

one of the best and most useful of men is sophisticated into atheism! In the replies of its advocates, abuse is unheded, misrepresentations rectified, and any thing in the shape of argument logically stated, and meekly and successfully combated. This is the firm, deliberate opinion of the writer, after a candid investigation of most writings on both sides; and having formed this opinion, he has conscientiously acted upon it—has rejected what to him appeared evidently erroneous, and espoused the cause of truth and soberness. But to proceed.

The Methodists have been accused of supposing that man makes the first step towards his recovery from sin. Now how does this correspond with the following verse which they frequently sing?

"What are our works but sin and death,
Till thou the quick'ning spirit breathe?
Thou giv'st the power thy grace to move
O wondrous grace! O boundless love!"

Innumerable extracts might be given from the works of Wesley, Fletcher, and others, in which man's woful depravity and utter helplessness are scripturally proved, and pathetically described. But so much has been said, respecting the Methodists having recourse to these writers as their infallible oracles, and that every defence of Methodism, is nothing more than a series of quotations from their publications, that I choose rather to refer unprejudiced persons to them than to quote them myself. The Methodists unequivocally believe that man's destruction is of himself, that his salvation is of the Lord. They consider that he who has graciously provided a remedy, must have made the first step towards man's recovery. That he who is urgent in expostulating with sinners, must thereby prove his concern to save them. They reject with abhorrence the idea that man's inability to recover himself from the fall is the result of a secret, cruel, eternal irrecoverable decree of God; but are active in proclaiming that it is entirely the result of wilful transgression, and that God is able to remove the evil, and give him power to do his will. They deem it inconsistent with reason, with the expostulations, promises, and threatenings of Scripture, to suppose that God compels any to return; but they believe that by the invitation of his Gospel, by the strivings of his Spirit, by his providential dispensations, by his long-suffering and forbearance towards them, he at once convinces them of their need of salvation, and of his willingness to save them in his own appointed way. God hath set before the human race life and death, a blessing and a curse; and this is the decree he publisheth, a decree firm as the basis of his throne, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

2. The Methodists have been accused of "expecting justification by the merits of works." If what has been advanced under the former head be correct, this accusation must be equally unjust. If every good and perfect gift cometh from above, and be wrought in us by the Spirit of God; if, further, our circumstances, as rational and accountable creatures, lay us under perpetual obligations to love, to fear, and to serve our Maker; no claim to salvation can possibly be made by us on the ground of merits, even if we did our duty, much less when that duty has not only been shamefully neglected, but the general aspect, it may be, of our conduct has been one perpetual scene of wilful and absolute rebellion. The Methodists never did, and with their views of man's lost condition, they never can, expect justification by works, but by faith alone. They believe the record God hath given of his Son, and "are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." By the exercise of a life of faith they receive Christ as their wisdom and righteousness, their sanctification, and redemption; and this faith is accounted to them for righteousness. "Then you make faith the meritorious cause of salvation?" No more than a beggar, by stretching forth his hand to receive your bounty, becomes meri-

toriously entitled to it. Faith sees what Christ exhibits; faith receives what Christ proffers; faith retains what Christ imparts. The love of God is the source from whence the blessing springs, and the obedience unto death of Christ its procuring cause. Christ, sinless himself, "was made a sin offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The Antinomian delusion of Christ's righteousness being so imputed to the sinner as to justify him in the sight of God, let him live as he lists; of its being compared to a robe that makes its wearer all glorious without, while within he continues full of all uncleanness, is justly opposed by the Methodists as unscriptural and pernicious; yet they earnestly contend that what Christ has done for us alone procures pardon and reconciliation; and that what he shall work in us shall alone keep us from falling; and prepare us for the enjoyment of heavenly bliss.

3. Another accusation brought against the Methodists is, that "they rob Christ of his crown." This is a hackneyed expression in frequent use among the high doctrinals, and signifies the ascribing to ourselves what should be ascribed to Christ alone. This the Methodists are supposed to do, by embracing the doctrine of general redemption, and by denying the notion of irresistible grace, hereby rendering salvation conditional. It would seem somewhat strange, if a nobleman were to prepare a feast, and invite all his tenants to partake of it, to accuse those who accepted the invitation of robbing him of his claim of benevolence merely by taking what he had benevolently provided for them, and for which they are solely indebted to his generosity. Whether I force a donation into the pocket of a starving man, or whether I offer it to his acceptance, the benevolent intention is the same. Don't hastily censure this, as carnal or fallacious reasoning, by which spiritual things are rather darkened than illustrated. Such reasonings and such comparisons did our Divine Master employ himself in order to convey religious instruction to the minds of his hearers. And after he had repeatedly assured them of the ample provision made by God for the recovery of the fallen race; after having removed every impediment to the proffers of his bounty on God's part, and to his acceptance on our's by his death upon the cross; after having established the mission by his resurrection from the dead; prior to his resuming the glory which he had with his Father before the world existed, he left his disciples this injunction, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." A direct intimation that the grace of God is designed for all, and that all have the power either to accept or reject it. Now is not the comprehensive design to save all more laudable than the partial contracted design to save a few? Is not the creation of a free agent more wonderful, more glorious, than that of a passive machine; does not the light which, by virtue of Christ's sacrifice, "enlightens every man coming into the world" to such a degree, that if he be not wilfully blind, but follow its directions, he will be guided by it, as the shepherds by the star, to the feet of the Saviour,—does not this light, I say, universally diffuse, and thus conditionally beneficial, reflect a bright lustre upon his perfect work, and adorn his crown with richer brilliancy than the supposition that his atonement secured the unconditional salvation of a part, and left the salvation of the rest depending upon the hopeless task of doing what is to them impossible, because the "distinguishing" grace necessary to effect it is withheld? Hear the observations of an eminent commentator, and very moderate Calvinist upon the subject, (observations which I bless God I ever met with, for by them I was first induced to relinquish the notion of particular redemption, and to believe that the arms of mercy encompassed all mankind :) "The idea of Christ paying exactly so much for one, and so

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