

much for another, and so much for each, and then adding the sums together, and forming a large limited sum, just sufficient to ransom the elect, appears unscriptural, and gives a degrading view of the glorious subject. An all-sufficient atonement was made at once, and an innumerable fullness of mercy and grace is treasured up in Christ to be communicated according to the eternal purpose and counsel of God. Every believer receives from this fullness; others remain under condemnation, not through the defect of merit in Christ, but through their own impenitency and unbelief." To these views of the subject every consistent Methodist can readily subscribe; and with these views I leave you to decide whether the charge of robbing Christ of his crown or glory can be substantiated against us.

4. The Methodists are accused likewise of "setting at naught the agency of the Spirit." This is so far from being correct, that they ascribe more glory to the Spirit of God than the peculiarities of Calvinism can possibly allow its advocates to do. An absurd distinction of grace into common and distinguishing, does indeed prevail among such. But it is evident that all the benefit which can be derived from the former, by those who are decretively selected from the latter, is only an aggravation of guilt, an increase of misery! The Methodists are convinced that nothing evil can proceed from God, nothing good from the devil. By whomsoever, therefore, a good deed is performed, or a good desire felt, they consider it to be excited by Him from whom all good proceeds.

Thou all our works in us hast wrought,
Our good is all Divine;
The praise of every virtuous thought
And righteous word is—thine.

Wesley.

I should not do justice either to my subject or to my feelings, were I to omit the mention of a scriptural sentiment universally embraced, and avowed by the Methodists, but which I must think is not viewed by some good men in that prominent light to which it has a claim. I allude to the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit, by which upon the exercise of saving faith, we obtain an immediate, consolatory, and infallible testimony, that we are "passed from death unto life." To the persevering inculcation of this important truth (under God) we are indebted for that cordial unanimity, and affection, and zeal, which so eminently characterize us as a body, and which excite the admiration of other denominations. Every sinner, awakened to a sense of his danger, and humbled on account of his transgressions, is importunately urged to seek that faith in Christ by which he may be justified, have peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost; on the exercise of which the Holy Spirit will be given to him, and "bear witness with his spirit that he is a child of God." He is not merely taught to infer that he is personally interested in Christ, from his being desirous to conform to the precepts of the Gospel; but is taught not to rest satisfied short of the experience and assurance that he is so by the sensible operations of God's Spirit within him. And, glory be to God, this apostolic doctrine is owned by him. Many now present can testify to the blessed effects it has wrought within them, and are living witnesses of the injustice of those who accuse us of supposing that his agency is needless, and that we can do without it.

5. The Methodists are said to "anticipate in this life the attainment of absolute perfection." In no one instance have the Methodists been more misunderstood and misrepresented than in their views of the doctrine of Christian perfection. The ideas they are supposed by some to entertain on this particular—that such a perfection may be obtained in this life as will render needless any Divine assistance; such a perfection as constitutes us independent of Jesus Christ; a perfection from which we cannot decline, and beyond which no scriptural progress can be made. Is not this insinuated when we are told, "If you are perfect you need no farther help from God—you have

no occasion for the blood of sprinkling—you cannot be better?" But from what author amongst us have they extracted or even inferred such monstrous absurdities as these? It is sufficient to deny the charge. We might as well aspire to omnipotence as to such perfection as this. We do not suppose we can attain to infallibility. The perfection we speak of is not such as will constitute our works meritorious, for the most perfect Christian will always acknowledge

"Every moment, Lord I want
The merit of thy death!"

Nor is it such as will not admit of degrees or advances either in time or eternity. The perfection we contend for is that of which Paul speaks (Phil. iii. 15.) a perfection which puts us on the stretch for higher attainments. "But don't you expect to be saved from all sin in this life, even from indwelling sin?" Yes; otherwise we despair of being happy in another. But is not sin an inseparable attendant on the body? Infirmities, (the sad effects of sin) are inseparably connected with a mortal body; and whilst that body is inhabited by a wicked heart it must, of necessity, be connected with sin. But come man, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Jesus came to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Not only to make us clean, but to make us holy. His precious blood cleanseth from all sin, and his spirit worketh in us every good word and work. Consequently he that is born of God sinneth not, knowingly he has dominion over it; is led to anticipate its destruction, and to have every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. He seeks to have his heart so filled with love to God as to leave no room for a rival: to possess that perfect love which casteth out fear; to be so cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit as to be enabled to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. In a word, to be sanctified wholly, sanctified throughout, and that the whole spirit, soul, and body, may be preserved blameless until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Obtaining his desire, he is more watchful unto prayer than ever, and by building himself up on his most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost he keeps himself in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

I conclude this part of my subject by reminding you that the blessing we have spoken of is within the grasp of every human soul—that it is procured and retained by faith—and that he is aspiring after the full enjoyment of Christian liberty and Christian perfection who can cordially pray,

Now let me gain perfection's height,
Now let me into nothing fall;
As less than nothing in thy sight,
And feel that Christ is all in all."

A PRECIOUS THOUGHT.—What can be so consoling to the heart of feeble man, as the thought that his Maker cares for him, and will save him from the cruel tyranny of his sins? Hours of despondency and gloom often cast their shadows over the Christian's mind; but when the sweet impression revisits his soul that his dear Redeemer cares for him, it is sunshine with his heart again. What pen can reveal the seriousness of the thoughts of Almighty love, that steals into the soul with all their balmy fragrance. Surely, God is love!

ANGELS glorify God by obedience, but not by sufferings. This honour is peculiar to the saints.