is acceptable to the beloved. A true lover of God hastens to do his will on earth as it is done in heaven. But is this the character of the presumptuous pretender to the love of God ? Nay, but his love gives him a liberty to disobey, to break, not keep, the commandments of God. Perhaps when he was in fear of the wrath of God, he did labour to do his will. But now, looking on himself as ‘ not under the law,’ he thinks he is no longer obliged to observe it. He is therefore less zealous of good works ; less careful to abstain from evil ; less watchful over his own heart ; less jealous over his tongue. He is less earnest to deny himself, and to take up his cross daily. In a

word, the whole form of his life is changed, since he has fancied himself to be at liberty. He is no longer exercising himself unto godliness; wrestling not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, enduring hardships, agonizing to enter in at the strait gate. No; he has found an easier way to heaven; a broad, smooth, flowery path; in which he can say to his soul, 'Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry.' It follows, with undeniable evidence, that he has not the true testimony of his own spirit. He cannot be conscious of having those marks which he hath not; that lowliness, meekness, and obedience; nor yet can the Spirit of the God of truth bear witness to a lie; or testify that he is a child of God, when he is manifestly a child of the devil."*

Such is the nature of Wesleyan teaching on these all-important subjects. A man is convinced of sin by the word and Spirit of God; and, under a distressing sense of his guilt, and of the entire corruption of his nature, he becomes alarmed and penitent, and acknowledges his just liability to the vengeance of eternal fire. He confesses his sins to God with contrition, and renounces them with shame and

* Wesley's Works, vol. i, p. 91.

abhorrence. Recognising in the death of Christ an atonement for sin, he believes in Christ, so as to renounce every other dependance and hope, and thus passes from death unto life. His person is justified, and he becomes an adopted child of God. The Holy Spirit bears a direct and an inward witness to his adoption; and hence he loves God, as the God of pardoning mercy, and all mankind for God's sake. This love to God and man, which the Holy Spirit inspires, is the principle of all holiness, and of all acceptable obedience. From this principle flow delight in God, obedience to his commandments, meek submission to his providential dispensations, zeal for his glory, forgiveness of injuries, and a generous desire to do good to all men, to enemies as well as friends. The man's nature is so changed, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, that sin ceases to have dominion over him, and he presents himself to God as a holy living sacrifice. In this state of happiness and of actual conformity to the divine will, it is his privilege not only to remain, but daily to advance till his redeemed and sanctified spirit enters into the celestial paradise. These views of personal religion are explained and defended, in their just proportions, and with admirable clearness, con-

sistency, and power, in Mr. Wesley's Sermons, and in his Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion. To his judgment on all these points the people who bear his name have ever paid a respectful deference, and never more so than in the present times; believing that, on these subjects especially, he has given a just exposition of God's own word.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit's witness in the hearts of believers, that they are the adopted children of God, is not a peculiarity of Methodism; but has been explicitly avowed by several of the most accomplished divines that ever lived. Testimonies without end might easily be adduced in favour of this great privilege of Christianity. Two only shall at present suffice. The first shall be that of Bishop Pearson, whose orthodoxy few men would have the boldness to impeach. "It is the office of the Holy Ghost," says he, "to assure us of the adoption of sons; to create in us a sense of the paternal love of God toward us; to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance. As therefore we are born again by the Spirit, and receive from him our regeneration; so we also are assured by the same Spirit of our adoption: because, being sons, we are also heirs, 'heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;' by the

same Spirit we have the pledge, or rather the earnest, of our inheritance."* In proof of this he refers to Rom. v, 5; viii, 14; Gal. iv, 6; Rom. viii, 15, 16.

An important document, entitled "The Confession of the Christian Faith," used formerly to be appended, with certain prayers, to the authorized version of the Holy Scriptures. In that document Christians were taught to say, "I believe and confess the Holy Ghost, God equal with the Father and the Son, who regenerateth and sanctifieth us, ruleth and guideth us unto all truth, persuading most assuredly in our consciences that we be the children of God, brethren to Jesus Christ, and fellow-heirs with him of life everlasting."

If this doctrine were taken in an isolated form, though it is clearly deducible from the Holy Scriptures, it would be liable to great abuse; but it is effectually guarded by that of sanctification, with which the sacred writers always connect it; and no man has shown this connection with greater clearness and force than Mr. Wesley. He acknowledges no witness of adoption but such as is obtained by faith in Christ, and is immediately followed by inward and outward holiness. Nor can any such wit-

* Exposition of the Creed, article viii.

ness be enjoyed a single hour, if sin be indulged, or the duties of godliness and morality be wilfully neglected.

We will now consider the exposition which you have given of these subjects, with its accompanying censures and charges.

You speak of a "section of the Wesleyan body," among whom "the original error" of Methodism on the question of justification "has been more fatally developing itself:" and you intimate that the Methodists who communicate in the established Church are less erroneous than the rest. You will allow me, however, to say, that I know of no "section" in that "body" who differ from their brethren, either with respect to the nature of this great blessing, or the method of obtaining it. This statement, like many others to which you have given currency, has no foundation in fact.

"They who go over" to what you call this "original error," we are further informed, "are taught to look for 'present salvation;' that is," say you, "a sensible assurance of salvation." Here I have again to complain both of ambiguity and misrepresentation. The term "salvation," as you well know, is sometimes used to denote that state of peace and holiness into which men are brought by the present exercise

of faith in Christ; and at other times it signifies final happiness in the enjoyment of God in glory. The Wesleyan body, not believing the tenet of absolute predestination, do not hold "an assurance of salvation" in the latter of these senses. They hold, indeed, with the Scriptures, a "full assurance of *hope*," but nothing more, till a man has actually entered into the blissful presence of God. The "assurance" for which they contend, if we must use the term, is the "assurance" of present adoption, communicated by the witness of the Holy Spirit, and confirmed by personal conformity to God's word and will.

By "present salvation," you tell us the Wesleyan body understand "a sensible assurance of salvation." This is a most unfair and misleading statement. When the Wesleyans speak of "present salvation," as we have already seen by an extract from Mr. Wesley, they understand far more than you have chosen to express. They mean nothing less than present deliverance from sin, its guilt, its misery, its power; so that the persons who have obtained it are no longer under condemnation, nor do they live in the commission of sin, but worship God in spirit and in truth, and serve him in holiness and righteousness. "Wesleyanism"

acknowledges no "assurance" but that which is preceded by sincere repentance, and connected with a sanctified heart and an upright life.

The reality of such an "assurance" you appear to confess, but deny that it is one of the ordinary blessings of Christianity; and therefore strongly condemn the Wesleyans for offering it, "indiscriminately," to those who are convinced of sin, as a gift which they may forthwith receive, by faith in the Son of God; for it is only upon the penitent that they press the duty of immediately believing with the heart unto righteousness. Men must first be "poor in spirit," and "mourn" under an humbling conviction of their guilt and depravity, before the Holy Spirit will "comfort" them by the witness of their adoption into the family of God. The "assurance" of which He is the author, you state, "is vouchsafed often to God's servants on their dying beds;" but "probably rarely until the close of life, and still less at the first conversion of a sinner:" you therefore add, as matter of blame, that "what God, when he is pleased to vouchsafe it, ordinarily bestows as the reward, at the end, the Wesleyan is taught to look for at the outset" of the Christian life. Two things are here asserted: First, that the "assurance" in question is rarely bestowed

until the close of life ; and, secondly, that it is "ordinarily" given only as a "reward." On both these points I join issue with you ; and challenge you to produce a single passage of Holy Scripture that, in its obvious and legitimate sense, directly supports either one position or the other. The Christian salvation, including happiness in God, and freedom from sin, is never spoken of either in the Old or the New Testament as a "reward" of pious obedience ; but as the gift of God, freely bestowed through Jesus Christ, and obtained by faith exercised in a penitent state of the heart : nor is the slightest intimation ever given, that God reserves the manifestation of his forgiving mercy to his people "until the close of life." The subject is of immense importance, involving the very substance and character of personal religion. If your theory be correct, it is not too much to say that millions of upright Christians have been false witnesses before God. If you are in error, you place yourself in a position of fearful responsibility : for you lower the standard of Christianity, and make sad the hearts of those whom God commands to rejoice. To the law and the testimony, then, let the appeal be made. The following passages are conceived to bear upon the question.

“ To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” Rom. iv, 5-8. Happiness is here expressly declared to be connected with the forgiveness of sin, and both are spoken of as present blessings. Is either of them described as a “reward?” Nay, verily; for they are bestowed upon the “ungodly,” and “him that worketh not.” Being guilty and corrupt at the very time of his justification, the man was incapable of yielding acceptable obedience to the moral law; but by “believing” he received pardon and a new heart, in consequence of which he was made emphatically “happy.” No intimation is given that the “assurance,” which was the basis of his happiness, and without which neither his understanding nor his conscience could be at rest, was reserved till the period of mortal sickness. This is an apocryphal doctrine, and not that of David and St. Paul. The Jewish prophet and the Christian apostle bear a united testimony to the great

truth of free justification by faith, and to the mental tranquillity, rich, solid, and permanent, which accompanies that blessed gift of God.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” Rom. v, 1, 2. Here the same doctrine is distinctly taught. Men are “justified by faith,” and are thus introduced into a state of “grace,” of favour or acceptance with God, in which they “stand.” In this state they “have peace with God.” Call this peace what you please, it is undeniably such an “assurance” of God’s love to them, as enables them to “rejoice in hope” of his “glory.” This also is asserted of believers “indiscriminately,” at the “outset” of the Christian life, not at its “close” only; and no hint is given that these blessings were in any sense conferred as the “reward” of any past services. They belong to “the common salvation,” and are bestowed “without money and without price.”

“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us,” verse 5. “We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement,” verse 11. “The

love of God" is here said to be poured into the hearts of believers by the Holy Spirit, who dwells in them; and although the manner in which this is done may be inexplicable, the fact itself must, in the nature of things, be matter of personal consciousness and of holy joy. They "have received the atonement," or the great benefit of "reconciliation" with God; and the result is, that they "joy in" him. The assurance of the divine favour, through Christ, is a means of kindling within them the flame of grateful love to God, and of exciting in them a joy of which God is both the author and the end. All this is spoken of without even the most distant allusion to the bed of death, or to the character of a "reward."

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. viii, 15, 16. - Adoption is here assumed to be one of the ordinary blessings of Christianity, conferred upon all believers, without distinction; and the fact is declared to be witnessed by the Holy Ghost to the spirits of those who are thus constituted the children of God. Let that witness be what it may, it

must be decisive of the fact to which it relates, or it is no witness at all. In the parallel passage, the apostle, addressing the same class of persons, says, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," Gal. iv, 6. It is not, therefore, because the parties are brought to "the close of life," and have long signalized themselves by their pious obedience, that they receive the "assurance" of their adoption as a "reward;" but it is "because they are sons;" and all attain to this distinction who believe in the Lord Jesus: for "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John i, 12.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv, 17. In the heart of a man who has a due sense of his responsibility to God, of the strict account which awaits him, and of the endless consequences of that account, for happiness or misery, there can be no true "peace and joy," without some "assurance" of the divine favour. Now, "peace and joy," as the gracious communications of the Holy Ghost, are here declared to be, not accidents of true religion; for

they enter into its very substance and nature, as "righteousness" itself does. To say that they are only imparted at "the close of life," is to say that, till then, "the kingdom of God" is not ordinarily set up in the souls of men, and, in effect, to deny the reality of early and living piety. But in the absence of piety, what is it that God "rewards" with the consolation of "assurance?"

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv, 13. It is here assumed that God himself communicates to his people "joy and peace;" and the apostle prays that these inestimable blessings might be imparted indiscriminately "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." Is it likely that an inspired man, who knew the mind of the Lord, would have thus prayed, had he been aware that these blessings are generally reserved for the "close" of the Christian life? and would he have asked that they might be vouchsafed to the people "in believing," had he known that they partake rather of the character of "a reward," than of a free gift? The discrepancy between the teaching of the apostle, and that of your pamphlet, is here striking and manifest.

“Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,” 2 Cor. i, 21, 22. “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory,” Eph. i, 13, 14. Heaven is often spoken of in Scripture as the future and everlasting “inheritance” of the people of God. It is “the inheritance of the saints in light;” (Col. i, 12;) and “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,” 1 Peter i, 4. The Holy Spirit, not in his miraculous operations, but in the “hearts” of believers, is here declared to be the “earnest” of that “inheritance.” But he can be no “earnest” to any man without what you call “assurance.” Individuals must know that they are so far under his influence, as to be entitled to that “inheritance,” and also prepared for it, or he is no “earnest” to them. The apostle gives no intimation whatever, that there is any thing peculiar in this. He rather speaks of it as the common privilege of the Corinthian and

Ephesian churches ; and he speaks of it, too, as that which was directly consequent upon "believing," and not as something special, which was reserved for the bed of death.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," Gal. v, 22, 23. The graces of the Christian character, as here specified, are the direct results of the Holy Spirit's operation upon the hearts of believers. They are distinct in their nature, but inseparable in their existence ; and hence they are not spoken of as many, but as the undivided "FRUIT of the Spirit." Among them are "joy and peace," which imply an "assurance" of present acceptance with God. The apostle speaks of them, not as communicated at different times, but as arising simultaneously under the gracious energy of the sanctifying and life-giving Spirit of God. It is a mere assumption, for which there is no authority whatever, to say, that "love, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, and meekness," constitute the characteristics of a Christian during life, and that at the "close" of his career, and as a "reward" of former services, "joy and peace" are then "vouchsafed." Such "teaching" certainly has "no warrant in the word of God," whatever claim it

may make to "catholicity." It is as absurd as it is unscriptural.

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls," 1 Peter i, 8, 9. In these words St. Peter gives precisely the same view that St. Paul has done of the happiness which enters into the very nature of Christianity. He describes it not merely by the terms "peace and joy," but declares it to be "joy unspeakable, and full of glory;" joy that cannot be adequately expressed in the language of men, and which is indeed a foretaste of the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which awaits the sanctified in a future state. Surely those who possess this have an "assurance"—a satisfying evidence—of their filial relation to God; for those only are the "heirs of God" who are his "sons." Does the apostle, then, speak of this "joy" as something peculiar, reserved for the bed of death, and withheld from the people of God during the greater part of their earthly pilgrimage? By no means. The entire structure of the passage proves the contrary. "The strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," are addressed

“indiscriminately;” and their joy, rich and abundant as it was, is said to have resulted from their “believing” in their unseen Redeemer. They exercised “faith” in him, with a direct reference to “the salvation of their souls;” and the consequence was, as we are here informed, that they “received” this “salvation,” including the happiness which the Holy Spirit has expressed in terms of such unwonted force.

These are but a very small part of the texts of Holy Scripture which are conceived to bear upon the question at issue. “Wesleyanism” teaches that an “assurance”—a satisfying evidence—of acceptance with God, arising from the joint testimony of the Holy Spirit and the believer’s own conscience, is directly consequent upon the exercise of faith in Christ, on the part of a truly penitent sinner. This you boldly declare to be “heresy,” and assert that such an “assurance” is rarely (if ever) given, except on the bed of death, and as a “reward.” Let the reader judge on which side the truth lies. For myself, I know not a single text of the New Testament, when fairly interpreted, that gives even the semblance of countenance to your theory, confident though the language be in which you express yourself.

The Wesleyan practice, in reference to this subject, though severely censured by you, we conceive to be justified by apostolic example; for the doctrine of the New Testament, on this question, is strikingly confirmed by the evangelical history. The apostles never hesitated to offer "a present salvation" to all whom they found prepared, by a deep conviction of their sin and danger; to receive it; and whenever their message was cordially embraced, "a present salvation" was invariably obtained by the people. It is a remarkable fact, that all the conversions which are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles were effected in a short period of time, and were all immediately followed by that "salvation" from the guilt, and misery, and power of sin, which you blame the Methodists for teaching the penitent among their hearers to seek and expect, in the exercise of faith in Christ.

When St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, preached Christ to the Jews, and charged them with having "by wicked hands crucified and slain" Him whom God had sent and raised from the dead, many of them were justly alarmed for the consequences of their sin, and "said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Peter said

unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," Acts ii, 37, 38. Here was an offer of "present salvation" to a numerous class of most notorious offenders; and that offer was made to "every one" of them "indiscriminately." They were directed to "repent," especially of their great wickedness in the betrayal and murder of the Son of God. But they were not to rest in this. They were, at the same time, "to be baptized (*ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι*) in the name of Jesus Christ;" and that with a direct and special reference to "the remission of their sins:" and they were assured that they should also "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

In submitting to be baptized in the name of Christ, it was, of course, understood that they "received Christ" in all his characters and offices, and especially as a sacrifice for sin; according to the teaching of St. Paul: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" Rom. vi, 3. Justifying faith is therefore declared to be "faith in his blood," Rom. iii, 25. All who received baptism in the full exercise of this faith, according to the provisions of the evangelical covenant, received also the bless-

ing of justification, and with it the regenerating and sanctifying Spirit.

The result of St. Peter's exhortation is thus stated: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people." The "present salvation," which St. Peter so promptly and unequivocally offered, is here described as actually obtained by a large number of people, to whom that apostle addressed himself. "About three thousand" persons, on "the same day," were instructed, "gladly received the word," "believed," "were baptized," "were added" to the congregation of the faithful, became examples of piety, and of every moral excellence. Some thousands more were soon after converted in the same manner; until "there was a great

persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles," Acts viii, 1. Yet God at length remembered his persecuted servants, and gave them a season of general tranquillity. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied," Acts ix, 31. Here we again meet the people who had formed the original church in Jerusalem, and who had been converted to Christianity about four years. Immediately after their conversion they had enjoyed the communion of saints, in their intercourse with each other; and it is instructive to find, that, in their exile, they cherished the same social character; for they were united together in "churches." They diligently employed the time of peace for the improvement of their knowledge and piety; for they "were edified:" and it is mentioned, as their permanent and unvarying character and habit, that they "walked in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost."

The case of these people, I apprehend, bears directly upon the question at issue. If any

class of offenders might be received to the mercy of God, and yet left destitute of spiritual consolation, we should suppose that this would have been the doom of the men who had despised the ministry of the Son of God, blasphemed his miracles and name, and even clamoured for his blood; yet, when they repented of their sin, and believed in Christ, they were made permanently happy, as well as holy. Immediately after their conversion, they "ate their meat with gladness," as well as "singleness of heart," and spent much of their time daily in "praising God." And then, after a lapse of four years, notwithstanding the persecutions by which they had been harassed, we find them still living under the Holy Spirit's richest influence, and filled with his "comfort." In their case "assurance" was no "reward," but a free gift. It was not reserved for "the bed of death;" for they "walked" in it, while engaged in the duties of life, and suffering its trials. Here was "present salvation," preached undeniably by inspired apostles, and actually vouchsafed by God himself, not to a few favoured and solitary individuals, but to many thousands of penitent and believing Jews, the greater part of whom, up to that period, had been the most deeply guilty of the human race.

The case of the Ethiopian eunuch has also a direct bearing upon this argument. He was probably a Jewish proselyte, and a devout and moral man, but a stranger to the gospel. While sitting in his chariot, he was instructed by the evangelist Philip, with respect to the nature, the character, and the work of Christ, and at once declared himself a believer. He descended from his chariot to receive baptism in the name of the Lord ; and then, resuming his seat, " he went on his way rejoicing," though traveling through a " desert" country, and separated from his spiritual guide. The joy with which he was inspired was no " reward" of Christian obedience, nor was it reserved till the " close of life ;" for it was coeval with his Christianity. The exercise of his faith in " the Son of God" was immediately followed, as in the converts of the feast of Pentecost, with rich and solid happiness. Acts viii, 26-40.

The process of conversion in Saul of Tarsus occupied more time than any other that we read of in this part of the inspired narrative. He was three days in blindness and penitential sorrow, " and neither did eat nor drink ;" for his grief appears during this time to have been unmitigated by the news of pardon, or by any disclosure of the purpose of God respecting

him. He had been informed that, at Damascus, he should be "told all things that were appointed him to do;" but what those things were, as yet he knew not. Ananias, addressing him, said, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." Acts xxii, 14, 15. It would seem that after Saul had been thus informed of the divine intention toward him, he manifested an inclination still to linger in his present state; when his spiritual monitor, true to the doctrine of "present salvation," roused him by saying, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Verse 16. This stirring admonition, accompanied by the imposition of hands, had the desired effect. "Immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized," Acts ix, 18. Like the three thousand penitent Jews, on the day of Pentecost, Saul received the blessing of justification in connection with baptism, because he submitted to that sacrament believing in Christ. In his epistles, therefore, he never

attributes justification to baptism, but always to faith. Had faith been wanting, whoever had baptized him, he would have still remained in his guilty condition, as did Simon Magus, to whom St. Philip administered that sacred ordinance. "We who are Jews by nature," said he to St. Peter, "and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ," Gal. ii, 15, 16.

In a very short period after his conversion, Saul entered upon the ministry that was assigned him; for he "straightway preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." The holy cheerfulness and self-possession with which he met the perils and opposition of the apostolic life, and the language of confidence and triumph which he invariably used when speaking of his spiritual state and of his hopes, demonstrate that he was no stranger to the joys of "assurance." He possessed them not on the bed of death, (for it was not his lot to lie there,) but in the time of imprisonment and of martyrdom; (2 Tim. iv, 7, 8;) for they had attended him through his wonderful career of labour and suffering. He

deemed his persecutions and privations, incessant and severe as they were, not worthy of regard, when viewed in connection with the glory that was to be revealed, and the bright prospect of which was ever in his view. Often does he refer to his spiritual enjoyments; but never does he speak of them as "a reward." They constituted a part of that salvation which he had received as the free gift of God, through the mediation of his Son.

Scarcely less striking is the refutation of your theory, which is furnished by the conversion of the jailer at Philippi. "At midnight," says the sacred historian, "Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs,

what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." Acts xvi, 25-34.

For several days it had been announced in the streets of Philippi, that Paul and Silas were "servants of the most high God," whose business it was to "show unto" mankind "the way of salvation;" and now that the earthquake, and the miraculous circumstances attending it, seemed to proclaim the interposition of this great Being in behalf of his injured and persecuted servants, the jailer became alarmed, and inquired what he must do to obtain the "salvation" which these strangers preached. The question was proposed with every indication of deep anxiety, and of penitent submission to God's will. Faith in Jesus Christ was declared to be the grand and simple means of "salvation." This doctrine the jailer cordially and practically received; so that he "was baptized,

he and all his, straightway." Like other converts, he was, of course, "baptized into the name of Christ," and with a special reference to Christ's "death," Rom. vi, 3. The direct consequence was, that he "rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house." In common with the many thousands of penitent and believing Jews in Jerusalem, and sincere converts everywhere, he was filled with joy and peace: thus realizing the fact, that true faith is immediately followed by happiness, as well as by freedom from the dominion of sin. This momentous change in the jailer was wrought in less than one night. The earthquake, which awoke him out of sleep, did not take place until the "midnight" hour; and according to the order of the narrative, before "it was day" he had listened to "the word of the Lord," believed with the heart unto righteousness, exercised Christian hospitality, been baptized, and was made happy in God. Here was indeed "present salvation," the preaching of which among the Methodists you deem such an intolerable evil. "The peace and joy of faith," in the case of this converted heathen, were not deferred till the hour of death, that they might then be "vouchsafed as a reward." They were freely and most graciously given with faith itself, by Him who de-

lighteth in mercy, and whose love transcends all thought. For in blessing mankind, in honour of his Son, God declares, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isa. lv, 8, 9.

The doctrine and practice of the apostles, in reference to this subject, are in perfect accordance with the teaching and conduct of the Lord Jesus. He did not hesitate, when occasion served, to give to several individuals the most express and perfect "assurance" that their sins were forgiven; and that they were in such a state, that if they remained in it they would be eternally saved. When the seventy disciples, for instance, returned from their mission, and related their success, he not only told them that their "names were written in heaven," but also directed them to "rejoice" on that account. Luke x, 20.

On another occasion we are informed that "they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee," Matt. ix, 2. He had, it seems, no apprehension that the

communication of this fact would be injurious to the man's piety, as you strangely intimate : or would interrupt the workings of any such "repentance" as God required of him.

We also read of "a woman that was a sinner;" who, under a grateful sense of his pardoning mercy, followed him into the house of a Pharisee, and there "began to wash his feet with her tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment" which she had brought for that purpose. In answer to the murmuring Pharisee, who was offended at these things, Jesus said, in her hearing, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for," or therefore, "she loved much." He said also to her, "Thy sins are forgiven." "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace," Luke vii, 36-50. Here is another undeniable example of "present salvation;" "salvation" from the guilt of "many" and great sins; "salvation" obtained by the exercise of "faith" in Christ; and "salvation" connected with "assurance" and an irrepressible feeling of holy thankfulness and joy.

Our blessed Lord acted in the same manner after his ascension to glory, as is manifest from his epistles to the seven churches of Asia. Those of them who had lost their piety he

rebuked and threatened; but of those who maintained their integrity he declared his approval; and he urged them to perseverance by the promise of a future reward. To the church at Smyrna he administered no reproof; and he, in effect, pronounced them to be in a state of acceptance, by saying, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," Rev. ii, 10. They had only to maintain their present character in order to their final salvation.

This is a very brief and faint outline of the evidence which Holy Scripture supplies on this momentous subject; for momentous indeed it is, not only as affecting the happiness of good men, but as it relates to the very substance of personal religion. For let it be distinctly understood, that the Wesleyans acknowledge no authority on this question but that of Scripture. They would give up all that has been said concerning it by the whole train of mystic writers, from Thomas à Kempis to Fenelon, for one single sentence of inspiration. You have not even attempted to prove that your theory is sanctioned by God's word, but have satisfied yourself with caricaturing our principles, and then representing them as absurd and injurious. I have stated, on unexceptionable authority, our real sentiments, and will now consider the ob-

jections which you have urged against them. It should, however, be observed, that the only question to be determined refers to the testimony of Scripture concerning the point at issue. If it is a doctrine fairly deducible from the inspired books, that all Christians may have a satisfactory "assurance" of their filial relation to God, and conformity to his will, no objections, however ingeniously constructed, and however confidently advanced, can render it unworthy of our belief. The mere circumstance, that objections have been adduced against the affirmative of this question proves nothing to our disadvantage. There is not a doctrine nor a duty of divine revelation, against which objections have not been advanced in one form or another: Even the being of a God is at this day denied. But we will neither abandon our belief in him; nor knowingly give up any thing that he has taught us in "his most holy word."

You have distinctly acknowledged that "a sensible assurance" of the divine favour "is vouchsafed often to God's servants on their dying beds;" and yet you tell us, that "self-deceit must come in whenever the feelings are directly acted upon." There certainly can be no "sensible assurance" without "feeling," either upon "a dying bed," or elsewhere. Are we

then to understand that "self-deceit" is always connected with "sensible assurance," even when God himself "vouchsafes" it, and when it is also "vouchsafed" as a "reward?" But your statement is still more startling; and indeed leads to absolute skepticism on the subject of personal religion. There can, for instance, be no true Christian piety without repentance; no repentance without sorrow; and no sorrow without "feeling." This is also true of faith in Christ, love to God, the exercise of devotion, and indeed all the principles, affections, and acts that are connected with the Christian life. Now repentance, faith, love to God, zeal for his glory, delight in his service, and, in fact, all the graces of the Christian character, are the effects of divine influence; and they are all connected, more or less, with "the feelings;" for the sanctified heart is not a heart of stone. Whether you really intend to charge "self-deceit" upon all the people whose "feelings" are "acted upon" by divine truth and grace; and if so, how it is that so *holy* an agency should produce such an *evil* effect; you will perhaps explain. For myself, I am utterly unable to ascertain what you intend to teach. Your two statements seem to be absolutely contradictory to each other.

To the doctrine of "assurance," as held by the Wesleyan body, you object, that "the workings of repentance and penitence are suddenly checked in the convert." "To feel 'the burden of our sins to be intolerable' is accounted want of faith." "Permanent repentance, and anxiety and grief for sin, are accounted contrary to the gospel." The entire force of this objection is derived from the ambiguity of the terms which you have seen it good to employ. If by "repentance and penitence," by "permanent anxiety and grief for sin," you mean such a conviction of personal guilt and depravity as is attended with a distressing apprehension of God's impending wrath and of our continual liability to be plunged into endless misery, I acknowledge the justness of your charge. The Wesleyans do not think that the children of God are doomed to spend their days in such a state of spiritual servility and bondage. But it is not "with them an object to check the strong emotions of compunction which God has raised in the sinner," as you untruly allege. It is rather "with them an object" to strengthen those "emotions," till, in the extremity of his anguish, the contrite transgressor of the law of God shall believe in Christ, and thus obtain an application of that

blood which "cleanseth from all sin," and which "purges the conscience from dead works." If "the emotions of compunction which God has raised" in any man be "checked" by human interference, the Wesleyans think that the only effectual relief is retarded; inasmuch as no solid and lasting comfort can be obtained, in cases of this nature, but by faith in the sacrifice of Christ. The seasonableness and reality of the comfort thus obtained are attested by innumerable scriptures, among which we adduce the following:—"I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord; and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living." Psalm cxvi, 1-9. "Thus

saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness I was wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts to him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him." Isa. lvii, 15-19. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. xi, 28-30. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," Rom. viii, 15. - If you mean that "repentance," in the sense of a just abhorrence of sin, and of shame, and

sorrow, and humiliation before God on account of it, is so far "checked" by the Wesleyan doctrine of "assurance," that its "workings" cease in those who are justified, and are filled with peace and joy in believing, I absolutely deny your allegation. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive that you are sincere in urging it. One can hardly imagine that you would so repeatedly have attacked the Wesleyan body, unless you had formed an acquaintance with their theology, discipline, and history, concerning which you express yourself with the most perfect confidence. What, then, must the reader think, when he is informed that, among those sermons of Mr. Wesley which form the doctrinal standards of his connection, there is an exceedingly impressive one on this very subject? It is entitled, "The Repentance of Believers;" and most distinctly shows that, although such persons have obtained redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and are so "born of the Spirit" as to be "new creatures," the exercise of repentance, in the sense just explained, is to end only with life. This doctrine, in truth, must be obvious to every one who duly considers the subject. The pardon of sin does not lessen its offensiveness before the God of infinite purity. Sin is

still "the abominable thing that he hateth;" and while a man's understanding, conscience, and affections are in a right state, the remembrance of his natural corruption, of his actual transgressions, of the comparatively late period of his conversion, of the sin that still remains in him, of the imperfect manner in which many of his duties are discharged, of his numerous opportunities of doing and receiving good which he neglects fully to improve, and of his ten thousand infirmities and inadvertencies, must ever fill him with sorrow and ingenuous shame before God; and that shame will be deep in proportion to his advancement in holiness. Nor ought he ever to forget the strict account which he must soon render to the Judge of quick and dead. Can the prodigal son, covered with "the best robe," and sitting at the festal board of his father, who has just received him with a kiss, be less impressed with the evil of his past conduct, than he was when pining among the swine in a strange land? Must not the recollection, that his sin had been committed against a parent of such unbounded kindness, fill him with the deepest shame, and lead him more than ever to detest his profligacy and ingratitude? Did not the pardoned "woman that was a sinner" weep at the feet of Jesus,

when she recollected his compassion in connection with her criminal forgetfulness of God, and disregard of his will? St. Paul knew that he had "obtained mercy;" yet he could never forget that he had been "a blasphemer, and injurious," so as not to be "worthy to be called an apostle, because he persecuted the church of God." To the end of his life, his godly shame and sorrow on account of his infidelity and opposition to the truth were heightened by every remembrance of the "exceeding" and "abundant" grace which had been shown to him. This is indeed one design of God in receiving sinners to his mercy: "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God," Ezek. xvi, 63.

This subject is so prominent in the theology of the Wesleyans, as to be distinctly and frequently introduced into the hymns which they are accustomed to sing in their public assemblies.

"Ah, why did I so late thee know
- Thee lovelier than the sons of men!
Ah, why did I no sooner go
To thee, the only ease in pain!
Ashamed I sigh, and inly mourn,
That I so late to thee did turn."

“ I loathe myself when God I see,
And into nothing fall,
Content if thou exalted be,
And Christ be all in all.”

“ Pardon'd for all that I have done,
My mouth as in the dust I hide,
And glory give to God alone,
My God for ever pacified.”

“ As the apple of an eye,
Thy weakest servant keep ;
Help me at thy feet to lie,
And there for ever weep :
Tears of joy mine eyes o'erflow,
That I have any hope of heaven ;
Much of love I ought to know,
For I have much forgiven.”

Besides, a Christian is not an isolated individual, but a member of a religious community, and belongs also to the universal church of God. The Almighty deals with churches in mercy or in judgment, according to their works. In the purest churches there are evils to be confessed and lamented ; and good men are especially led to deprecate the consequences of those evils in earnest and daily prayer.

The Christian is also a member of the commonwealth, and is liable, like the rest of his countrymen, to national judgments and calamities, as the punishment of national sins ; and hence

it is his duty to acknowledge and bewail those sins before God, in secret, domestic, and public worship, although he may not be personally guilty of them, and to implore the divine forbearance and mercy.

It is therefore manifest, that as there is a repentance which is preparatory to justification, so there is a repentance which is consequent upon it, and which is to end only with life. The following censure, therefore, is utterly groundless. You say, "The penitence of the Psalms, or that praised by St. Paul,—'Behold this self-same thing, that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness is wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves,—yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what revenge!' In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter,'—have no place in this system, except to be effaced." If you mean that, according to the doctrine and practice of the Wesleyan body, the language of penitence with which the Psalms abound is not adapted to the use of Christian believers, I deny your assumption. Theirs is the daily language of penitence, as well as of holy gratitude and joy for pardon and the ten thousand blessings connected with it. At the same time it is conceded, that there are

particular expressions in the Psalms that are not applicable, in their strict original meaning, to the case of real Christians. You yourself, for instance, cannot pray to be saved from "blood-guiltiness," as David offered that affecting petition after "the matter of Uriah." There are also in the Psalms prophetic complaints which were uttered by the Son of God, in the depth of his anticipated sufferings as the world's Redeemer: and such complaints no mere man can make his own, except in an accommodated sense.

The case of the Corinthians, which you have adduced, was peculiar. They were criminally lax in the exercise of discipline. One of them indulged himself in conduct of which the very heathens would have been ashamed. He had committed incest with his "father's wife;" and no member of the church raised his voice against the crying sin. They were all unconcerned, as if the act had been perfectly lawful. For this the apostle rebuked them with terrible severity. He called upon them to "mourn," that the Christian name had been so dishonoured; and charged them, in the name of the Lord, by "delivering up" the offender "to Satan," to "purge out" the evil "leaven" which had begun to ferment among them. His admonitions

produced the desired effect ; and hence his account of the repentance of the church. It is certainly the duty of all who have thus offended, to repent as the Corinthians did ; but churches that maintain a pure discipline are not involved in the guilt of that people, and therefore cannot repent in precisely the same manner. Every man, however, has offended, in one way or another ; and to the end of his life should therefore manifest a becoming “ indignation,” “ fear,” and “ revenge,” because of his past misconduct, and carefully “ clear himself” for the time to come. I speak not without authority when I say, that I believe no ministers whatever inculcate this duty with greater frequency and earnestness than those of the Methodists ; and hence the injustice of your unmeasured censures upon them and upon the whole of their hearers. Both in theory and practice they abhor the tenets which you have charged upon them.

You further state, in opposition to the Wesleyan doctrine, that “ ‘ experiences’ are not the result of ‘ patience,’ which ‘ the trial of our faith worketh,’ not the victory won by Christ’s strength in our weakness, but what, if real, would be revelations of God’s love.” Here again, I apprehend, you venture upon state-

ments which are incapable of proof. What do the Methodists understand by "religious experience?" (not *experiences*: they are not in the habit of using such language.) They mean by it, the sorrows of repentance, arising from a conviction of sin, produced in the heart by the word and Spirit of God;—the peace and joy which are imparted to the believing penitent when the guilt of sin is taken away, and "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him;"—the blessed change which takes place in a man's spirit and temper, when, through the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, the earthly, sensual, and devilish mind is exchanged for the mind which was in Christ; so that the man, ceasing to serve sin, presents himself to God as a holy, living sacrifice;—the continual enjoyment of the Holy Spirit's power, restraining from sin, carrying on and completing the work of sanctification, and effectually helping the infirmities of the believer in all the duties of life;—and the reception of divine grace to sustain and comfort the mind in every season of trial and affliction, producing humble and cheerful submission to the divine will, with a lively hope of heaven.

Now I ask, what is there in all this that is

contrary to the doctrine of St. Paul? When he says that "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience," he speaks of one branch of that "experience" of which Christian believers are the subjects; the "experience" of the faithfulness, power, and mercy of God, and of the reality of their own piety, which they receive in seasons of "tribulation," when their faith and "patience" are put to the severest test; but he certainly did not intend to deny religious "experience" in every other form. You cannot suppose, when he said that "patience worketh experience," he meant to contradict what he had just asserted,—“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” When he himself was filled with penitential sorrow at Damascus, and then with peace and joy, and invested with the apostolic office, he had a lively "experience" of the divine goodness, power, and mercy; but that "experience" was greatly enlarged when, through a series of years, he endured weariness, hunger, cold, nakedness, imprisonment, scourging, shipwreck, the unfaithfulness of friends, stoning, calumny, and bitter insult; and yet was so strengthened

and comforted by the grace of God, as to be able to pass through them all, not only without a murmur, but with joy and thanksgiving. "We glory in tribulation." You may assume, that if, by the grace of God, "patience work experience" of one kind, the same grace, in imparting peace to the troubled conscience, and purity to the corrupted heart, does not produce it in another; but St. Paul has said nothing of the kind. You may also represent the Wesleyans as talking about "experiences," (though the term is your own, not theirs,) and tell us that these, "if real, would be a revelation of God's love." Uncouth and perverse phraseology alters not the nature of things. Till the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised, and the living shall be changed, it will remain an immutable truth, that "the kingdom of God" in man, "is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" (Rom. xiv, 17;) and that the true "circumcision" are the men "which worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii, 3. "Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," are indeed "feelings." You may pour contempt upon them under this name, and say that they imply a "revelation," or any thing else. According to

apostolic testimony, they constitute "the kingdom of God" upon earth. Nor are they a whit the less valuable because they are felt, but rather more so. The blessed God is pleased, in the fulness of his mercy, not only to exempt penitent believers from future wrath, but also to deliver them from present misery. His ways are therefore pleasantness, and his paths are peace.

But whatever reality there may be in religious experience, as described in the Holy Scriptures, you insinuate, in terms sufficiently intelligible, that the Wesleyans have no part in this matter. If we may judge from your representations, their piety is not even dubious. It is either absolute delusion, or something worse. The following are some of your expressions in reference to that body of Christian people:—
" *The mind is worked up, until it lose its fear, and gain what it thinks an assurance of salvation.*" "It is too certain that in this way much dangerous *self-deceit and unconscious hypocrisy* has been fostered; people being led to *work themselves up* to imagine that they had feelings equal in spirituality, or yet more spiritual than those of their neighbours, or *inventing them* when they could not. And this, unhappily, is almost essential to the system. Self-deceit must come in whenever the feelings are directly

acted upon. People have, for a time at least, the *power of exciting their own feelings, or making themselves for the time feel what they habitually do not.* And this, with the Wesleyan, is the *test of his faith.* “Such a state, as being mostly artificial, must be unreal.” Instead of teaching men to look for the fruits of conversion in obedience to the commands of God, you say that Wesleyanism “sets men watching for *certain feelings only*, which unhappily man has it in his power, in a great degree, to *produce in himself*, without their being any criterion of his habitual state, or permanently influencing it,—except for evil, *in drugging the conscience.*”

Such is the estimate that you form of the religious character of the people to whom the name of Wesleyan is applied. In the New Testament certain affections, principles, and dispositions are mentioned, which the Holy Spirit is said to produce in the hearts of Christians, by an application to them of evangelical truth. These affections, principles, and dispositions, by what names soever they may be called, the Wesleyan Methodists regard as essential to the true Christian character in every age and place; so that, whatever may be a man's orthodoxy, his attention to the forms of religion, or the correctness of his morals, unless

he love God and all mankind, and unless he be spiritually minded, and pure in heart, he cannot be finally saved; inasmuch as "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The only way of attaining to personal holiness they believe to be the exercise of faith in Christ; faith preceded by repentance toward God, and consisting in an unfeigned trust in Christ, as the Mediator between God and sinful men.

This has been their doctrine from the beginning; and not a few of them, at every period of their history, have expressed a persuasion that they had attained to this state. They have avowed their belief that they had received the Christian salvation, in the Scriptural method; and their profession has been confirmed by an exemplary walk and conversation, at once consistent, pure, and upright.

Without attempting to show that the Wesleyans mistake the sense of Holy Scripture, you grievously misrepresent their views, contemptuously stigmatize spiritual affections as mere "feelings," and, so far as the Wesleyans are concerned, declare those "feelings" to be "artificial," the offspring of "self-deceit," "unconscious hypocrisy," and pride: for you tell us that these people "imagine that they have feelings more spiritual than their neighbours."

There are more than a million of Christians now living, whose spirit and conduct are open to the inspection of all men, and of whom you have given this character; and a far greater number of others have gone to their final account. Among all these people it is probable that you have never conversed with fifty on the subject of personal religion, or whose general deportment through life you have been able to observe; and yet you feel yourself at liberty, in this bold and sweeping manner, to declare what passes in their minds, and to deny their Christianity. Yes, to *deny their Christianity*; for it is perfect mockery to add, as you do, "These things are not said as any reflection on the body;" and "many good men are doubtless entangled in" Wesleyanism. If the Methodists are the men that you have affirmed them to be, they fall below honest heathens; for they are unconscious hypocrites and self-deceivers; and what they call "the fruit of the Spirit" consists of "certain feelings only, which unhappily" fallen "man has it in his power, in a great degree, to produce in himself." When the Wesleyans cannot "*work themselves up*," so as to "imagine they have these feelings," you tell us, "*they invent them*." The most obvious meaning of these words is, that when the Me-

thodists cannot satisfy themselves that they have acquired the graces of the Christian character, they feign the possession of them, and thus profess themselves to be what they know they are not. I am not careful to answer these revilings; and will only say, I trust there are no Wesleyans upon earth who will dare to speak of you as you have spoken of them, and of their pious dead. The people whom you accuse, it is hoped, will practically remember Him "who when he was reviled, reviled not again." "The Lord be judge between them and you." May I be allowed, without offence, to remind you that "there is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy;" and that it is his exclusive prerogative to "try the reins and the heart?" You may affect a knowledge of all that passes between God and the souls of his Methodist worshippers, in all parts of the world; but you have undertaken a task for which you are not qualified, and for which you have no authority. Of the outward actions of men you may lawfully form an opinion under the guidance of truth and charity; but to place yourself in the judgment-seat, and pronounce the religious affections of millions of Christian people to be artificial and assumed, is an act which I will not attempt to characterize. I

will only ask, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth." "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice," Ephesians iv, 31.

THE CHARGE OF ANTINOMIANISM.

ANTINOMIANISM, or opposition to the law of God, whether in theory or in practice, is justly considered one of the foulest heresies that ever afflicted the church, and dishonoured the sacred cause of religion. This heresy you charge upon the Wesleyan body, and profess to state its origin, as well as to trace its development and effects, among them. Its principle, you say, is to be found in their doctrine of salvation by faith; and to substantiate this allegation, as we have already seen, you invent and place to their account a doctrine on the subject which they never believed, and which they hold in righteous abhorrence. Now, sir, an invention of your own, placed to the account of the Wesleyans, is a proof, not that they are heretical, but that you are unjust. Though you should impute to them this invention a thousand times, they will be as innocent as ever; for there is not the slightest probability that they will ever

adopt it, while they retain any regard either for Scripture, or for common sense. Till you produce something further, therefore, I must maintain that the charge of heresy on the ground of doctrine entirely fails. As you adduce no proof, the defendants are entitled to a full acquittal.

But you have not confined yourself to doctrine. The practice of the Wesleyans you also declare to be in many respects lax, reprehensible, and, in fact, Antinomian. Your allegations on this score shall be fully met, and the question then submitted to those who take an interest in its decision.

You charge the Wesleyans with setting up a false test of acceptance with God, so that they judge of their spiritual state with little or no regard for religious and moral duties. Of their theological system you say, "By substituting another test of acceptance, it even takes people off from considering their practical duties toward God and man, and how they perform these, which our Lord gives us as the test of our love for him: 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' Instead of this, it sets them watching for certain feelings only." "The feelings, or the persuasion that a man is saved, are the test of his faith. He has no need then

to examine himself, except as to this one point; he may take it for granted that he is obedient, humble, meek, has all the 'fruits of the Spirit.' Since, then, life is a daily struggle against the powers of evil, since watchfulness is enjoined as essential, since habitual self-denial and bearing the cross is a test of our Lord's true disciples, how must such a system, in the end, be a delusion?" Here again I join issue with you, and fearlessly aver that the Wesleyans hold no such doctrine of faith as you have imputed to them; nor are they ever taught, as you have said, to disregard the duties of life in judging of their acceptance with God. They do indeed believe that there is a witness of the Holy Spirit, consequent upon faith in Christ, as St. Paul teaches, both in his Epistle to the Romans, and in that to the Galatians, and that this witness is direct and immediate; but it is never alone. It is always preceded by unfeigned repentance, in the exercise of which sin in every form is confessed, lamented, and renounced; and is immediately followed by purity of heart, and by obedience to all the will of God, so far as it is known and understood. Whatever you may assert, the Wesleyans acknowledge as a test of faith no "feelings" that are unconnected with holy tempers and an obedient life. In declar-

ing the contrary, you misrepresent their creed, and unjustly reproach their character. A man's state of trial does not cease when he obtains the forgiveness of his past sins, and is "accepted in the Beloved." To the end of life, says Mr. Wesley, "we are every moment either pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works; according to our inward tempers and outward behaviour." There is no subject on which he has expressed himself more distinctly and copiously than on this, as every candid reader of his Works will confess. One or two specimens shall be given. They will demonstrate the flagrant injustice of your censures.

He has an admirable sermon, which he entitles, "The Witness of our own Spirit," on the following text:—"This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world," 2 Cor. i, 12. In discoursing on these words he says, "By 'the grace of God' is sometimes to be understood that free love, that unmerited mercy, by which I a sinner, through the merits of Christ, am now reconciled to God. But in this place it rather means that power of God the Holy Ghost, which 'worketh in us both to will and to do of

his good pleasure.' As soon as ever the grace of God in the former sense, his pardoning love, is manifested to our souls, the grace of God in the latter sense, the power of his Spirit, takes place therein. And now we can perform, through God, what to man was impossible. Now we can order our conversation aright. We can do all things in the light and power of that love, through which Christ strengtheneth us. We now have the testimony of our conscience, which we could never have by fleshly wisdom, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have our conversation in the world.

“ This is properly the ground of a Christian's joy. We may now, therefore, readily conceive how he that hath this testimony in himself rejoiceth evermore. ‘ My soul,’ may he say, ‘ doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour.’ I rejoice in him who, of his own unmerited love, of his own free and tender mercy, hath called me into this state of salvation, wherein, through his power, I now stand. I rejoice, because his Spirit beareth witness to my spirit, that I am bought with the blood of the Lamb ; and that, believing in him, I am a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. I rejoice, because the sense of God's love to me

hath, by the same Spirit, wrought in me to love him, and to love for his sake every child of man, every soul that he hath made. I rejoice, because he gives me to feel in myself the mind that was in Christ:—*simplicity*, a single eye to him in every motion of my heart; power always to fix the loving eye of my soul on Him who loved me, and gave himself for me; to aim at him alone, at his glorious will, in all I think, or speak, or do:—*purity*, desiring nothing more but God; crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts; setting my affections on things above, not on things of the earth:—*holiness*, a recovery of the image of God, a renewal of soul after his likeness:—and *godly sincerity*, directing all my words and works, so as to conduce to his glory. In this I likewise rejoice; yea, and will rejoice, because my conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost, by the light he continually pours in upon it, that I walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called; that I abstain from all appearance of evil, fleeing from sin as from the face of a serpent; that, as I have opportunity, I do all possible good, in every kind, to all men; that I follow my Lord in all my steps, and do what is acceptable in his sight. I rejoice, because I both see and feel, through the inspiration of God's Holy

Spirit, that all my works are wrought in him, yea, and that it is he who worketh all my works in me. I rejoice in seeing through the light of God, which shines in my heart, that I have power to walk in his ways; and that, through his grace, I turn not therefrom, to the right hand or to the left.

“Such is the ground and the nature of that joy whereby an adult Christian rejoiceth evermore. And from all this we may easily infer, first, that it is not a *natural joy*. It does not arise from any natural cause: not from any sudden flow of spirits. This may give a transient start of joy; but the Christian rejoiceth always. It cannot be owing to bodily health or ease, to strength and soundness of constitution; for it is equally strong in sickness and pain, yea, perhaps far stronger than before. Many Christians have never experienced any joy, to be compared with that which then filled their soul, when the body was well nigh worn out with pain, or consumed away with pining sickness. Least of all can it be ascribed to outward prosperity, to the favour of men, or plenty of worldly goods; for then chiefly, when their faith has been tried as with fire, by all manner of outward afflictions, have the children of God rejoiced in him whom unseen they loved,

even with joy unspeakable. And never, surely, did men rejoice like those who were used as the filth and offscouring of the world; who wandered to and fro, being in want of all things; in hunger, in cold, in nakedness; who had trials, not only of cruel mockings, but moreover of bonds and imprisonments; yea, who, at last, counted not their lives dear unto themselves, so they might finish their course with joy.

“We may, secondly, infer that the joy of a Christian does not arise from any blindness of conscience, from his not being able to discern good from evil. So far from it, that he was an utter stranger to this joy, till the eyes of his understanding were opened; that he knew it not, until he had spiritual senses, fitted to discern spiritual good and evil. And now the eye of his soul waxeth not dim. He was never so sharp-sighted before. He has so quick a perception of the smallest things, as is quite amazing to the natural man. As a mote is visible in the sunbeam, so to him who is walking in the light, in the beams of the uncreated Sun, every mote of sin is visible. Nor does he close the eyes of his conscience any more. That sleep is departed from him. His soul is always broad awake: no more slumber, or folding of the hands to rest! He is always standing on the

tower, and hearkening what his Lord will say concerning him; and always rejoicing in this very thing, in seeing Him that is invisible.

“Neither does the joy of a Christian arise, thirdly, from any dulness or callousness of conscience. A kind of joy, it is true, may arise from this, in those whose foolish hearts are darkened; whose heart is callous, unfeeling, dull of sense, and consequently without spiritual understanding. Because of their senseless, unfeeling hearts, they may rejoice even in committing sin; and this they may probably call *liberty!* which is indeed mere drunkenness of soul, a fatal numbness of spirit, the stupid insensibility of a seared conscience. On the contrary, a Christian has the most exquisite sensibility, such as he could not have conceived before. He never had such a tenderness of conscience as he has had since the love of God has reigned in his heart. And this also is his glory and joy, that God hath heard his daily prayer,—

‘O that my tender soul might fly
The first abhorr’d approach of ill;
Quick as the apple of an eye,
The slightest touch of sin to feel!’

“Christian joy is joy in obedience; joy in loving God, and keeping his commandments:

and yet not in keeping them as if we were thereby to fulfil the terms of the covenant of works ; as if by any works of ours we were to procure pardon and acceptance with God. Not so ; we are already pardoned and accepted through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Not as if we were by our own obedience to procure life, life from the death of sin : this also we have already through the grace of God. Us hath he quickened, who were dead in sins ; and now we are alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. But we rejoice in walking according to the covenant of grace, in holy love and happy obedience. We rejoice in knowing that, being justified through his grace, we have not received the grace of God in vain ; that God having freely (not for the sake of our willing or running, but through the blood of the Lamb) reconciled us to himself, we run, in the strength which he hath given us, the way of his commandments. He hath girded us with strength unto the war, and we gladly ‘fight the good fight of faith.’ ”*

You tell your readers that the Wesleyan doctrine supersedes the necessity of watchfulness, striving against sin, self-denial, and taking up the cross. What think you then of the fol-

* Wesley's Works, vol. i, pp. 105-107.

lowing remarks on these subjects, extracted from Mr. Wesley's sermon on "Self-denial?" His voluminous Works abound with passages of a similar kind. "The denying ourselves, and the taking up our cross, in the full extent of the expression, is not a thing of small concern. It is not expedient only, as are some of the circumstantials of religion; but it is absolutely, indispensably necessary, either to our becoming or continuing His disciples. It is absolutely necessary, in the very nature of the thing, to our coming after him, and following him; in-somuch that, as far as we do not practise it, we are not his disciples. If we do not continually deny ourselves, we do not learn of him, but of other masters. If we do not take up our cross daily, we do not come after him, but after the world, or the prince of the world, or our own fleshly mind. If we are not walking in the way of the cross, we are not following him; we are not treading in his steps; but going back from, or at least wide of him."

"But what is self-denial? Wherein are we to deny ourselves? and whence does the necessity of it arise? I answer, The will of God is the supreme unalterable rule of every intelligent creature; equally binding on every angel in heaven, and every man upon earth. Nor can

it be otherwise : this is the natural, necessary result of the relation between creatures and their Creator. But if the will of God be our rule of action in every thing, great and small, it follows, by undeniable consequence, that we are not to do our own will in any thing. Here, therefore, we see at once the nature with the ground and reason of self-denial. We see the nature of self-denial: it is the denying or refusing to follow our own will, from a conviction that the will of God is the only rule of action to us. And we see the reason thereof, because we are creatures ; because ‘it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves.’

“ This reason for self-denial must hold, even with regard to the angels of God in heaven ; and with regard to man, innocent and holy as he came out of the hands of his Creator. But a further reason for it arises from the condition wherein all men are since the fall. We are all now ‘shapen in wickedness, and in sin did our mother conceive us.’ Our nature is altogether corrupt, in every power and faculty. And our will, depraved equally with the rest, is wholly bent to indulge our natural corruption. On the other hand, it is the will of God that we resist and counteract that corruption, not at some times or in some things only, but at all times

and in all things. Here, therefore, is a further ground for constant and universal self-denial."

"It is undoubtedly pleasing, for the time, to follow our own will, by indulging, in any instance that offers, the corruption of our nature. But by following it in any thing, we so far strengthen the perverseness of our will; and by indulging it, we continually increase the corruption of our nature. So, by the food which is agreeable to the palate, we often increase a bodily disease. It gratifies the taste, but it inflames the disorder. It brings pleasure, but it also brings death.

"And every one that would follow Christ, that would be his real disciple, must not only deny himself, but take up his cross also. A cross is any thing contrary to our will, any thing displeasing to our nature. So that taking up our cross goes a little further than denying ourselves: it rises a little higher, and is a more difficult task to flesh and blood: it being more easy to forego pleasure than to endure pain.

"Now, in running the race that is set before us, according to the will of God, there is often a cross lying in the way; that is, something which is not only not joyous, but grievous; something which is contrary to our will, which is displeasing to our nature. What then is to be

done? The choice is plain. Either we must take up our cross, or we must turn aside from the way of God, 'from the holy commandment delivered to us;' if we do not stop altogether, or turn back to everlasting perdition!

"In order to the healing of that corruption, that evil disease, which every man brings with him into the world, it is often needful to pluck out, as it were, a right eye, to cut off a right hand: so painful is either the thing itself which must be done, or the only means of doing it; the parting, suppose, with a foolish desire, with an inordinate affection; or a separation from the object of it, without which it can never be extinguished. In the former kind, the tearing away such a desire or affection, when it is deeply rooted in the soul, is often like the piercing of a sword, yea, like the 'dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow.' The Lord then sits upon the soul as a refiner's fire, to burn up all the dross thereof. And this is a cross indeed; it is essentially painful; it must be so in the very nature of the thing. The soul cannot be thus torn asunder, it cannot pass through the fire without pain."

"See that you apply this, every one of you, to your own soul. Meditate upon it when you are in secret. Ponder it in your heart! Take

care not only to understand it thoroughly, but to remember it to your lives' end! Cry unto the Strong for strength, that you may no sooner understand, than enter upon the practice of it! Delay not the time, but practise it immediately, from this very hour! Practise it universally, on every one of the thousand occasions which occur in all circumstances of life! Practise it daily, without intermission, from the hour you first set your hand to the plough, and enduring therein to the end, till your spirit returns to God!"*

The subject is now before the reader; and an appeal is made to the understanding and conscience of every competent judge, whether your charge is not absolutely unfounded, and therefore unjust. "Wesleyanism," you say, gives such "a test of acceptance" as "takes people off from considering their practical duties toward God and man." Mr. Wesley states that, although "acceptance" is, in the first instance, obtained by faith only; yet this faith is invariably followed both by inward and outward holiness; and that no man, who lives in the commission of any known sin, or in the neglect of any known duty, is either accepted of God, or has any Scriptural "test" or "assurance" of

* Wesley's Works, vol. i, pp. 428, 429, 433.

acceptance. If he imagine that he has, he only deceives his own soul. Justifying faith does not find men holy, but it makes them so, by securing to them the gift of the Holy Spirit, in his fulness of comforting and regenerating power; and hence there is no true faith but that which is connected with a sincere and practical hatred to all sin, and with obedience to the commands of God. Here then is another direct and tangible contradiction between the doctrine of Mr. Wesley, as stated by himself, and your report concerning it. The conclusion is inevitable: you have again said the thing that is not.

It is true, the gospel unfolds the provision which the God of all grace has made for the recovery of backsliders, who have lost that peace of conscience which they once enjoyed; so that their forfeited happiness may be recovered. But what then? This doctrine, as held by the Wesleyan body, affords no encouragement to any laxity of morals, or in religious duty, as you more than insinuate. It sets the offenders not upon "watching for certain feelings," as you are pleased to say, but solemnly charges them to "remember from whence they have fallen;" and then to "repent, and do the first works;" and never to dream of comfort in

a state of lukewarmness and sin. If they could recover their forfeited peace in the Antinomian manner that you describe, (which we absolutely deny,) what have they gained? According to the Wesleyan doctrine, they could not enjoy that peace a single hour in the neglect of obedience to the commandments of God. Every man that is living in wilful disobedience to the divine will, let him profess what he may, Wesleyanism declares, on the authority of Holy Scripture, to be under the wrath of God, and in the way to perdition. As there is no joy in the absence of obedience, so there is no safety when any precept of God is disregarded.

You exclaim, with great apparent seriousness: "Since, then, life is a daily struggle against the powers of evil, since watchfulness is enjoined as essential, since habitual self-denial and bearing the cross is a test of our Lord's true disciples, how must such a system" as that of Wesleyanism, "in the end, be a delusion!" No, sir, after what we have just seen of Mr. Wesley's sentiments, this conclusion cannot be admitted. Justice, truth, and honour, put the matter thus:—"Since life is a daily struggle against the powers of evil, since watchfulness is enjoined as assential, since habitual self-denial and bearing the cross is a test of

our Lord's true disciples,"—and since no man ever enforced these duties with greater earnestness, consistency, and success than John Wesley,—and since the people who bear his name have not departed a hair's breadth from the tenets which he taught them from God's own inspired word,—how lamentably must the regius professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford have forgotten the respect which was due to his own character, as well as to the dead and the living, when he told the archbishop of Canterbury, and the people of England, that the venerable John Wesley and his people virtually set aside these sacred duties of Christianity!

But whether the Wesleyans are Antinomians or not, in respect of "daily struggling against evil," "watchfulness," "self-denial," and "bearing the cross," you declare that they are so with respect to the Christian sacraments. You say, "The means of grace are with them, not the sacraments, but the class-meeting, bands, love-feasts;" and that in this matter they act in accordance with their principles; for the doctrine which they have received "substitutes practically the feelings and experiences for repentance, good works, and the sacraments." These are strong words, and imply that the Wesleyans have altogether abandoned baptism

and the Lord's supper. A stranger, who knew nothing of them but what he learned from your pamphlet, would infer that they have discarded the sacraments as much as the Quakers have done. Whether you intended to make this impression, or only meant that the Wesleyans are generally indifferent to these ordinances of Christ, I know not; but this statement, when interpreted in the most favourable sense, is notoriously at variance with fact.

Far be it from me to say, that all the members of the Wesleyan societies have always shown a due regard for the Christian sacraments, or that they even do so at this day. Where indeed can we find a large body of Christian people, however pious the greater part of them may be, of whom this can be affirmed? One of the churches that were planted by apostolic labour, and generally governed by apostolic men, was subjected to severe official rebuke for the manner in which they acted with respect to the supper of the Lord. But this I will maintain, in opposition to your unjust and sweeping censures, that the Wesleyans, as a body, have all regarded the sacraments as "means of grace," and as universally binding upon the church till the end of time; and that many of the instances of irregular

attendance upon the holy communion, which have occurred among them, have been rather the misfortune than the fault of the parties concerned. An honest reference to the history of the Wesleyans, with respect to this subject, will set the matter in a just light.

Soon after the first Methodist societies were formed, the bishop of Bristol told Mr. Wesley, that he had heard with regret that he and his brother administered the Lord's supper to their people separately. Mr. Wesley answered, that they had never done this, and he believed they never should. In the course of a few months, however, he and his brother were compelled to submit to that which had formed no part of their previous design. The clergy in Bristol entered into a general agreement to refuse the Lord's supper to the two Wesleys, and to the people connected with them. One principal reason assigned for this resolution was, that the amount of clerical labour was very inconveniently increased by the numerous communicants whom the indefatigable brothers sent to the different churches. Accordingly, when Mr. Charles Wesley, accompanied by several converted colliers, offered himself at the sacramental table in one of the Bristol churches on the morning of the Lord's day,

they were all refused the memorials of their Saviour's death, and peremptorily commanded to leave the place. The Methodist clergyman, who appeared in his gown, mildly remonstrated; but the officiating minister called upon the authorities present, to clear the sacred edifice of these unwelcome guests, who had presented themselves at the holy feast. Under these circumstances, Mr. Charles Wesley took these humble and despised men to a room which had been built in Kingswood for the education of the colliers' children, and there administered to them the supper of the Lord. This was the origin of separate communion among the Methodists.

The clergy in Bristol were not the only men who repelled the Methodists from the Lord's table. Their brethren in Leeds, Wakefield, Derbyshire, and some other places, did the same; so that their Methodist parishioners were greatly distressed. One of them, writing from Chinley, to the Rev. Charles Wesley, says, under date of 1745, "The ministers of the Church persecute with all their strength. The society are some miles from the church. They have a desire to know whether you or your brother, once or twice in a year, would not deliver them the sacrament. As to my own soul, I am weakened much for want of partaking of

the ordinance ; and the minister of Chapel-en-le-Frith flatly denies me the sacrament ; and has ordered me and some others to be put out of the church. Dear sir, consider these things well, and let me have your answer speedily.”* An urgent and affecting application like this, (and it was only one among many,) viewed in connection with what occurred in Bristol and Kingswood, is a decisive refutation of your statement, that these Christian people “substituted” their own “feelings” for the “sacraments,” and disregarded them as being no “means of grace.”

After the holy communion had been thus introduced into Kingswood, it was administered in the Methodist chapels in Bristol and in London, and was continued there as long as the brothers lived. Mr. Charles Wesley was generally resident in one or the other of these cities from the year 1753 till 1788, when he died ; and he was accustomed to administer the Lord’s supper weekly. He composed a volume of hymns for sacramental occasions, which were so acceptable to the societies, that they passed through several editions during his life. It is doubtful whether any congregation of Christians could be mentioned, who have frequented the

* Life of Rev. Charles Wesley, p. 331.

Lord's table with greater regularity and more sincere devotion, than the people who attended the ministrations of this gifted man. While the Wesleyan societies in London and Bristol were thus favoured, their brethren in other places were mostly exhorted to receive the Lord's supper in their several parish churches. But in some places the clergy were immoral in their lives ; in others they were intolerant, preached against their Wesleyan parishioners, and even refused to give them the holy communion. Hence great uneasiness often arose. The societies did not, as you say, deny that the sacraments are "means of grace ;" but they earnestly requested the administration of them by their own preachers, who had been the instruments of their conversion, and to whose pastoral oversight they willingly submitted. This request Mr. Wesley refused, from a desire to preserve them in union with the established Church ; but he often refused, as he confesses, with a doubting conscience ; for while he could himself receive the Lord's supper at the hands of an ungodly man, he confessed his inability to answer the reasons of his spiritual children, who declared that they could not. His people generally did not "substitute their own feelings for the sacraments," but desired to receive them at

the hands of spiritual men, with whom they could have sanctifying fellowship in these the most sacred of all their acts of devotion. This desire was sometimes irrepressible, and formed one of the greatest difficulties that Mr. Wesley met with in the regulation of his people. About the middle of the last century, nearly the whole of the important society in Leeds separated themselves from him, and formed themselves into an independent church, principally on this account. Many of the Methodists in Halifax, and in several other places, soon after followed their example:—such was the earnestness of their desire to receive the sacraments with devotion and regularity.*

While Mr. John Wesley lived, some of the members of his societies received the Lord's supper in their respective churches, especially where the ministers were tolerant and friendly; not a few of them constantly travelled several miles to receive it at the hands of clergymen who were known to be pious, and who preached the truth with faithfulness and zeal: others received it in dissenting chapels: and others again seldom or never received it, especially where the clergy were hostile, or immoral, or

* These cases are largely detailed in the Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley.

refused to administer it to them. Mr. Wesley saw that this state of things could not be permanently maintained ; and that it was, in fact, undesirable : for many of his spiritual children had left him on this account, and had become strict dissenters. He therefore ordained several of his preachers for the purpose of administering the sacraments ; directing them, however, to depart from the order of the established Church as little as possible ; yet maintaining a due regard for the spiritual interests of the people. After his death, the call for the sacraments in the chapels became so loud and urgent, that the conference was necessitated to consent to the administration : a case for which Mr. Wesley had actually made provision. It may convey to many persons some idea of the feeling which then existed, when they are told that the document which the conference put forth, conceding the boon which many of the societies had long desired, was entitled, "THE PLAN OF PACIFICATION." It is true, the sacraments were not the only boon which was then conceded ; but in the general estimation they were viewed, in connection with divine service in the forenoon of the Lord's day, as by far the most important benefit that was then demanded.

Now, sir, these are undeniable historic facts, which no ingenuity can disprove; and the bearing of them upon our present argument cannot be evaded. They demonstrate the injustice of your charge. These are not the acts of men who "substitute their own feelings for the sacraments," and who refuse to regard these sacred ordinances of Christ as "means of grace." Those of the Wesleyans who could receive the Lord's supper in their own chapels, from the beginning thankfully and devoutly availed themselves of the privilege; and those societies to whom this was denied were generally restless and uneasy till it was conceded; for they felt that to "eat of that bread and drink of that cup" was the command of their dying Lord, which it was at once their duty and advantage to obey. And such are the convictions of the great body of the Wesleyans at the present time. They faithfully attend the sacraments, in their own chapels, and that to their comfort and edification. Not a few of the societies are in this respect examples of godly seriousness and order. I have witnessed the administration of the Lord's supper in many churches, and in some dissenting chapels; but have never seen greater decorum at this sacred ordinance, nor more satisfactory indications of

devout feeling, than in the great majority of Wesleyan congregations. Instances of inattention and indifference among them indeed there may be ; but they are met by affectionate warning and admonition. Nor is it at all surprising that cases of this kind should occur, considering the profligacy and total ignorance of divine things in which Methodism found multitudes of the people whom it has succeeded in turning from the error of their way. Think of the mental state of a man who has lived to be thirty or forty years of age, (yet immortal and redeemed !) and has never been either taught to read, or accustomed to attend divine worship. In this state Methodism found immense masses of the people of England ; and what wonder is it if some of them, even when brought under religious influence and training, fail at once to come up to such a "ripeness" in knowledge and grace, that there shall not be found among them either error or fault ? They are rather to be patiently instructed, encouraged, and urged forward in the ways of God, than scornfully reproached, and pointed at, as persons who are destitute of all spiritual and moral good. I have generally ascertained, on examination, that most of the people of this class, who absent themselves from the table of the

Lord, are actuated by a misleading fear lest they should eat and drink "unworthily," and so as to expose themselves to "damnation."

But you have stated a case which you say came under your own notice, and which you seem to think confirms your allegations against the Methodists generally. Your words are, "The writer has known such a meeting" ("class-meeting, bands, love-feasts") "preferred by a body of Wesleyans to the holy communion, where this could not have been celebrated for nearly a year in a language which they understood, and there was no prospect of its being again for some time administered. 'We relate our feelings' was the uniform answer to his inquiry as to the subject of their class meetings." Allow me to say, that the matter may have been exactly as you state, and yet your charge against the Wesleyans generally, and even against the people whom you have here mentioned, is far from being substantiated. They may have acted as you say they did, and yet have been deeply impressed with the sacredness of the Lord's supper, and their own obligations to attend it. There are several other points connected with your narrative which must be explained before we can adopt your conclusion. Was the Lord's supper,

which these people declined to attend, administered in their own place of worship or in the church? If in the church, was the officiating minister a man of correct morals? Was he of a tolerant, meek, and benevolent spirit? or was he in the habit of preaching against them, imputing to them tenets which not one of them believed, and practices which they held in righteous detestation? Had he refused the ordinary rites of burial to their dead, so as to compel them either to read the funeral service in the public street, or to seek a resting-place for their fathers and mothers, or their beloved children, wherever they could find one? Had he secured the dismissal of any of them from the situations which they held, and the duties of which they discharged with acknowledged fidelity, because they were members of the Wesleyan society? I could relate to you some sad instances of this kind, but would rather that the very remembrance of them should be forever obliterated. If in all these respects his own conduct was unexceptionable, and becoming a minister of Christ, what was that of the other communicants? Were none of them sabbath-breakers, profane swearers, or intemperate persons? These are not trifling or capitious questions; for an apostle has said, "If

any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat," 1 Cor. v, 11. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us," 2 Thess. iii, 6. These Wesleyans might have had conscientious scruples against uniting with ungodly men in the very sacred act of receiving the appointed symbols of redeeming mercy; or their spirits may have been chafed by harsh treatment which they had not merited.

There is something really mysterious in your account. You say that the Lord's supper "could not have been celebrated for nearly a year in a language which" these people "understood." Do you mean that this sacrament had not been administered in the church for twelve months? If so, it would seem that the Wesleyans are not the only people that are indifferent to this sacred ordinance. Pray what had the pastor and his flock during this time "substituted" for this very important "means of grace?" Had they substituted religious "feeling," or something that was less commendable?

But why "could not" these Methodists have received the Lord's supper in less than "a year?" I have known "a body of Wesleyans," who were accustomed to hard labour during the week, and to whom the rest of the sabbath was indeed a relief and a blessing, cheerfully walk six or eight miles on that day to receive the supper of the Lord at the hands of a pious clergyman. For any thing that you have shown to the contrary, the persons whom you have censured might have done the same many times in the course of that "year," although unknown to you, or they might have received it in one of their own chapels.

There is another part of your account which greatly needs explanation. You hint at the administration of the Lord's supper "in a language" which these Wesleyans did not "understand." What is the "unknown tongue" here referred to? Surely you do not mean that the Wesleyans might attend the Latin service of the Church of Rome, and receive at the hands of her priesthood what they administer as the supper of the Lord! My hope is perfect, that there is not a Wesleyan in England who would receive the consecrated wafer as the body, soul, and divinity of the Son of God, and, after worshipping it as such, eat it; and call this the

communion of the body and blood of Christ : thus committing the double sin of idolatry, and of omitting the "cup of blessing," while the Lord himself says, "Drink ye all of it." "This is not to eat the Lord's supper."

The sum of the matter is this : Your declaration, that the Wesleyan Methodists "substitute feelings for the sacraments," and that in their estimation "the sacraments are not means of grace," is notoriously at variance with fact. The conduct of the particular "body of Wesleyans" whom you mention may have been seriously reprehensible ; or it may not. In the absence of full information, no sentence can be justly pronounced either way.

Before we leave this subject I will take the liberty of observing, that, with respect to the sacraments, there is danger both on the right hand and on the left. It is a sin, a grievous sin, to neglect these ordinances of Christ, to think lightly of them, or to celebrate them with formality, indifference, and levity ; and it is no less a sin to substitute them for "the inward and spiritual grace" of which they are in themselves only the "outward and visible signs." In consequence of the corruption of human nature through the fall, the Lord Jesus has declared, in terms the most express and solemn,

the absolute and universal necessity of a great moral change in every man. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," John iii, 3, 5. From the manner in which this change is spoken of in other parts of the New Testament, we learn that it consists in the recovery of fallen man to personal holiness, so that he "doeth righteousness," "overcometh the world," and "doth not commit sin," 1 John ii, 29; v, 4, 5; iii, 9. The author of this momentous change is the Spirit of God; and hence those who are the subjects of it are said to be "born of the Spirit," and "born from above."

Our blessed Saviour has also said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John vi, 53, 54. In these deep and expressive words, it has been often shown, he speaks not of the holy supper, which was not instituted when this discourse was delivered; but of his death, as a sacrifice for sin, and of faith in that sacrifice,

as the only means of life and salvation to fallen men.

There are parties who declare that the new birth is necessarily connected with baptism, when rightly administered; and who assert, that no new birth is ever to be expected but in that ordinance. The same parties speak of the Lord's supper as a "sacrifice;" of the administrator, as a sacrificing "priest;" and describe him as actually giving the body and blood of Christ to the communicants: so that, irrespective of the state of their own minds, and whether they have faith or not, they really eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ in receiving the consecrated elements. The fact, however, is, that millions of baptized persons are living in open sin, presenting not one single mark of the new birth, as specified in holy Scripture, any more than a Jew, a Mohammedan, or a heathen; and the same remark will apply to multitudes who have often received the Lord's supper. They are proud, revengeful, worldly, intemperate, unjust, bearing no resemblance to the Lord Jesus, either in their spirit or general conduct. Yet these people are taught, that because they have been baptized, they are born again; and because they have taken the sacramental

bread and wine, after due consecration, they have eaten the body and drunk the blood of Christ ; so that in point of fact, they "have eternal life, and shall be raised up at the last day." By such an abuse of the sacraments men are deceived to their everlasting ruin. Baptism is put in the place of the life-giving and sanctifying Spirit of God ; and the Lord's supper in the place of the Lord himself : so that men who are impenitent, unbelieving, unholy, imagine themselves to be the children of God, and heirs of heaven, till they lift up their eyes in unexpected misery, and find that misery to be endless and irretrievable. The sacraments, when rightly used, are indeed "means of grace ;" but they are not necessarily connected with salvation. Simon Magus was baptized, yet almost immediately after, an apostle declared him to be "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity," and solemnly charged him to "repent of his wickedness," Acts viii, 13, 22, 23. Many an infidel has received the Lord's supper ; yet the Lord has absolutely declared, "He that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi, 16. "Be not deceived : neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners,

shall inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi, 9, 10. No exception is made in behalf of the self-deceivers who have been baptized, and have received the Lord's supper, and yet practise these evils: and their teachers, who thus mislead them, incur the most fearful responsibility. Having encouraged their disciples to rest in the form of godliness, without its power, they will, in the great day of the Lord, be answerable for the souls that have for ever perished through this antichristian doctrine. The sacraments are eminently "means of grace" when used according to the divine will; but to substitute them for repentance, faith, and holiness, is one of the most destructive errors that was ever introduced into the church of God. It is a subversion of the whole gospel of Christ; and is the more fatally misleading because it affects to honour Christ's ordinances.

But you accuse the Wesleyan body of Antinomianism, not merely on account of their alleged indifference to the sacraments; but also on the score of their religious and moral conduct, which you declare to be formed according to a false rule. Your words are,—“The Wesleyan standard of morals and holiness is, of necessity, low. The state of their feelings, not God's commandments, is the standard whereby they

try themselves." If it be a fact, that they take their own "feelings" as the "standard" of duty, their "standard" must be "low" indeed. But this is not true. The man who makes such an assertion knows them not; if he believes his own statement. It is acknowledged, that neither with respect to "morals" nor "holiness" are the Wesleyans what they ought to be, considering the high religious advantages which they enjoy, in regard of doctrine, discipline, and spiritual helps. Their "morals," however, so far as general society is concerned, are no secret. They are known to the magistracy, they are known to the people, of England. The Wesleyan societies have, from the beginning, mostly consisted of the labouring poor; and their conduct has been open to the public inspection for more than a century. During this period many seasons of political agitation, strife, and public pressure have occurred; riots have taken place; life, property, the national institutions, have all been in peril. Who have been the leaders and most active agents in these scenes of disorder and mischief? and who have been among the quiet in the land? Who are the criminals that find employment for the police, for the magistrates and judges? Who are the men that are subjected to the various

forms of prison discipline, sent to penal settlements, or die by the hand of public justice? The criminal code of England, till a late period, was sufficiently sanguinary, and executions were frequent. Pray, sir, how many Wesleyans, who were really recognised as such, have you known among these unhappy victims of the law? And if the sufferers were not Wesleyans, who were they? I wish you could be prevailed upon to give an explicit answer to these questions.

Before the Wesleys entered upon their itinerant labours, Cornwall was one of the most ungodly and immoral counties in England. "Wesleyanism" has taken a deeper hold upon the people generally, in the mining districts of that county, and exerts a wider influence upon them, than upon the population in any other part of the kingdom. In Cornwall, at this time, there is less crime than in any other English county, considering the number of inhabitants. Is this a proof that "Wesleyanism" is immoral in its tendency? and that it is "developing itself" in a form even "worse than open Antinomianism?" Are the people of Cornwall restrained from evil by their "feelings" only, in utter disregard of "God's commandments?" Are they not rather imbued with his fear, and thus induced to stand in awe of his authority? Excuse

me, sir, if I request an answer also to these inquiries.

But whatever may be the public conduct of the Wesleyans, and however successful they may be in keeping themselves out of the hands of constables, and other officers of justice still more to be dreaded, you give us to understand that their "private" "morals" are bad enough. Here is the proof. "In more private cases," you say, "persons of no very strict lives have been able to profess that they have been without a sinful thought for weeks together; others, for even twenty years." Now, sir, admitting that what you here state really occurred, what does it prove; except that some persons, connected with the Wesleyans,—but whether young or old, sane or insane, does not appear,—"have been able" to say a very foolish thing? But, to tell you the truth, I do not believe a word of this statement. I know something of the people whom you are so anxious to depreciate; but I never heard any one of them give utterance to such a sentiment; and I think that those who give implicit credit to the tale must have a considerable appetite for idle gossip. I confess I can scarcely believe my own senses, when I see such pitiful tattle gravely published by a learned professor of the University of Ox-

ford, and addressed to the highest ecclesiastical personage in the land! Surely you thought the archbishop of Canterbury greatly needed something to occupy his attention, when you laid this silly story before him in a printed form! However, if you think the matter sufficiently important, you can produce the names and residences of the parties; and I pledge myself that the subject shall then have all the attention that it really deserves.

You go on to state, that "persons esteemed sober-minded among them have held, that by one act of faith a person may become perfectly sanctified; and that it is the privilege of believers, whenever they choose, to claim it." I can assure you, sir, that, whatever you may suspect to the contrary, the Wesleyans would not deem any man very "sober-minded," nor well informed, who should express himself on a subject of this nature in a manner so uncouth and indefinite. What is it to be "perfectly sanctified?" What is meant by "one act of faith?" What is it that believers have the "privilege to claim whenever they choose?" The grammatical construction of the sentence would suggest, that it is the "one act of faith;" but for a person to "claim" an "act," when that "act" is to be his own, is a mode of expression that would

not be expected from "persons esteemed sober-minded." Should any reader wish to know what the Wesleyans really believe on the subject of personal sanctification, he will find the information which he seeks in Mr. Wesley's "Plain Account of Christian Perfection;" and in Mr. Fletcher's "Essay on the Twin Doctrines of Christian Imperfection and a Death Purgatory." Among other excellences, these works have the merit of being intelligible. The writers studied not to darken, to misrepresent, to perplex and confound the reader; but endeavoured, in the fear of God, to make what they believed to be the truth plain and clear, and then to apply it to the understanding and conscience of every one.

But your main proof of the practical Antinomianism of the Wesleyan body is deduced from the case of Dr. Coke, and is thus stated: "It has been observed how very eminent among them have been individuals known in no ordinary degree to be ambitious and worldly. One need but refer to the case of the individual to whom Wesley deputed the organization of their missions. He was known to be ambitious, affecting high titles of honour, to which he had no claim; was consecrated to the episcopal office, and took its highest spiritual titles:

since his death, it has been discovered that he made application for a bishopric in the Church, being ready on such terms to abandon his Wesleyanism. All this is known: yet he is not disowned, but held in high repute as before." The facts of this case shall be honestly stated, and then the public shall judge between you and the object of your vituperation.

Dr. Coke was a Welshman by birth. He was the only child of his parents, from whom he inherited an ample fortune. Having been educated for the Christian ministry in the University of Oxford, and taken his degree there, he obtained episcopal ordination, and the curacy of South Petherton, in Somersetshire; where he was greatly persecuted on account of his zeal, and energetic endeavours to suppress the reigning vices of the place. While yet comparatively young, he formed an acquaintance with Mr. Wesley, and soon after connected himself with that apostolic minister as a fellow-labourer; his scholarship and intelligence, the cheerful buoyancy of his spirit, his fidelity and godly ardour, with his untiring activity and perseverance, endearing him to that venerable man, who greatly needed such an assistant. When the United States of America had gained their independence, and most of the

English clergy had left that country, Mr. Wesley consented to give to his societies there the form and character of a regular church, having all the ordinances of Christianity; and he resolved that its government and order should be episcopal. He did not think that episcopacy was expressly instituted by God, nor that it is binding upon the church everywhere; but he thought that it had many advantages, was venerable for its antiquity, and well adapted to the state of his societies in America, who were scattered over a vast extent of country. He appointed Dr. Coke to the office of a bishop; instructed him to invest Mr. Asbury, who had been in America for several years, with the same office; and then directed, that they should unitedly ordain the American preachers generally to the duties of the Christian ministry. This charge the doctor fulfilled, as it appears, to Mr. Wesley's entire satisfaction; except that he and Mr. Asbury, with the concurrence of the preachers over whom they were to preside, took the name of bishops; the less-imposing title of "superintendents" being assigned to them by the venerable man under whose direction they acted.

Having accomplished his difficult task in the United States, the doctor returned to England,

which he soon after left, with a band of missionaries, all of whom, except one, he intended to fix in the most necessitous and promising places of British North America; but they were driven by contrary winds to the West Indies, where they found providential openings for missionary labour. The doctor visited various islands, and left his self-denying companions as the religious instructors of the enslaved negroes. This was in the year 1786; and from this period, to the end of his life, his energies were chiefly directed to the support and extension of the West India mission, thus auspiciously begun.

The negro slaves were then perhaps, without exception, the most oppressed and degraded part of the human race. Many of them had been torn from their families and homes on their native continent, and after enduring the indescribable miseries of "the middle passage," were subjected to a slavery worse than death. The tenderest feelings of their nature were, as a matter of course, often violated by the hopeless separation of husbands and wives, parents and children; not excepting even those of a tender age. Men and women were subjected to hard labour in the fields, and under a burning sun; their required task of duty was extorted

from them by the inhuman application of the cart-whip ; and often for slight offences, even inadvertencies, their flesh was mercilessly torn and lacerated by the same instrument of torture. The greater part of these friendless outcasts were left to faint and die under their complicated wrongs without either sympathy or hope.

To alleviate the sufferings of these hapless people, by the consolations of religion, and to prepare them for a world of blessedness, where there is no more curse, and where the voice of the oppressor is unheard, was the leading business of Dr. Coke's life. He travelled through Great Britain and Ireland, selecting missionaries, making congregational collections for their support, waiting personally upon opulent families and individuals to whom he could gain access for the same purpose, and creating everywhere an interest in behalf of an oppressed people, who received the gospel with grateful joy. The missionaries themselves were often treated with personal violence, and even imprisoned ; their places of worship were closed ; and the negro congregations deprived of the word and sacraments of Christ, and forbidden even to meet for religious purposes. In all these cases Dr. Coke was their faithful and

ever-active friend; bringing the persecuting acts of the local authorities before his majesty's government at home; and often obtaining the royal interference for the protection of the oppressed. Notwithstanding his very gentlemanly manners, and the obvious disinterestedness of his labours, he received many an insult in seeking pecuniary aid for the mission to the negroes; and in one instance, at least, a fierce dog was set upon him by a person on whom he had called, and whom he had mistakingly supposed to be charitable and humane. Yet his was a firmness of purpose which no form of opposition could dishearten. Nothing could quench the ardour of his zeal. He crossed the Atlantic Ocean eighteen times, at his own expense, for missionary purposes; repeatedly visited the West Indies, with the design of preaching to the negroes, and of encouraging the missions; and also the American continent, the wilds of which he traversed extensively, ministering to the scattered people the word of life. He expended the whole of his private fortune in the vast enterprise of truth and mercy with which he was connected; and had it not been for the property which he received with the two ladies whom he successively married he must have died in indigence.

“ Paul’s love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
 Were copied close in him, and well transcribed ;
 He followed Paul ; his zeal a kindred flame,
 His apostolic charity the same,
 Like him cross’d cheerfully tempestuous seas,
 Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease ;
 Like him he labour’d, and like him content
 To bear it, suffer’d shame where’er he went.”

Such was the man whom you have described as “ worldly,” and that “ in no ordinary degree ;” the man whom, above all others, you have selected in proof that, among the Wesleyans, the “ standard of morals and holiness is of necessity low !”

“ Blush, calumny ; and write upon his tomb,
 If honest eulogy can spare thee room,
 Thy deep repentance.”

“ His tomb,” did I say ? but I forget myself. His grave is the great deep ; for he died at sea, on a missionary voyage. Yet he has left in the east, and in the far west, monuments of his godly zeal ; and, above all, his record is on high. For indeed few men, however diligent and pious, have laboured so successfully. The Methodist Episcopal Church in America has been an immense blessing to that rising country. It has carried the gospel and ordinances of Christ to the remotest settlements of

the Union, as well as to the populous towns, and that to the spiritual benefit of millions. At this day it is the most numerous religious body in those lands. The result of the doctor's labours in the West Indies is equally gratifying. The Wesleyan missions, with those of other bodies of Christian people, prepared the black and coloured population in those islands for emancipation; so that nearly a million of abject and crouching slaves are likely to be, at no distant period, elevated into a free peasantry, honoured and happy subjects of the British crown. The labours of no one man contributed more directly and efficiently to bring about this most desirable state of things, than those of Dr. Coke. The venerated Wilberforce has justly acquired imperishable fame for his services in behalf of the negro race; and yet the sacrifices of time and property, of convenience, ease, and reputation, which even he made in behalf of this injured people, were far surpassed by those of Dr. Coke, the very mention of whose name you seem scarcely able to endure. To the cause of religion and humanity he devoted all that he had to give;—his property, his time, his intellect, his influence, his life.

Great as have been *the civil advantages* which the negroes in the West Indies have

derived from the labours of Dr. Coke, those poor outcasts have received *spiritual benefits* of immensely greater importance. Tens of thousands of them have been brought to a saving knowledge of God and of Christ, and have lived and died in holiness and peace. I will take the liberty of mentioning one instance, which I remember to have read many years ago in the private journal of a deceased missionary. A negro slave, a member of the Wesleyan society, came one day to inform him of a painful trial through which he had just been called to pass. When employed in his daily labour, he was thinking of the love of Christ, and forgetting for a moment that the driver was near, he began to sing a verse of a hymn in praise of his Saviour. It was deemed an unpardonable offence, that a slave should sing in the presence of one who was so much his superior. The negro was therefore fastened to the ground, and severely flogged for his alleged insolence. The sufferer finished his affecting narrative with these significant words:—"Still, massa, while I was under de lash, *de sing was in my heart.*" Yes, sir, the love of Christ, which burned in the breast of that oppressed man, and enabled him to make melody to the Lord in his heart in the midst of torture, has enabled many

of his sable brethren to bear their wrongs with meekness and resignation, and has prepared them for the songs of the glorified. Such have been, on an extensive scale, the blessed fruits of a mission which Dr. Coke had the honour to originate and superintend.

The question of Dr. Coke's "worldliness" I hope may now be considered as fairly settled. He might have purchased a rich living, and probably have obtained preferment in the Church, had he been so minded. Instead of this, he lived only to promote the spiritual interests of the most neglected of mankind. His salary, as a Methodist clergyman, was sixty pounds a year. In proof of his "ambition," you say, he "affected high titles of honour, to which he had no claim;" and that he "was consecrated to the episcopal office, and took its highest spiritual titles." You have given no proof that he sought the office of a bishop at the hands of Mr. Wesley; which, for any thing we know to the contrary, was imposed on him, as matter of duty, by that venerable minister, whom he had engaged to serve as a son in the gospel. He certainly exceeded his instructions in taking the name of bishop; but then it was pleaded in justification, that he had received the office of which that name is the acknow-

ledged title; and in accepting the name he appears to have been greatly influenced by the judgment and feelings of the men toward whom he sustained the episcopal relation. You say that he "affected high titles of honour, to which he had no claim." What titles he "affected," I know not. The titles of honour which he received were those of "doctor," and "bishop." The former of these was given to him in consequence of the degree which he took at the university; and in this case I presume he had as just a "claim" to it as any other man. You say, he took the "highest spiritual titles" of the "episcopal office." This is not true. You greatly exaggerate. He was never called "prelate," "right reverend," nor "father in God;" much less was he ever called "archbishop," "most reverend," or "your grace;" but simply "bishop," and that not in England, but only in America. Of course it is your judgment that he had "no claim" to this title; but then there are many others who are of a very different mind. They maintain that every true minister of Christ, who has a pastoral charge, is a Scriptural bishop; and certainly some of the arguments which they adduce are of great weight: especially those which are drawn from the address of St. Paul to the

presbyters of the Ephesian church, (Acts xx, 17-35,) and from his epistles to Timothy and Titus. You have an undoubted right to your opinion; and those who are otherwise minded have an equal right to theirs. So we may let this matter pass. When a man accepts an office, I presume it is no proof of "ambition" that he receives the title by which it is usually designated.

In reference to Dr. Coke, you further state, "Since his death it has been discovered that he made application for a bishopric in the Church, being ready on such terms to abandon his Wesleyanism." You here, I presume, allude to a letter which he is said to have addressed to the late Mr. Wilberforce, and which the sons of that eminent man have recently published.* As I wish to evade nothing that you have said, either against Dr. Coke or the Wesleyan body generally, but fairly to meet every objection that you have urged, I here give that letter entire; so that the public may have the means of judging concerning every point at issue.

* Correspondence of William Wilberforce. Edited by his sons, Robert Isaac Wilberforce, M. A., Vicar of East Farleigh, late Fellow of Oriel College: and Samuel Wilberforce, M. A., Archdeacon of Surrey, Rector of Brighthelmston. Vol. ii, pp. 256-261.

“REV. DR. COKE TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

“At Samuel Hague’s, Esq., Leeds,
April 14, 1813.

“DEAR AND HIGHLY RESPECTED SIR,—A subject, which appears to me of great moment, lies much upon my mind ; and yet it is a subject of such a delicate nature, that I cannot venture to open my mind upon it to any one, of whose candour, piety, delicacy, and honour, I have not the highest opinion. Such a character I do indubitably esteem you, sir ; and as such, I will run the risk of opening my whole heart to you upon the point.

“For at least twelve years, sir, the interests of our Indian empire have lain very near my heart. In several instances I have made attempts to open a way for missions in that country, and even for my going over there myself. But every thing proved abortive.

“The prominent desire of my soul, even from my infancy, (I may almost say,) has been to be useful. Even when I was a Deist for part of my time at Oxford, (what a miracle of grace !) usefulness was my most darling object. The Lord has been pleased to fix me for about thirty-seven years on a point of great usefulness. My influence in the large Wesleyan connection,

the introduction and superintendence of our missions in different parts of the globe, and the wide sphere opened to me for the preaching of the gospel to almost innumerable, large, and attentive congregations, have opened to me a very extensive field for usefulness. And yet I could give up all for India. Could I but close my life in being the means of raising a spiritual church in India, it would satisfy the utmost ambition of my soul here below.

“I am not so much wanted in our connection at home as I once was. Our committee of privileges, as we term it, can watch over the interests of the body, in respect to laws and government, as well in my absence as if I was with them. Our missionary committee in London can do the same in respect to missions; and my absence would only make them feel their duty more incumbent upon them. Auxiliary committees through the nation (which we have now in contemplation) will amply supply my place in respect to raising money. There is nothing to influence me much against going to India, but my extensive sphere for preaching the gospel. But this, I do assure you, sir, sinks considerably in my calculation, in comparison of the high honour (if the Lord was to confer it upon me in his providence and grace) of beginning

or reviving a genuine work of religion in the immense regions of Asia.

“ Impressed with these views, I wrote a letter about a fortnight ago to the earl of Liverpool. I have either mislaid the copy of it, or destroyed it at the time, for fear of its falling into improper hands. After an introduction, drawn up in the most delicate manner in my power, I took notice of the observations made by Lord Castlereagh in the House of Commons, concerning a religious establishment in India, connected with the established Church at home. I then simply opened my situation in the Wesleyan connection, as I have stated to you, sir, above. I enlarged on the earnest desire I had of closing my life in India, observing, that if his royal highness the prince regent and the government should think proper to appoint me their bishop in India, I should most cheerfully and most gratefully accept of the offer. I am sorry I have lost the copy of the letter. In my letter to Lord Liverpool, I observed, that I should, in case of my appointment to the episcopacy of India, return most fully and faithfully into the bosom of the established Church, and do every thing in my power to promote its interests, and would submit to all such restrictions in the fulfilment of my office, as the government and the

bench of bishops at home should think necessary ; that my prime motive was to be useful to the Europeans in India ; and that my second (though not the least) was to introduce the Christian religion among the Hindoos by the preaching of the gospel, and perhaps, also, by the establishment of schools.

“ I have not, sir, received an answer. Did I think that the answer was withheld because Lord Liverpool considered me as acting very improperly by making the request, I should take no further step in the business. This may be the case ; but his lordship’s silence may arise from other motives : on the one hand, because he did not choose to send me an absolute refusal ; and, on the other hand, because he did not see it proper, at least just now, to give me any encouragement. When I was in some doubt this morning, whether I ought to take the liberty of writing to you, my mind became determined on my being informed, about three hours ago, that, in a letter received from you, by Mr. Hey, you observed that the generality of the House of Commons were set against granting any thing of an imperative kind to the dissenters or Methodists in favour of sending missionaries to India. Probably I

may err in respect to the exact words which you used.

“ I am not conscious, my dear respected sir, that the least degree of ambition influences me in this business. I possess a fortune of about one thousand two hundred pounds a year, which is sufficient to bear my travelling expenses, and to enable me to make many charitable donations. I have lost two dear wives, and am now a widower. Our leading friends through the connection receive me, and treat me with the utmost respect and hospitality. I am quite surrounded with friends who greatly love me ; but India still cleaves to my heart. I sincerely believe that my strong inclination to spend the remainder of my life in India originates in the divine will, while I am called upon to use the secondary means to obtain the end.

“ I have formed an intimate acquaintance with Dr. Buchanan, and have written to him, to inform him that I shall make him a visit within a few days, if it be convenient. From his house I intend, *Deo volente*, to return to Leeds for a day, and then to set off next week for London. The latter end of last November I visited him before at Moat Hall, his place of residence ; and a most pleasant visit it was to

me, and also to him, I have reason to think. He has been, since I saw him, drinking of the same bitter cup of which I have been drinking, by the loss of a beloved wife.

“I would just observe, sir, that a hot climate peculiarly agrees with me. I was never better in my life than in the West Indies during the four visits I made to that archipelago; and should now prefer the torrid zone, as a climate, to any other part of the world. Indeed, I enjoy in this country, though sixty-five years of age, such an uninterrupted flow of health and strength, as astonishes all my acquaintance. They commonly observe, they have perceived no difference in me for these last twenty years.

“I would observe, sir, as I did at the commencement of my letter, that I throw myself on your candour, piety, and honour. If I do not succeed in my views of India, and it were known among the preachers that I had been taking the steps I am now taking, (though from a persuasion that I am in the divine will in so doing,) it might more or less affect my usefulness in the vineyard of my Lord, and that would very much afflict me. And yet, notwithstanding this, I cannot satisfy myself without making some advances in the business.

“I consider, sir, your brother-in-law, Mr.

Stephen, to be a man of eminent worth. I have a very high esteem for him. I know that his yea is yea, and what he promises he certainly will perform. Without some promise of confidence he might (if he were acquainted with the present business) mention it to Mr. —, with whom I know Mr. Stephen is acquainted. If Mr. — were acquainted with the steps I am taking, he would, I am nearly sure, call immediately a meeting of our committee of privileges, and the consequence might be unfavourable to my influence, and consequently to my usefulness, among the Methodists. But my mind must be eased. I must venture this letter, and leave the whole to God, and under him, sir, to you.

“I have reason to believe that Lord Eldon had, (indeed, I am sure of it,) and probably now has, an esteem for me. Lord Sidmouth, I do think, loves me. Lord Castlereagh once expressed to Mr. Alexander Knox, then his private secretary in Ireland, his very high regard for me : since that time I have had one interview with his lordship in London. I have been favoured, on various occasions, with public and private interviews with Lord Bathurst. I shall be glad to have your advice, whether I should write letters to those noblemen, particu-

larly to the two first, on the present subject; or whether I had not better suspend every thing, and have the pleasure of seeing you in London. I hope I shall have that honour. I shall be glad to receive three or four lines from you, (do not write, unless you think it may be of some immediate importance,) signifying that I may wait on you immediately on my arrival in London.

“I have the honour to be, with very high respect, my dear sir, your very much obliged, very humble, and very faithful servant,

“ T. COKE.”

Upon this very remarkable document I beg leave to offer a few brief observations.

1. The letter itself was strictly private and confidential. The writer was aware that it was liable to misconception, and that an evil use might be made of it by persons who did not know the real nature and circumstances of the case. He therefore says, in reference to the matter which he had to communicate, “It is a subject of such a delicate nature, that I cannot venture to open my mind upon it to any one, of whose candour, piety, delicacy, and honour I have not the highest opinion. Such a character I do indubitably esteem you,

sir ; and as such I will run the risk of opening my whole heart to you upon the point." The doctor felt, that although his motives were perfectly pure and upright, he was staking his reputation and future usefulness upon the honour of his correspondent. All classes of good men have an interest in the character of Mr. Wilberforce, the Christian statesman and philanthropist, the friend of Africa, of the Bible Society, and of all that is charitable and holy ; and it is gratifying to know that he never abused the generous confidence that was thus reposed in him. Dr. Coke had often consulted him on questions connected with West Indian affairs, and regarded him as a personal friend ; nor does it appear that the subject thus intrusted to him ever passed the lips of Mr. Wilberforce. To the end of life, while Dr. Coke lived, and when the doctor was no more, Mr. Wilberforce proved himself to be the man of " candour, piety, delicacy, and honour," which the letter assumes. At his death, the trust which he had so sacredly kept devolved upon his clerical sons ; and in what manner they have acted in reference to it, the appearance of the letter in a printed form declares. The case of the doctor, however, is not peculiar. Solomon has said, "Thine own friend, and thy

father's friend, forsake not ;" (Prov. xxvii, 10 ;) but the sons of Mr. Wilberforce, unmindful of this maxim of inspired wisdom, have pursued a course, not with regard to Dr. Coke only, but also to various other friends of their father, which, to say the least, is very unusual among persons of chivalrous honour, and of tender filial affection.

2. It will be observed, that Dr. Coke mentions the fact of his having formerly been " a Deist ;" and as you have invited the attention of the public to his letter, in which he makes the admission, it is but justice to him to give an explanation of this subject. He went to the university of Oxford a simple-minded, upright youth, about seventeen years of age, accustomed to observe the forms of Christianity, and never having entertained any doubt of its truth ; but he soon found himself at college surrounded by fellow-students who laughed at all religion. The worst part of the story remains to be told. His college tutor was an infidel and a drunkard, who succeeded in wresting from the unarmed stripling his faith in the revelation of God. " It was chiefly in his cups that this gentleman administered the poison. ' Eh, Coke !' he would then say, as well as he could, ' do you believe the Adam and Eve story ? Eh !' and

thus got rid of the Bible with a fool-born jest.”* Whether this profane scoffer was in the “apostolical succession,” of which the world has heard so much of late years, I know not; but he was certainly intrusted with the training of those who were to be the successors of apostles, saints, and martyrs, in the holy ministry; and in what manner he fulfilled his task, the sad experience of young Coke, and of Coke’s fellow-students, too plainly shows. He taught the future ministers of the Lord Jesus to blaspheme that “name which is above every name,” and to which “every knee shall” be made to “bow.” If Dr. Coke’s moral principles were corrupt through life, as you seem wishful it should be understood that they were, it cannot be forgotten that they were corrupted at the very place where they ought to have been purified and strengthened. But the truth is, that, though his unsuspecting mind was for a time perverted, he was by the mercy of God soon rescued out of “the snare of the devil,” and became one of the most devoted and useful ministers of his age.

3. The object which Dr. Coke proposed in his letter, the spread of true religion in the East, was every way noble, and worthy of the

* Moore’s *Life of Wesley*, vol. ii, p. 308.

high character which he had acquired as a missionary, and a friend of Christian missions ; but the means by which he sought to attain it were never likely to be conceded to him ; and therefore his application for a bishopric in India was highly indiscreet. It was not at all probable that the earl of Liverpool, or any other prime minister of England, whatever he might think of Dr. Coke personally, and however kindly he might be disposed toward him, would give such an appointment to any clergyman who had been so notoriously irregular ; for it must of necessity have given great umbrage to many persons of rank and influence, whom the head of every government must wish rather to conciliate than to offend. Had the doctor consulted with his best friends, he would never have entertained the thought of this project, and much less would he have disclosed it to Lord Liverpool and Mr. Wilberforce. Every one who knew him was aware that his judgment was not equal to his zeal. The ardour of his mind sometimes bordered upon impetuosity, and occasionally led him, especially in the absence of his ordinary advisers, into acts of indiscretion. This was his great failing ; and he often confessed it. But, then, a man of cooler temperament would never have planned and exe-

cuted the schemes of usefulness with which his name stands in honourable connection, and the benefits of which are likely to extend through all time. The letter was indiscreet. This is freely acknowledged; but more than this, to the writer's disadvantage, no man can prove.

4. I have often had occasion to complain of the incorrectness and extreme partiality of your statements, which must necessarily mislead such readers as are not already acquainted with the subjects to which they refer. An instance of this occurs in your account of Dr. Coke. You say, "He made application for a bishopric in the Church, being ready on such terms to abandon his Wesleyanism." Thousands of persons have probably read these words who never saw the Wilberforce correspondence, and do not know the facts to which you allude. Such persons, judging from your mode of expression only, will naturally infer that the clerical superintendent of the Wesleyan missions was wishful to barter his Methodism for one of the English bishoprics, with its ample emoluments, a seat in the House of Peers, the title of "my lord," and extensive patronage. You know that this was not the fact, and it cannot have been your intention to convey a

meaning so remote from the truth. Allow me, then, to suggest, whether a writer who deals in vituperation ought not to be more guarded, and carefully to abstain from the use of terms which convey an idea of blame far beyond what he really designed to express? I submit that you ought in all fairness to have said that the preferment for which Dr. Coke applied was a missionary bishopric in India, where no English prelate at that time had ever set his foot. If it was a post of honour, it was no less a post of difficulty and peril; and certainly, considered in itself, apart from the momentous object which the doctor proposed, no very enviable situation for a man who had nearly arrived at the grave period of "threescore years and ten."

5. Your charge against Dr. Coke is, that he was "worldly" and "ambitious;" and you allege as proof, that he sought to obtain a bishopric in India. I presume you will not deny that it is lawful to accept a bishopric, and in some instances even to ask for it; since an apostle has declared, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," 1 Tim. iii, 1. Yet if a man desire this office under the influence of corrupt motives, he is deeply criminal in the sight of God; and this you assume to have been the

fact with respect to Dr. Coke. The feelings which swayed his mind in this affair, according to his own apprehension, he has distinctly stated in his letter to Mr. Wilberforce. "My influence in the large Wesleyan connection," says he, "the introduction and superintendence of our missions in different parts of the globe, and the wide sphere opened to me for the preaching of the gospel to almost innumerable large and attentive congregations, have opened to me a very extensive field of usefulness. And yet I could give up all for India. Could I but close my life in being the means of raising a spiritual church in India, it would satisfy the utmost ambition of my soul here below." "There is nothing to influence me much against going to India, but my extensive sphere for preaching the gospel. But this, I do assure you, sir, sinks considerably in my calculation, in comparison of the high honour (if the Lord was to confer it upon me in his providence and grace) of beginning or reviving a genuine work of religion in the immense regions of Asia." "I am quite surrounded with friends who greatly love me; but India still cleaves to my heart."

Such is the doctor's own statement, the whole of which you repudiate, so far as his motives

are concerned. You can see nothing in all his concern for India, with its teeming millions of idolaters, perishing in ignorance and sin, but the desire of the mitre which glittered before his eyes. The *onus* of proof, of course, rests with you. It is one of the easiest things in the world to impute bad motives to any man, however upright and blameless he may be ; but it is often difficult to prove a negative. Happily, however, in this case the proof is at hand that you have treated this good minister of Jesus Christ with flagrant injustice. His desire to go to India commenced long before men in power began to talk of founding a bishopric there ; and that desire suffered no abatement when the hope of the mitre had passed away like a dream. His biographer says,—

“ In the early part of his life, Dr. Coke had considered India as a region which afforded an ample field for missionary exertions ; and in the year 1784 he had actually written a letter to a gentleman in India, to make inquiries into the state of morals, the influence of idolatry, the difficulties to be encountered, the probable amount of expense, the prospect of success, and the best plan of procedure, in case the establishment of a mission were attempted in Asia. To these inquiries, and a variety of others closely

connected with this general question, he received a very long, very full, and an accurately detailed account in a letter, dated February 10th, 1785. This letter may be found in the *Armenian Magazine* for the year 1792.

“ The difficulties which this letter faithfully recorded were too formidable to be at that time encountered. And as those places in which missions have since been established presented a more promising field, the concerns of Asia were postponed until finance, ability, and leisure should combine to mark the expediency of the arduous enterprise. Nor was it until the year 1813, when those circumstances united together which have been enumerated, that Dr. Coke thought the period fully come.

“ Although nothing was done toward the establishment of a mission in India till this time, it was a subject that had frequently engrossed his thoughts. On every occasion that presented itself he seized the opportunity to promote inquiries; thus continually augmenting his stock of information, which was treasured up against the anticipated but distant result. In the year 1806, Dr. Coke, being at the house of a pious gentleman in Cornwall, who had resided upward of twenty years in India, unfolded to him the designs which were then ripening in

his mind. From this gentleman (Colonel William Sandys) he procured a fund of information, with which he was so highly pleased, that he requested him to state what he had communicated to the missionary committee in London, in order to prepare them for that work which he fully expected he should one day undertake. A statement was accordingly given to the committee by Colonel Sandys, a copy of which is now before the author; and 'it is evident, from comparing its recommendations with the facts furnished by the mission when fitted out, that its principles were not without their influence in the arrangements which were finally made.'*

These statements, so distinct and particular, and which embody various facts, fully settle the point for which they are adduced. They prove that, nearly thirty years before Dr. Coke wrote to Lord Liverpool and Mr. Wilberforce, the spiritual necessities of India rested with great weight upon his mind: and that he cherished an earnest desire to assist in extending the blessings of Christianity through that vast region of darkness, idolatry, and death. His compassionate concern for the perishing millions there was not first excited by the hope of a bishopric. The gentleman in India to whom he wrote in

* Drew's Life of Dr. Coke, pp. 340, 341.

1781, and whose valuable letter is referred to by the doctor's biographer, there is reason to believe, was Mr. Charles Grant, the father of Lord Glenelg.

The authorities connected with India were generally opposed to any extended efforts to spread Christianity among the heathen population of that vast country, and especially so far as the Methodists and dissenters were concerned. Their plea was, that any direct interference with the reigning superstition would endanger the British dominion in the East. Of this Dr. Coke was fully aware; and he learned, from Mr. Wilberforce's letter to Mr. Hey, of Leeds, that the same feeling predominated in the House of Commons. "When I was in some doubt this morning," says he, "whether I ought to take the liberty of writing to you, my mind became determined on my being informed, about three hours ago, that, in a letter received from you, by Mr. Hey, you observed that the generality of the House of Commons were set against granting any thing of an imperative kind to the dissenters or Methodists in favour of sending missionaries to India." The difficulty which the Wesleyans experienced in the support of their existing missions rendered them generally unwilling to

engage in any new enterprises of the same kind. It appeared, therefore, to Dr. Coke, that if he were to do any thing toward the advancement of the cause of Christ in the East Indies, he must do it, not as a Methodist, but as a clergyman of the Church of England: and under the influence of this impression, he felt it his duty to offer his services as a bishop in that distant land.

Dr. Coke's letter to Mr. Wilberforce bears the date of April 14th, 1813; and that to the earl of Liverpool was written about a fortnight earlier. The earl was silent, and what answer Mr. Wilberforce returned does not appear; but it certainly contained nothing that could lead the doctor to expect the appointment which he had solicited; so that the hope of the bishopric was soon at an end. But the doctor's yearnings for India were so far from being extinguished by the disappointment, that they became increasingly strong and irrepressible. His friend, Mr. Drew, addressed to him a letter, in which he "endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose of visiting India, on account of his age; the shock which his constitution must sustain by a long residence in the torrid zone; the difficulty of rendering the organs of

articulation sufficiently flexible, at his time of life, to enable him to pronounce a new language; and, finally, his inability to leave behind him a successor that should be at once able and willing to beg from door to door, to support the missions already established."

To this remonstrance the doctor returned the following answer, dated June 28th, 1813; nearly three months, it will be observed, after he had written to Mr. Wilberforce: "I am now dead to Europe, and alive for India. God himself has said to me, 'Go to Ceylon.' I am as much convinced of the will of God in this respect, as that I breathe; so fully convinced, that methinks I had rather be set naked on the coast of Ceylon, without clothes, and without a friend, than not go there. The Portuguese language is much spoken all round the coast of India. According to Dr. Buchanan, there are five hundred thousand Christians (nominal Christians at least) in Ceylon; and there are only two ministers to take care of them. I am learning the Portuguese language continually, and am perfectly certain I shall conquer it before I land in Ceylon. The fleets sail in October and January. If the conference employ me to raise the money for the outset, I shall

not be able to sail till January. I shall bear my own expenses, of course.”*

The Wesleyan Conference assembled toward the close of July following, and before that body “Dr. Coke introduced his design to visit India ; stating at large the providential concurrence of circumstances which had appeared, the favourable disposition which some men in power had manifested toward the mission, and the reasons which had finally led him to visit the eastern regions of the globe. At the same time he introduced to the conference six young men, whom he had procured to accompany him, and share in his toils.” “The connection at this conference being deeply involved in debt, Dr. Coke was well aware that the old objection, which he had for many years been compelled to encounter, and occasionally to stifle with an act of generosity, would again be raised. And it seemed probable, from the embarrassments which existed, that his design to visit India would be wholly defeated, unless he could find some decisive method to impose silence upon the tongue of opposition, so far as pecuniary assistance and domestic claims were engaged in the issue. To meet this he boldly and generously offered to bear, from his own

* Drew's Life of Dr. Coke, pp. 342, 343.

private fortune, the whole expense of the outfit, to the amount of six thousand pounds, if that sum should be thought necessary.”*

It is distinctly remembered, that when this venerable man proposed his scheme at the conference, and his brethren attempted to dissuade him from the difficult enterprise, he burst into tears, wept like a child, and in a most excited state of feeling said, “If you will not suffer me to go to India, you will break my heart!” At the same time he declared his determination to expend all the property that he possessed, rather than fail in the establishment of a mission there. Further opposition was useless; the desired consent was given; the doctor took a final leave of his friends in England; and, on the 30th of December following, embarked with his band of missionaries for the East. Having completed more than one half of the voyage, during which he preserved his hallowed cheerfulness and affability, and applied himself with great diligence to the studies connected with the service upon which he expected soon to enter, he was suddenly seized with apoplexy, and expired in his cabin. On retiring to rest in the evening of May 2d, he “took his fellow missionaries by the hand, and in his

* Drew's Life of Dr. Coke, p. 344.

usual manner commended them to God." In the morning "the servant knocked, as usual, at the cabin door. But after several efforts, being unable to procure a reply, he ventured to open the door. This being done, he discovered, to his utter astonishment, the mortal remains of Dr. Coke, lifeless, cold, and nearly stiff, stretched upon the cabin floor."

Due preparation having been made for the funeral, "the coffin was brought upon deck, where it remained for some time covered with signal flags. The awning being spread, the soldiers were drawn up in rank on deck, when the tolling of the ship's bell called together the passengers and crew, so that the deck was quite crowded with solemn and silent spectators, who seemed much affected with the scene of mortality they were called to witness. Mr. Harvard then read the burial service, and the body was consigned to its watery grave in silent solemnity, to be seen no more till the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible."*

"So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him who walk'd the waves."

Such was the end of Dr. Coke, one of the most disinterested, laborious, and useful men

* Drew's Life of Dr. Coke, p. 350.

of modern times ; but a man whose memory you have treated with the deepest disrespect ; having held him up to the public reprobation, as being “in no ordinary degree” “worldly and ambitious,” and adduced his character in proof that “the standard of morals and holiness” among the Wesleyans must be “necessarily low,” because they hold him in “high repute,” instead of “disowning” his very name. He had, as we have seen, expended a liberal fortune in generous attempts to promote the spiritual good of mankind, and eighteen times crossed the Atlantic Sea for the same purpose ; and when he had nearly arrived at the ordinary limit of human life, he entered upon the acquirement of a new language, with an exclusive reference to the benefit of others, and undertook a voyage to India, and the task of conducting, at his own expense, six missionaries to that neglected field of Christian labour. By what “standard of morals and holiness” all your contumelies are heaped upon the memory of such a man, it is not for me to say.

There is, however, one point more in your statement which needs some explanation. You say that Dr. Coke was “ready on such terms” (those of a bishopric) “to abandon his Wesleyanism.” This allegation you have adopted

from the Messrs. Wilberforce. On committing the doctor's letter to the press, they seem to have been desirous of anticipating the opinion of the public, and therefore suggested that in it the doctor "offers to abandon the Methodists." You will excuse me, sir, if on this point also I differ both from you and them. The letter contains no such offer. What is "Wesleyanism?" Its great and leading principle is, the absolute and universal necessity of personal conversion to God. All men being guilty and depraved, need the kindred but distinct blessings of justification and sanctification; both of which, according to the gospel, are obtained by faith in the Lord Jesus. Those persons only, who are thus changed in their state and character, are able to love God and keep his commandments. The rest are in danger of perishing for ever. Wesleyanism therefore subordinates every thing to such conversion; declaring it to be the chief concern of every human being, and the object at which, above all others, every minister ought to aim. If he succeed not in this, he "labours in vain, and spends his strength for naught." Canonical irregularity is an accident of Wesleyanism, and does not enter into its nature and substance. Mr. Wesley was irregular, because he believed that the spiritual necessities of the

world required him to be so ; but this he regretted ; and there can be no doubt that he would at any time have become as regular as any of his clerical brethren, could he have been convinced that by so doing he could convert and save a greater number of souls. Dr. Coke had been irregular, as irregular as were the apostles and primitive evangelists. Had he been otherwise, it is possible that, at this day, West India slavery might have existed in its untold amount of guilt and misery. But had he gone to India, invested with the episcopal office, regularity would have been essential to his success. Without that, he must have been recalled. Hence the propriety of his proposal to “submit to all such restrictions in the fulfilment of his office as the government and the bench of bishops at home should think necessary.” His purposes were perfectly honourable. He sought not the Church’s emoluments and influence, to innovate upon her doctrine and order ; but to accomplish that which is the end of all ecclesiastical arrangements,—the salvation of redeemed men.

There is nothing in any proposal of Dr. Coke that is contrary to genuine “Wesleyanism.” The Rev. Vincent Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, in Kent, to the end of his very protracted life,

was Mr. Wesley's friend and adviser ; so that Mr. Charles Wesley used to call him "the archbishop of the Methodists." Yet he himself was perfectly regular ; and not the slightest reflection was ever cast upon him on this account by his Wesleyan friends. Two of his sons were itinerant preachers in Mr. Wesley's connection ; and he wrote several able tracts in defence of the Wesleyan tenets. The Rev. Walter Sellon, vicar of Ledsham, in Yorkshire, was a decided Wesleyan, and wrote largely in defence of Mr. Wesley's character and theology. Yet he walked strictly according to canonical rule. A few years ago an excellent clergyman in Wales died, who had been a member of the Wesleyan society for the long space of sixty-years ; but his membership never interfered with his submission to the order of the Church. He thought that his talents were better adapted to the duties of a parish priest, than of an itinerant preacher ; and he acted accordingly, with the undiminished esteem and affection of his Wesleyan brethren. That which was done by these good men, Dr. Coke was at perfect liberty to do, without abandoning his "Wesleyanism," provided that his usefulness was likely to be increased. This was his highest aim.

His letter to Mr. Wilberforce bears on the very face of it the character of an honest man, and not of a selfish renegade. He casts not the slightest reflection upon his Methodist brethren, but speaks of them in terms of the utmost affection and kindness. The greatest difficulty that he had to overcome was that of tearing himself away from them ; for they everywhere received him with esteem and hospitality, and surrounded him in large crowds whenever he occupied their pulpits. He intimates that he could never have entertained the thought of going to India, had he supposed that the missions among the negroes would sustain any injury by the withdrawal of his superintendency. Not a syllable of regret is even whispered in the letter, that the writer had been the instrument of giving a constitution and the sacraments to the Methodist Church in America. Nor is any intimation given that his views of ecclesiastical order had undergone any change ; that he was at all dissatisfied with his position as a Methodist ; or that he regarded canonical regularity, under all circumstances, as matter of absolute duty. The probability is, that had it not been for the pecuniary difficulties which at that time impeded the efforts of Wesleyanism, both at home and abroad, and the opposition to the

system which he knew to exist in India, he would, in the first instance, have formed the plan of a Wesleyan mission there, and never have thought of the bishopric at all. But for the promotion of the blessed work of turning men to righteousness, which he steadily kept in view through life, he was ready to adopt any mode of Christian operation. "Abandon his Wesleyanism!" No, never! The object which he proposed in going to India was not to provide for his children or near relations, for he had none; but to accomplish that which is the one design of all Wesleyan instrumentality whatever,—“raising up a spiritual church,” “beginning or reviving a genuine work of religion.” There is absolutely nothing in the letter that implies any just reflection upon Dr. Coke’s uprightness and integrity. The only circumstance connected with it that his warmest admirers can lament is, that he asked for an appointment which it was not probable that he would receive; and the request for which might be turned to his disadvantage by the jealousy or the petty malice of men who could not sympathize with him in his high missionary feelings and designs.

And now, sir, you and the Messrs. Wilberforce have all had your revenge upon the Me-

thodist clergyman. They have published his letter, the subject of which he asked his friend to keep concealed in his own breast; and you have availed yourself of it to assail his moral character. The whole case is now before the world, and every one may form his own judgment concerning it. I shall not be surprised if the least share of blame be awarded to Dr. Coke, and the greatest to yourself. The doctor wrote an indiscreet letter, but for an object that was worthy of an apostle; and by the writing of it he "injured no man, he corrupted no man, he defrauded no man." The Messrs. Wilberforce have published it, but for what purpose is best known to themselves; certainly not to prove that they excel their venerable father in that "delicacy" and "honour" which Dr. Coke so justly ascribed to him. Upon this document, published under circumstances of which few persons it is presumed can by possibility approve, you have assumed that Dr. Coke was a bad man, and have preferred against him charges of the foulest kind, not one of which you have it in your power to establish. In the eagerness of his desire to benefit the millions of India, the doctor injudiciously preferred a request which was not likely to be granted; the two archdeacons

have violated a trust which was confided to their father's "candour, delicacy, and honour;" and you have broken the great law of truth and charity, by unjust censures both upon the living and the dead. I presume that the Wesleyans may still respect the memory of Dr. Coke, without divesting themselves of the Christian character.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now, sir, carefully examined what you have advanced against the Wesleyan body, in the long note which you have appended to your Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and have endeavoured to meet all that you have there alleged, whether in the shape of fact, or of argument. With what success I have executed my task, others will judge. Hitherto I have merely endeavoured to repel charges; but, after what has been advanced, it will not excite your surprise, if, in conclusion, I lay aside the character of defendant, and assume that of plaintiff. You have voluntarily taken upon yourself the office of a public censor, and have certainly shown little tenderness or forbearance toward the religious body to which I have the happiness to belong, any more than toward other classes of Christian people, as

well foreign as domestic. Of all men, therefore, you cannot justly complain if that which is deemed blameworthy in your public conduct, especially in your authorship, be freely animadverted upon. I would much rather offer commendation than rebuke, especially to one who bears the title of a minister of Christ; but in this case commendation would be flattery, and therefore a sin.

I complain, first, that in your attempts to find ground of accusation against the Wesleyan body, you have said many things which are directly at variance with truth. Several examples of this have been pointed out in the preceding pages. Whether they are accidental or designed, I know not; nor is it my business to determine. Either way they are inexcusable, because correct information could have been readily obtained. It has been shown that some of your most grave and severe charges against the Wesleyans are utterly unfounded; so that you would scarcely have departed more manifestly from the truth, if you had said that Mr. Wesley derived his creed from the Koran, and that all the people to whom his name is applied are zealous Mohammedans. The proofs are before the reader; and against a mode of writing so unjust and unscrupulous the accused

have too much reason to remonstrate. You say, the Wesleyans are in schism, and that their doctrines are heretical. Be it so, for the sake of argument. Say, if you please, that they are burglars and highwaymen. Still you have no right to impute to them tēnets which not one of them believes, and practices which their souls abhor. Next to piety to God, nothing ought to be more sacred than truth between man and man; truth in every verbal communication, and in every department of social intercourse; and most of all, truth in the use of the press. The man who publishes a fallacious and misleading statement, especially to the injury of the character of others, is answerable for all the mischief that ensues from it, not only as long as the book which contains it continues to circulate, but as long as any one repeats the unjust aspersion. Whether the Wesleyan body are good or bad, saints or the vilest sinners, you have not spoken of them the thing that is right, because you have not spoken that which is true. Neither with respect to doctrine nor practice are they the people that you have described.

I complain, secondly, of your utter disregard of all that the Wesleyans themselves have published in explanation and defence of their own

tenets and practices. The substance of the charges which you have preferred against them in your Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, you had previously embodied in your Letter to the Bishop of Oxford. They were met and disproved in the Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine for January and February, 1841. Of what is there advanced by the accused party, you take not the slightest notice, but repeat your censures, as if they admitted of no dispute. By what "standard of morals" you thus act, I profess not to know. It is not the Jewish "standard;" for "a master in Israel" silenced a whole sanhedrim of unrighteous men, by proposing the question, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" John vii, 51. That it was not the "standard" of pagan Rome, we have also direct testimony. Festus said, "It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him," Acts xxv, 16. Nor is it, I presume, a "standard" that can at all comport with Christian truth and equity. Suppose a lover of strife, in perfect disregard of your recorded sentiments, should publicly declare

that you deny the catholic doctrine of the Holy Trinity. You are astounded at the charge, publicly and solemnly declare that it is absolutely unfounded, and refer to your printed works in confirmation of your testimony. Your accuser, bent upon the ruin of your reputation, publishes a series of pamphlets, each of which he addresses to some distinguished personage. He makes not the remotest reference to your defence of yourself, but is careful in every publication to repeat his charge, declaring, with expressions of regret, that you are certainly a heretic. Would you consider the conduct of such a man justifiable upon any principle that Christianity recognises? and not rather regard it as an outrage upon the most sacred principles of Christian morality? Excuse me, sir, if I say that this is precisely your conduct toward the Wesleyan body. You accuse them of heresy. They remonstrate, and produce direct proof of the injustice of your allegations. No matter for this. Their remonstrances and proofs are nothing to you. The ruin of their character is the object to be accomplished. You therefore repeat your refuted charges in successive publications, with undiminished pertinacity. There is an authority which says, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so

do unto them." Whether or not you will observe this equitable precept in your future animadversions upon Mr. Wesley and his people, time will show. Hitherto you have acted toward them as if no such words had been uttered, either by God or man.

I complain, thirdly, that in reference to Mr. Wesley and the people who bear his name, you have assumed authority to speak with a confidence which is altogether unwarrantable; because you cannot by possibility possess the knowledge that you affect. The Wesleyans, as we have seen, attach immense importance to personal conversion, and to subsequent conformity to the word and will of God. You profess to know all that passes in their minds in the entire process of their conversion and salvation, and resolve the whole matter into self-deceit in some, and hypocrisy in others. Dr. Coke, in all his yearnings for India, you are sure was a great sinner; for he was actuated by "worldliness and ambition," and that "in no ordinary degree." You have, by implication, given the same character of Mr. Wesley. Toward the close of his life, he is well known to have ordained several of his preachers to the full duties of the ministry; to the administration of the sacraments and the pastoral

oversight of the people, as well as the public preaching of God's word. Yet you say, "that to the last he refused, in the strongest terms, his consent that those thus ordained should take upon them to administer the sacraments; he felt that it exceeded his powers, and so inhibited it."* Solomon says, "Who can stand before envy?" and it may well be inquired, Who can stand before an opponent who writes in this manner? Mr. Wesley refused his consent that those preachers who had not been ordained to this service should administer the sacraments, yet not for the reason which you have assigned; but others of them he solemnly and expressly ordained to this administration, and declared to his brother, that he had as much right thus to ordain, as he had to baptize and to give the Lord's supper. In these deliberate, well-considered, and solemn acts, you aver, "he felt" that he had not the power which he professed to exercise. If this be true, he stands convicted of playing the hypocrite in the house of God, in some of the most sacred and momentous acts of his eventful life; as you, in effect, declare that Dr. Coke did, and that a large portion of the Wesleyan societies have done, and do at this day.

* Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 151. Fourth edition.

Now, sir, the question is not what God in his righteous judgment may in the last great day declare Mr. Wesley, Dr. Coke, and other Methodists, to have been; but how do *you* know what passed in their hearts, so as to justify you in speaking of them in the terms which you have employed? You were not present when Mr. Wesley performed his ordinations; and if you had been, you could only have witnessed the outward act. When he uttered the words, "Take thou authority to preach the word of God, and to administer the holy sacraments in the congregation;" and when he said, "Be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy sacraments;" how do you know that "he felt" it "exceeded his powers" to convey any such "authority;" and that he was therefore condemned in his own conscience? Whether he was or was not the self-convicted and presumptuous man that your statements assume him to be, "the day will declare;" "for it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire will try every man's work, of what sort it is." But in the mean while God only knows what passes in the hearts of his creatures. The manner therefore in which you have charged the most hateful sin of hypocrisy upon your "fellow-servants" is no more consistent

with strict truth, than it is with Christian meekness and charity. You have not the means of knowledge. It is not your prerogative, but that of God, to "judge the secrets of men's hearts."

I complain, fourthly, that your attack upon the Wesleyan body is inconsistent, and has every appearance of party objects. You profess great zeal against Antinomianism, which is acknowledged to be an evil of frightful magnitude wherever it exists. Such zeal, therefore, if sincere, is highly commendable. I say, if sincere; for if it express itself in language of unmeasured censure against the evil in some quarters, and palliate or justify the same evil in others; if it charge the evil upon one body of Christians who are comparatively innocent, and caress another that is openly guilty; it is not sincere, and is rather to be frowned down as a meddling impertinence than as an honourable virtue. Now, sir, the most superficial observer must see that Antinomianism is not confined to any one set of doctrinal propositions, but is a disease of human nature to which every community is liable, and against which all ought to guard. It has indeed shown itself among those who have held the evangelical doctrine of salvation by grace, through faith in the blood of Christ; but it has far oftener appeared among

the clamourers for religious pomp and ceremony, the men who can only admire religion when it is adorned with gold lace and ostrich feathers. The most notorious Antinomians of ancient times were the Jewish Pharisees, who "made long prayers," where they could "be seen of men," and were scrupulously exact in paying "tithes of mint, anise, and cummin," and in "making broad their phylacteries;" but in their practice "devoured widows' houses," made void the commandment of God, and set aside justice, mercy, and fidelity. Here was Antinomianism, bold and impudent, in the very "straitest sect" of the Jews' religion.

Next to them the Church of Rome is the most flagrant offender in this respect. Her ceremonial is pompous beyond all example among Christians, and her rites are numerous and minute. The additions which she has made to the simple religion of the Lord Jesus, time would fail one to mention; and to all these she has given the name of piety. But what are her morals? Let the turbulence of Ireland, and the infidelity, the sabbath desecration, and the nameless vices of France and of the Italian states declare. A man may be a recognised Romanist without either Christian godliness or moral honesty. How many adhe-

rents of the Papacy are there at this day, especially in Ireland and Italy, who observe saints' days, and profane the sabbath ; who count their beads, practise all the rites of the church, carefully avoid all that would violate what is called "catholic unity," and would murder almost any man for half-a-crown !

To come somewhat nearer home : within the last few years a body of men have risen up in the Protestant church of this country, who call themselves Anglo-Catholics. Their doctrine, particularly on the vital question of man's justification before God, when stripped of the verbiage in which they have seen good to envelop it, is precisely that of the Council of Trent, and therefore at variance with the Articles and Homilies of their own Church, which they have severally subscribed. The especial attention of these men has been directed to the circumstantials of religion. They have strenuously recommended obsolete ceremonies in the public worship of God, and in several instances have actually introduced them ; for which they have been rebuked by their ecclesiastical superiors : and, indeed, nearly the whole of the bishops have, with various degrees of severity, expressed their disapprobation of the principles and conduct of the party.

That these men, notwithstanding their professions of strictness and severity of manners, are not free from the leaven of Antinomianism, is, I think, manifest. I pass over the bitter and persecuting spirit which not a few of them have betrayed. Much they say on the subject of "catholicity," but certainly *catholic love* is no part of their system; for they have shown the deepest hostility toward nearly all the churches of Protestant Christendom, and have treated even the martyred reformers with contumely. The direct effect of their proceedings has been to create a feeling in favour of the Church of Rome; and some persons who entertain the views of the party, it seems, were known to be dissatisfied with their own position as Protestants, and began to entertain serious thoughts of connecting themselves with the Papal hierarchy. To satisfy the minds of these persons, the "Tract for the Times," numbered ninety, was published. It is intended to show that the Articles of the Church of England, although decidedly opposed to the tenets of Rome, may nevertheless be *explained* so as not very materially to differ from the Papal creed. Men, therefore, who dissent from the Articles of the English Church, need not forsake her communion on that account, but should rather inter-

pret those Articles in accordance with their own views. According to this tract, a young man who is a Romanist at heart may subscribe the formularies of the Church of England, without believing them, and thus enter upon the ministry in her with a lie in his mouth. If such conduct be justifiable when a man is appointed to the most sacred of all offices, that of a Christian minister, whose business it is to guide the people in the way of truth and righteousness, it cannot be seriously wrong with respect to offices of a less sacred nature. Suppose then that ministers of state, senators, judges, and military and naval commanders, were to act in this manner, taking their respective oaths of office with mental reservation, and even in a sense directly opposite to the proper meaning of the words; and that the same course were followed in all commercial transactions, and in all private contracts and engagements; what must be the consequence, but an abandonment of all confidence, and the disruption of society? Principles more immoral in their tendency than those which tract ninety imbodies were perhaps never put forth through the medium of the British press; yet that publication, with all its flagrant dishonesty, is still allowed to circulate, and the parties whose

organ it is have the face to appear as public reformers! O for an English Pascal, who by a series of "Provincial Letters," or in any other way, should exhibit these principles in all their deformity, and preserve the mind of Protestant England from the bane of such Jesuitical morality!

If a man submit to inconvenience and suffering, rather than do a thing which he considers sinful and dishonourable, he is generally regarded with respect, even when he is thought to be mistaken. He may be in error, and even betray weakness of intellect; but he proves himself to be honest, and therefore trust-worthy. Some of the Anglo-Catholic clergy have resigned their Protestant character, and gone over to the Church of Rome; but the greater part of them remain in the established Church. Their doctrine is declared by the prelates to be opposed to the formularies which they have subscribed; and some of themselves have strongly censured the Book of Common-prayer, which they daily use, and declared their decided preference of Popish forms of divine worship. One of them has described himself and his brethren in the use of the English Liturgy, as "working in chains." And yet, with these views and predilections, they eat the bread of the Church

from whose doctrine they dissent, and whose services they alternately praise and vilify. What the civil courts think of such conduct may be easily learned from their decisions in the case of Lady Hewley's charity. If orthodox endowments ought not to be applied to the support of Socinian error, neither ought Protestant endowments to be applied to the support of Popery, in any of its modifications. Yet here are men declaiming against Protestantism, and renouncing its very name, while they pocket the money which was intended to be appropriated to the defence of its doctrines, and the performance of its rites!

Now, sir, I appeal to you as a Christian minister, and a man that fears God, whether such moral principles and such conduct are consistent with the holiness of the gospel? You profess to be greatly concerned on account of the Antinomianism of the Wesleyan body, and, in your eagerness to substantiate the charge against them, you have invented for them a creed, and affected to trace the development of it in sins of which the accused are not guilty. But can you discern nothing of this evil in the Church of Rome, and in the party whose sayings and doings have called forth so many episcopal admonitions? If you really have a

godly jealousy of Antinomianism, and not a mere feeling of dislike for the Wesleyans,—instead of teaching whining sentimentalists to say, “Thou dost soothe the heart, thou Church of Rome,”—warn that corrupt community of the guilt and danger of tolerating in her children the gross immoralities by which immense numbers of them in all parts of the world are distinguished. Tell her that, however she may “soothe” the consciences of bad men by her masses, indulgences, and absolutions, “the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.” Reprove the Anglo-Catholics for sending forth the tract number ninety, which has been an occasion of so much public scandal; exhort them to suppress it without delay; and to repent before both God and man that they ever sanctioned the immoral principles which it contains. If they hesitate, quote the following scriptures to them, and say that, whatever they may find in “tradition” of a contrary kind, it ought to be rejected with abhorrence:—“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another,” Eph. iv, 25. “Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds,” Col. iii, 9. Tell these misguided men, that their continuance in

a Protestant church, while they propagate the doctrines of Papal Rome, is at variance with every principle of justice, truth, and honour; and that their spirit of bitter exclusiveness is perfectly alien from the charity of the gospel, "without which all their doings are" confessed to be "nothing worth." Sound an alarm in the ears of the Anglo-Catholics for having so far identified themselves with the great apostacy, as to have openly defended one of its worst characteristics, that of "speaking lies in hypocrisy," 1 Tim. iv, 2. If you thus oppose Antinomianism wherever it is seen to exist, your reproofs addressed to the Wesleyans will be the more effective; because it will be seen that they proceed not from personal antipathy, but from a righteous detestation of sin. But if you persist in charging the Wesleyan body with evils which either do not exist among them at all, or exist to a very limited extent, and are constantly reprov'd and condemned, while you maintain a complete silence concerning still greater evils which meet you at every step, it is easy to see that your rebukes are rather the ebullitions of party prejudice, than the honest outbreaks of godly zeal; and therefore are more likely to provoke recrimination than to lead to repentance and amendment.

I have to complain, fifthly, that in attacking Wesleyanism, you have thrown discredit upon Christian godliness as described in the New Testament. Every reflection that you have cast upon religion as taught by Mr. Wesley and his people, applies with equal force to personal Christianity as taught by our blessed Lord and his apostles. An argument in proof of the divine authority of the gospel has often been drawn from the effects which were produced by the preaching of it in the primitive times. Large numbers of people who had long been addicted to the worst habits, were not only reformed, but entirely changed in their spirit and temper, through the apostolic ministry. An ample account of the people who were thus converted is given by the New Testament writers. They are everywhere described as believers in Christ; and, as such, they are declared to be justified, received into the favour of God, and adopted into his family. They are all spoken of as having received the Holy Spirit, so as to live under his influence, and to be comforted, quickened, regenerated, and sanctified by him; to live in habits of devotion, of holy love and obedience. Many of the people of whom these things are said had formerly been profligate and polluted heathens. These are the facts. How

are they to be accounted for? An unbeliever may easily borrow your theory, and say that these people were taught to look for certain "feelings" in their minds; that they set themselves to produce those "feelings," which unhappily men "have the power in a great measure to do;" and when these feelings did not come, and the people were unsuccessful in their attempts to call them forth, they had nothing to do but to "invent them." So that by means of self-deceit and hypocrisy they might easily be what they called justified, regenerated, and made happy. Such is the theory which satisfies you with regard to "Wesleyanism," and may satisfy an infidel with regard to Christianity, as it is described in the Epistles of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John. But with such a theory no man can be satisfied who duly considers the subject.

It is true that repentance is a "feeling," or rather, a complication of "feelings;" but it is something more. It is such a conviction of sin as produces godly sorrow, deep humiliation and shame before God; a renunciation of the world and sin; earnest desires to regain the favour and image of God; and a turning to him in confession, deprecation, and prayer. Of that conviction the Holy Spirit is the direct author;

and the exercise of repentance is enjoined upon all men, everywhere; since without it they must perish for ever.

Faith in Christ is a "feeling;" but it is something more. It is that penitent trust in him, as the Mediator between God and man, by which the benefits of his redemption are obtained. According to the provisions of the evangelical covenant, men are justified by faith; they are adopted into the family of God by faith; they receive the promised gift of the Spirit by faith; they live by faith; they walk by faith; they are saved by faith.

Spiritual peace and joy are "feelings;" but they are something more. They are the gracious communications of the Holy Spirit, vouchsafed to those whom he acknowledges and "seals" as the children of God. They are the direct effect of that witness which he bears with their spirits that they are "accepted in the Beloved." Of such persons it is said that their "hearts and minds are kept by the peace of God, which passeth all understanding;" and that "the joy of the Lord is their strength."

Love to God is a "feeling;" but it is something more. It is conformity to "the first and great commandment," the supreme law of earth and heaven. It is the principle of holiness,

and of all acceptable obedience. To bring mankind to the possession and exercise of this love, God has himself promised to "circumcise their hearts;" so that "love is of God." Where it reigns, there is heaven. In the absence of it, even existence is misery. Hence the force of Joshua's admonition: "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God."

The fear of God is a "feeling;" but it is something more. It is the principle by which good men are restrained from sin, and from all irreverent and unbecoming familiarity with God. Under its influence they study in all things to please him, and to preserve a conscience pure and upright.

Zeal for God is a "feeling;" but it is something more. It is the pure flame of love, expressing itself in earnest desires for the spread of God's truth and ordinances, and the extension of his dominion; and that the glory which is due to his name may be given to him by all creatures upon earth, as well as by all in heaven.

Delight in religious duties, such as public and secret worship, receiving the Lord's supper, reading the Holy Scriptures, and moral obedience, is a "feeling;" but it is something

more. It is a direct effect of that momentous change which takes place in the heart when a man is "born from above;" and is therefore a sign of that new nature which all must possess, before they can either serve God acceptably in this world, or enter into heaven in the next.

Contentment with our providential lot, and patience in affliction, are "feelings;" but they are something more. They are a meek and dutiful submission to the will of our heavenly Father, who chooses our inheritance for us, and who causes "all things to work together for good to them that love him."

Brotherly love is a "feeling;" but it is something more. It springs from the love of God, is expressly enjoined by Jesus Christ, and is the mark and badge of his true disciples. By this they are induced to seek each other's society, to bear one another's burdens, and in every possible way to promote each other's benefit. Without this men are no more in the sight of God than "sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal." They are therefore "taught of Him to love one another."

Love to all mankind is a "feeling;" but it is something more. It is enjoined by "the second" commandment of God, which is "like unto the first," both in its nature and obligations.

By this powerful "feeling" good men are impelled to forgive injuries, to return blessing for cursing, to pray for their persecutors, to overcome evil by acts of pure kindness, to reprove sin, to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, entertain strangers, visit the sick, relieve the widow and the fatherless, and do good to all.

Hope of heaven is a "feeling;" but it is something more. It is an earnest expectation of perfect and endless happiness in the enjoyment of God; and supplies the most powerful motives to personal holiness and perseverance in the way of righteousness. "For every one that hath his hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." Animated by this hope, "the noble army of martyrs" passed with unshrinking fidelity through the fiery conflict, and thus gained the promised crown.

These, sir, are the "feelings" which the Wesleyans are taught to "look for," and even to ask in prayer from the God of all grace; because he only can impart them. From the pulpit of every Wesleyan chapel, in every class-meeting and love-feast, they are pressed upon the people as constituting the very substance of true religion. Those persons are the most esteemed who attain to the greatest proficiency in

these "feelings," at the same time exhibiting the genuine effects of them in their lives. Notwithstanding the strong and unqualified terms in which you have expressed yourself on the subject, I trust it is not your intention absolutely to condemn religious "feeling," in this sense; but whether you do or not, with the Holy Scriptures in their hands, and the testimony of ten thousand witnesses before them, the Wesleyans are not likely to swerve from the doctrine which they have received.

You say that they and you preach two different gospels. This is very manifest; and it requires no extraordinary spirit of discernment to determine which party adheres the most closely to "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," which was committed to the trust of the apostles, and which they have embodied in their writings. Your theory, as we have seen, is directly at variance with the general tenor of the New Testament. The Wesleyans have been taught by the revered founder of their societies, to be "men of one book;" and to teach nothing as binding upon the consciences of mankind but what is clearly taught in the inspired records. Should an angel from heaven bring them any doctrine which either contra-

dicts the New Testament, or professes to supply its alleged deficiencies, they would spurn his message as unauthorized and apocryphal. If you preach any other gospel, I trust you have duly weighed the consequences of propagating it, in opposition to that which bears the direct marks of divine authority.

Through good report, and through evil report, the Wesleyans have hitherto persevered, bearing their honest testimony in favour of inward religion, the kingdom of God in the heart, manifesting itself in every form of piety and moral goodness. What they contend for is not matter of mere opinion, and of outward form, (the importance of which they are, however, ready to acknowledge,) but solid virtue, faith in Christ, the love of God and man, spiritual worship, holiness and benevolence, an exemplary discharge of all the duties of life, connected with peace and joy, and the hope of future glory. For religion in its Scriptural simplicity, power, and life, they will not cease to contend, leaving all mere ceremonies of human invention, whether derived from the Nicene Church, or the church of the scribes and Pharisees, to those who admire them.

Various forms of evil exist at present in this

country, and are in active operation ; such as infidelity in the character of atheism, and anarchy wild and fierce, menacing every public and private interest. Immense multitudes of the people are still ignorant and wicked ; and not a few of the children of the poor, if we may judge from parliamentary documents, are scarcely aware that there is a God, a future state, or any difference between moral right and wrong. Wesleyanism has laboured for many years, according to its means, to counteract these evils, and with most encouraging success, as is known to every candid observer in the land. A writer in the last number of the Quarterly Review confesses, that the established Church has done nothing for the colliers and miners. In a collier village, containing a population of five thousand souls, it is said that there are “ thirty beer shops, without a church or chapel, save the meeting-house of the indefatigable Wesleyan, who, let it be noted, has hitherto been, in many of these regions, the only Protestant missionary. ‘ The Methodists,’ says Mr. Leifchild, ‘ have chiefly, and, in several instances, exclusively undertaken the charge of providing religious instruction in the collieries. Considerable moral amelioration has ensued through their

agency, for which they merit, and have received from nearly all parties their meed of praise.'” (Report on Northumberland and North Durham, Appendix i, 533.) The reviewer adds, “ Our Protestant system has ever been defective in its machinery, as well as curtailed in its resources ; and, moreover, the upper classes of Englishmen, speaking generally, have scarcely yet learned to be the *companions* of the poorer orders of society, however meritorious their claims as distributors of charity. These reports prove that the Wesleyan has followed them in every village, and gone from cottage to cottage, to leave, in person, his tracts and his discipline. Hence the English colliers, where they have any religion at all, are Methodists.”*

It is also reported by Mr. Leifchild, that the Wesleyan Methodists have in one district built, at a cost of twenty-nine thousand pounds, forty chapels, containing about fifteen thousand sittings ; and that in these chapels are taught upward of four thousand Sunday-school scholars. All these buildings Mr. Leifchild found to be situated within about one mile of Newcastle, on each side of the river Tyne ; and he adds, that there are many similar erections in

* Quarterly Review, Number cxxxix, p. 167.

the mining districts of Northumberland and Durham.*

These are but a specimen of the efforts which have been made by these people for the spiritual good of mankind, both at home and abroad. Corrupt in mind and heart as you declare them to be, the fact is, that, having themselves experienced the reality and blessedness of inward religion, they are anxious that all the world should share with them in its benefits. Hence their exertions in the British islands, and in the dark and wretched nations of the heathen world. "For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves" to build schools and chapels, to support a laborious itinerant ministry, to preach in the open air, and in private houses, as well as to send missionaries to far distant lands, beyond civilization and the protection of law, for the one object of turning men to Christ as their Saviour. With what success they have laboured, by the blessing of God, millions have declared both in life and death, and still declare.

Yet does it appear that, in the estimation of those clergymen who entertain your views of

* Parliamentary Evidence, detail No. 643, p. 716.

religion, Wesleyanism itself is one of the greatest of all evils: and hence their ceaseless and most strenuous efforts are at this day directed to arrest its progress, and, if possible, to effect its extermination. Tracts in great numbers are printed in Oxford, London, Leeds, and other places, and are carried from house to house through the towns and villages, containing statements against Mr. Wesley and his people, which are drawn up with little regard for truth, and still less for charity. Many persons suspect that these publications are intended to exasperate the Wesleyan societies against the Church of England, and thus weaken the Protestant interest; that so the Church of Rome may regain her lost ascendancy. If there be such a design, I pray God to "turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." This fact, however, is undeniable, that most of the tracts to which reference has just been made, embody precisely the same principles as do those which are circulated against Wesleyanism by the "Catholic Institute," of which Daniel O'Connell and his friends are the most active members.

To whatever trials it may please God, in the righteous dispensations of his providence, to subject the Protestants of Great Britain, my

hope is, that the Wesleyan societies will resolutely choose rather to follow the martyred reformers through the flames of Smithfield to paradise, than abandon the blessed gospel of the Son of God for the miserable superstition and the blasphemies of the man of sin. Their great calling is to bear testimony to this vital truth, that "circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God," under the influence of "faith which worketh by love." In the enforcement of the great verities of Christianity they know no "reserve;" but endeavour, "by manifestation of the truth to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Thus the venerable Charles Wesley sung,—

Thy power and saving truth to show,
A warfare at thy charge I go,
Strong in the Lord, and thy great might,
Gladly take up thy hallow'd cross;
And suffering all things for thy cause,
Beneath thy bloody banner fight.
A spectacle to fiends and men,
To all their fierce or cool disdain,
With calmest pity I submit:
Determined naught to know beside
My Jesus and him crucified,
I tread the world beneath my feet.

For this alone I live below,
The power of godliness to show,
 The wonders wrought by Jesu's name ;
O that I might but faithful prove ;
Witness to all thy pardoning love,
 And point them to the atoning Lamb !
Let me to every creature cry,
The poor and rich, the low and high,
 " Believe, and feel thy sins forgiven !
Damn'd till by Jesus saved thou art !
Till Jesu's blood hath wash'd thy heart,
 Thou canst not find the gate of heaven !"

I am, sir, your obedient servant.

LONDON, August 4, 1842.

THE END.



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