

hath all power in heaven and in earth ; beseeching Him, that, in every circumstance of life, you may stand "firm as the beaten anvil to the stroke ;" desiring nothing on earth ; accounting all things but dung and dross, that you may win Christ ; and always remembering, "It is the part of a good champion, to be flayed alive, and to conquer !"

October 10, 1745

THE
PRINCIPLES OF A METHODIST.

WRITTEN IN 1740.

Occasioned by a late Pamphlet, entitled, "A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PRINCIPLES OF METHODISM."

TO THE READER.

1. I HAVE often wrote on controverted points before ; but not with an eye to any particular person. So that this is the first time I have appeared in controversy, properly so called. Indeed I have not wanted occasion to do it before ; particularly when, after many stabs in the dark, I was publicly attacked, not by an open enemy, but by my own familiar friend. But I could not answer him. I could only cover my face and say, *Και συ εἰς ἐκείνων ; Και συ, τέκνον ;* "Art thou also among them ? Art thou, my son ?"

2. I now tread an untried path "with fear and trembling ;" fear, not of my adversary, but of myself. I fear my own spirit, lest I "fall where many mightier have been slain." I never knew one man (or but one) write controversy, with what I thought a right spirit. Every disputant seems to think (as every soldier) that he may hurt his opponent as much as he

can; nay, that he ought to do his worst to him, or he cannot make the best of his own cause; that so he do not belie or wilfully misrepresent him, he must expose him as far as he is able. It is enough, we suppose, if we do not show heat or passion against our adversary. But, not to despise him, or endeavour to make others do so, is quite a work of super-erogation.

3. But ought these things to be so? (I speak on the Christian scheme.) Ought we not to love our neighbour as ourselves? And does a man cease to be our neighbour, because he is of a different opinion; nay, and declares himself so to be? Ought we not, for all this, to do to him as we would he should do to us? But do we ourselves love to be exposed, or set in the worst light? Would we willingly be treated with contempt? If not, why do we treat others thus? And yet who scruples it? Who does not hit every blow he can, however foreign to the merits of the cause? Who, in controversy, casts the mantle of love over the nakedness of his brother? Who keeps steadily and uniformly to the question, without ever striking at the person? Who shows, in every sentence, that he loves his brother only less than the truth?

4. I have made a little faint essay towards this. I have a brother who is as my own soul. My desire is, in every word I say, to look upon Mr. Tucker as in his place; and to speak no tittle concerning the one in any other spirit than I would speak concerning the other. But whether I have attained this or no, I know not; for my heart is "deceitful and desperately wicked." If I have spoken anything in another spirit, I pray God it may not be laid to my charge; and that it may not condemn me in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest! Meanwhile, my heart's desire and prayer to God is, that both I, and all who think it their duty to oppose me, may "put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us."

THE
PRINCIPLES OF A METHODIST.

1. THERE has lately appeared in the world a tract, entitled, "A Brief History of the Principles of Methodism." I doubt not but the writer's design was good, and believe he has a real desire to know the truth. And the manner wherein he pursues that design is generally calm and dispassionate. He is, indeed, in several mistakes; but as many of these are either of small consequence in themselves, or do not immediately relate to me, it is not my concern to mention them. All of any consequence which relates to me, I think, falls under three heads:

First. That I believe justification by faith alone.

Secondly. That I believe sinless perfection. And,

Thirdly. That I believe inconsistencies.

Of each of these I will speak as plainly as I can.

2. First. That I believe justification by faith alone. This I allow. For I am firmly persuaded, that every man of the offspring of Adam is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil; that this corruption of our nature, in every person born into the world, deserves God's wrath and damnation; that therefore, if ever we receive the remission of our sins, and are accounted righteous before God, it must be only for the merit of Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings of any kind. Nay, I am persuaded, that all works done before justification, have in them the nature of sin; and that, consequently, till he is justified, a man has no power to do any work which is pleasing and acceptable to God.

3. To express my meaning a little more at large: I believe, three things must go together in our justification: Upon God's part, his great mercy and grace; upon Christ's part, the satisfaction of God's justice, by the offering his body, and shedding his blood; and upon our part, true and living faith in the merits of Jesus Christ. So that in our justification there is not

only God's mercy and grace, but his justice also. And so the grace of God does not shut out the righteousness of God in our justification ; but only shuts out the righteousness of man, that is, the righteousness of our works.

4. And therefore St. Paul requires nothing on the part of man, but only a true and living faith. Yet this faith does not shut out repentance, hope, and love, which are joined with faith in every man that is justified. But it shuts them out from the office of justifying. So that although they are all present together in him that is justified, yet they justify not all together.

5. Neither does faith shut out good works, necessarily to be done afterwards. But we may not do them to this intent,—to be justified by doing them. Our justification comes freely, of the mere mercy of God ; for whereas all the world was not able to pay any part towards their ransom, it pleased him, without any of our deserving, to prepare for us Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom might be paid, and his justice satisfied. Christ, therefore, is now the righteousness of all them that truly believe in him.

6. But let it be observed, the true sense of those words, " We are justified by faith in Christ only," is not, that this our own act, " to believe in Christ," or this our faith which is within us, justifies us ; for that were to account ourselves to be justified by some act or virtue that is within us ; but that although we have faith, hope, and love within us, and do never so many good works, yet we must renounce the merit of all, of faith, hope, love, and all other virtues and good works, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as far too weak to deserve our justification ; for which, therefore, we must trust only in God's mercy, and the merits of Christ. For it is he alone that taketh away our sins. To him alone are we to go for this ; forsaking all our virtues, good words, thoughts, and works, and putting our trust in Christ only.

7. In strictness, therefore, neither our faith nor our works justify us, that is, deserve the remission of our sins. But God himself justifies us, of his own mercy, through the merits of his Son only. Nevertheless, because by faith we embrace the promise of God's mercy and of the remission of our sins, therefore the Scripture says, that faith does justify, yea, faith without works. And it is all one to say, " Faith without works," and " Faith alone, justifies us," Therefore the ancient Fathers from

time to time speak thus : " Faith alone justifies us." And because we receive faith through the only merits of Christ, and not through the merit and virtue we have, or work we do ; therefore in that respect we renounce, as it were, again, faith, works, and all other virtues. For our corruption through original sin is so great, that all our faith, charity, words, and works, cannot merit or deserve any part of our justification for us. And therefore we thus speak, humbling ourselves before God, and giving Christ all the glory of our justification.

8. But it should also be observed, what that faith is whereby we are justified. Now, that faith which brings not forth good works, is not a living faith, but a dead and devilish one. For even the devils believe that Christ was born of a virgin ; that he wrought all kinds of miracles, declaring himself to be very God ; that for our sakes he died and rose again, and ascended into heaven ; and at the end of the world shall come again, to judge the quick and the dead. This the devils believe ; and so they believe all that is written in the Old and New Testament : And yet still, for all this faith, they are but devils ; they remain still in their damnable estate, lacking the true Christian faith.

9. The true Christian faith is, not only to believe the Holy Scriptures and the articles of our faith are true ; but also, to have " a sure trust and confidence to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ," whereof doth follow a loving heart, to obey his commandments. And this faith neither any devil hath, nor any wicked man. No ungodly man hath or can have this " sure trust and confidence in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God."

10. This is what I believe (and have believed for some years) concerning justification by faith alone. I have chose to express it in the words of a little treatise, published several years ago ; as being the most authentic proof, both of my past and present sentiments. If I err herein, let those who are better informed calmly point out my error to me ; and I trust, I shall not shut my eyes against the light, from whatsoever side it comes.

11. The Second thing laid to my charge is, that I believe sinless perfection. I will simply declare what I do believe concerning this also, and leave unprejudiced men to judge.

12. My last and most deliberate thoughts on this head were published but a few months since, in these words :—

(1.) " Perhaps the general prejudice against Christian per-

fection may chiefly arise from a misapprehension of the nature of it. We willingly allow, and continually declare, there is no such perfection in this life, as implies either a dispensation from doing good and attending all the ordinances of God; or a freedom from ignorance, mistake, temptation, and a thousand infirmities necessarily connected with flesh and blood.

(2.) "First. We not only allow, but earnestly contend, that there is no perfection in this life, which implies any dispensation from attending all the ordinances of God, or from 'doing good unto all men, while we have time,' though 'specially unto the household of faith.' We believe, that not only the babes in Christ, who have newly found redemption in his blood, but those also who are 'grown up into perfect men,' are indispensably obliged, as often as they have opportunity, 'to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him,' and to 'search the Scriptures;' by fasting, as well as temperance, to 'keep their bodies under, and bring them into subjection;' and, above all, to pour out their souls in prayer, both secretly and in the great congregation.

(3.) "We, Secondly, believe, that there is no such perfection in his life as implies an entire deliverance, either from ignorance or mistake, in things not essential to salvation, or from manifold temptations, or from numberless infirmities wherewith the corruptible body more or less presses down the soul. We cannot find any ground in Scripture to suppose, that any inhabitant of a house of clay is wholly exempt, either from bodily infirmities, or from ignorance of many things; or to imagine any is incapable of mistake, or falling into divers temptations.

(4.) "'But whom then do you mean by *one that is perfect?*' We mean one in whom 'is the mind which was in Christ,' and who so 'walketh as Christ walked;' a 'man that hath clean hands and a pure heart,' or that is 'cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit;' one in whom 'is no occasion of stumbling, and who accordingly 'doth not commit sin.' To declare this a little more particularly: We understand by that scriptural expression, 'a perfect man,' one in whom God hath fulfilled his faithful word, 'From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you: I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.' We understand hereby one whom God hath 'sanctified throughout, in body, soul, and spirit;' one who 'walketh in the light as he is in the light, in whom is no darkness at all; the blood of Jesus Christ his Son having cleaused him from all sin.'

(5.) "This man can now testify to all mankind, 'I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' He is 'holy, as God who called him is holy,' both in heart and 'in all manner of conversation.' He 'loveth the Lord his God with all his heart,' and serveth him 'with all his strength.' He 'loveth his neighbour,' every man, 'as himself;' yea, 'as Christ loved us;' them, in particular, that 'despitefully use him and persecute him, because they know not the Son, neither the Father.' Indeed his soul is all love, filled with 'bowels of mercies, kindness, meekness, gentleness, longsuffering.' And his life agreeth thereto, full of 'the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. And whatsoever he doeth either in word or deed, he doeth it all in the name,' in the love and power, 'of the Lord Jesus.' In a word, he doeth 'the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven.'

(6.) "This it is to be 'a perfect man,' to be sanctified throughout: Even 'to have a heart so all-flaming with the love of God,' to use Archbishop Usher's words, 'as continually to offer up every thought, word, and work, as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ.' In every thought of our hearts, in every word of our tongues, in every work of our hands, to 'show forth his praise, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' O that both we, and all who seek the Lord Jesus in sincerity, may thus be made perfect in one!"

13. If there be anything unscriptural in these words, anything wild or extravagant, anything contrary to the analogy of faith, or the experience of adult Christians, let them "smite me friendly and reprove me;" let them impart to me of the clearer light God has given them. How knowest thou, O man, "but thou mayest gain thy brother;" but he may at length come to the knowledge of the truth; and thy labour of love, shown forth with meekness of wisdom, may not be in vain?

14. There remains yet another charge against me, that I believe inconsistencies; that my tenets, particularly concerning justification, are contradictory to themselves; that Mr. Wesley, "since his return from Germany, has improved in the spirit of inconsistency." "For then he published two treatises of Dr. Barnes, the Calvinist, or Dominican rather, who suffered in 1541;" (let us spare the ashes of the dead. Were I such a Dominican as he was, I should rejoice too to die in the flames;) "the first on 'Justification by faith only;' the other on 'the

sinfulness of man's natural will, and his utter inability to do works acceptable to God, until he be justified.' Which principles, if added to his former tenets," (nay, they need not be *added* to them, for they are the very same,) "will give the whole a new vein of inconsistency, and make the contradictions more gross and glaring than before."

15. It will be necessary to speak more largely on this head, than on either of the preceding. And in order to speak as distinctly as I can, I propose taking the paragraphs one by one, as they lie before me.

16. (1.) It is "asserted that Mr. Law's system was the creed of the Methodists." But it is not proved. I had been eight years at Oxford before I read any of Mr. Law's writings; and when I did, I was so far from making them my creed, that I had objections to almost every page. But all this time my manner was, to spend several hours a day in reading the Scripture in the original tongues. And hence my system, so termed, was wholly drawn, according to the light I then had.

17. It was in my passage to Georgia, I met with those Teachers who would have taught me the way of God more perfectly. But I understood them not. Neither, on my arrival there, did they infuse any particularities into me, either about justification or anything else. For I came back with the same notions I went. And this I have explicitly acknowledged in my second Journal, where some of my words are these: "When Peter Böhler, as soon as I came to London, affirmed of true faith in Christ, (which is but one,) that it had these two fruits inseparably attending it, 'dominion over sin, and constant peace from a sense of forgiveness,' I was quite amazed, and looked upon it as a new gospel. If this was so, it was clear I had no faith. But I was not willing to be convinced of this. Therefore I disputed with all my might, and laboured to prove that faith might be where these were not; especially, where that sense of forgiveness was not; for, all the scriptures relating to this I had been long since taught to construe away, and to call all Presbyterians who spoke otherwise. Besides, I well saw, no one could (in the nature of things) have such a sense of forgiveness; and not feel it. But I felt it not. If then there was no faith without this, all my pretensions to faith dropped at once." (Vol. I. p. 101.)

18. (2.) Yet it was not Peter Böhler who convinced me that

conversion (I mean justification) was an instantaneous work. On the contrary, when I was convinced of the nature and fruits of justifying faith, still "I could not comprehend what he spoke of an instantaneous work. I could not understand how this faith should be given in a moment; how a man could at once be thus turned from darkness to light, from sin and misery to righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost. I searched the Scriptures again, touching this very thing, particularly the Acts of the Apostles. But to my utter astonishment, I found scarce any instances there of other than instantaneous conversions; scarce any others so slow as that of St. Paul, who was three days in the pangs of the new birth. I had but one retreat left, viz., 'Thus, I grant, God wrought in the first ages of Christianity; but the times are changed. What reason have I to believe he works in the same manner now?'

"But on Sunday, 23, I was beat out of this retreat too, by the concurring evidence of several living witnesses, who testified God had thus wrought in themselves; giving them, *in a moment*, such a faith in the blood of his Son, as translated them out of darkness into light, out of sin and fear into holiness and happiness. Here ended my disputing. I could now only cry out, 'Lord, help thou my unbelief!'" (Vol. I. p. 91.) The remaining part of this section, with the third and fourth, contain my own words, to which I still subscribe.

And if there is a mistake in the fifth, it is not material.

20. (3.) It is true, that "on Wednesday, July 12, the Count spoke to this effect:—

- (1.) "Justification is the forgiveness of sins.
- (2.) "The moment a man flies to Christ, he is justified.
- (3.) "And has peace with God, but not always joy.
- (4.) "Nor perhaps may he know he is justified till long after.
- (5.) "For the assurance of it is distinct from justification itself.
- (6.) "But others may know he is justified, by his power over sin, by his seriousness, his love of the brethren, and his hunger and thirst after righteousness; which alone proves the spiritual life to be begun.
- (7.) "To be justified is the same thing as to be born of God: When a man is awakened, he is begotten of God, and his fear, and sorrow, and sense of the wrath of God, are the pangs of the new birth."

It is true also, that I then recollected what P. Böhler had often said on this head, which was to this effect:—

(1.) “When a man has living faith in Christ, then he is justified.

(2.) “This is always given in a moment.

(3.) “And in that moment he has peace with God.

(4.) “Which he cannot have without knowing that he has it.

(5.) “And being ‘born of God, he sinneth not.

(6.) “Which deliverance from sin he cannot have without knowing that he has it.”

21. I did not apprehend it possible for any man living to have imagined, that I believed both these accounts; the words whereof I had purposely so ranged, and divided into short sentences, that the gross, irreconcilable difference between them might be plain to the meanest reader. I cannot therefore but be a little surprised at the strength of that prejudice which could prevent any one’s seeing, that, in opposition to the Count’s opinion, (which in many respects I wholly disapproved of,) I quoted the words of one of his own Church, which, if true, overturn it altogether.

22. I have nothing to object to the quotations made in the seventh, eighth, and ninth sections. In the tenth are these words: “Now, since Mr. Wesley went so far to gather such materials together, let us see what was the system (or rather the medley) of principles he had to return with to England.”

“OF THE ASSURANCE OF JUSTIFICATION.

“I BELIEVE that conversion is an instantaneous work; and that the moment a man is converted, or has living faith in Christ, he is justified: Which faith a man cannot have, without knowing that he hath it.

“Yet I believe he may not know that he is justified (that is, that he has living faith) till a long time after.

“I believe, also, that the moment a man is justified he has peace with God.

“Which he cannot have without knowing that he has it.

“Yet I believe he may not know that he is justified (that is, that he has peace with God) till a long time after.

“I believe, when a man is justified he is born of God.

“And being born of God, he sinneth not.

“Which deliverance from sin he cannot have without knowing it.

“Yet I believe he may not know that he is justified (that is, delivered from sin) till a long time after.

“Though I believe that others may know that he is justified, by his power over sin, his seriousness, and love of the brethren.”

23. “OF THE CONDITIONS OF JUSTIFICATION.

“I BELIEVE that Christ ‘formed in us,’ subordinately to Christ ‘given for us,’ (that is, our own inherent righteousness subordinate to Christ’s merits,) ought to be insisted upon, as necessary to our justification.

“And it is just and right that a man should be humble and penitent, and have a broken and contrite heart, (that is, should have Christ formed in him,) before he can expect to be justified.

“And that this penitence and contrition is the work of the Holy Ghost.

“Yet I believe that all this is nothing towards, and has no influence on, our justification.

“Again, I believe that, in order to justification, I must go straight to Christ, with all my ungodliness, and plead nothing else.

“Yet I believe that we should not insist upon anything we do or feel, as if it were necessary *previous* to justification.”

24. “OF THE EFFECTS OF JUSTIFICATION.

“I BELIEVE that justification is the same thing as to be born of God. Yet a man may have a strong assurance that he is justified, and not be able to affirm that he is born of God.

“A man may be fully assured that his sins are forgiven, yet may not be able to tell the hour or day when he received this full assurance, because it may grow up in him by degrees.— Though he can remember that, from the time this full assurance was confirmed in him, he never lost it, no, not for a moment.

“A man may have a weak faith at the same time that he hath peace with God, not one uneasy thought, and freedom from sin, not one unholy desire.

“A man may be justified, that is, born of God, who has not a clean heart, that is, is not sanctified.

“He may be justified, that is, born of God, and not have the indwelling of the Spirit.”

25. I entirely agree, "that the foregoing creed is a very extraordinary and odd composition." But it is not mine: I neither composed it, nor believe it; as, I doubt not, every impartial reader will be fully convinced, when we shall have gone over it, once more, step by step.

The parts of it which I do believe I shall barely repeat: On the others it will be needful to add a few words.

"OF THE ASSURANCE OF JUSTIFICATION.

"I BELIEVE that conversion," meaning thereby justification, "is an instantaneous work; and that the moment a man has living faith in Christ, he is converted or justified." (So the proposition must be expressed to make it sense.) "Which faith he cannot have, without knowing that he has it."

"Yet I believe he may not know that he has it till long after." This I deny: I believe no such thing.

"I believe the moment a man is justified he has peace with God:

"Which he cannot have without knowing that he has it."

"Yet I believe he may not know he has it till long after." This again I deny. I believe it not; nor Michael Linner neither; to clear whom entirely, one need only read his own words:—

"About fourteen years ago, I was more than ever convinced that I was wholly different from what God required me to be. I consulted his word again and again; but it spoke nothing but condemnation; till at last I could not read, nor indeed do any thing else, having no hope and no spirit left in me. I had been in this state for several days, when, being musing by myself, those words came strongly into my mind, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' I thought, '*All!* Then I am one. Then He is given for *me*. But I am a sinner: And he came to save sinners.' Immediately my burden dropped off, and my heart was at rest.

"But the full assurance of faith I had not yet, nor for the two years I continued in Moravia. When I was driven out thence by the Jesuits, I retired hither, and was soon after received into the Church. And here, after some time, it pleased our Lord to manifest himself more clearly to my soul; and give

me that full sense of acceptance in him, which excludes all doubt and fear.

“Indeed, the leading of the Spirit is different in different souls. His more usual method, I believe, is, to give, in one and the same moment, forgiveness of sins, and a full assurance of that forgiveness. Yet in many he works as he did in me; giving first the remission of sins, and after some weeks, or months, or years, the full assurance of it.” (Vol. I. p. 128.)

All I need observe is, that the first sense of forgiveness is often mixed with doubt or fear. But the full assurance of faith excludes all doubt and fear, as the very term implies.

Therefore, instead of, “He may not know that he has peace with God till long after,” it should be, (to agree with Michael Linner’s words,) “He may not have, till long after, the full assurance of faith, which excludes all doubt and fear.”

“I believe a man is justified at the same time that he is born of God.

“And he that is born of God sinneth not.

“Which deliverance from sin he cannot have, without knowing that he has it.”

“Yet I believe he may not know it till long after.” This also I utterly deny.

26. “OF THE CONDITIONS OF JUSTIFICATION.

“I believe, that Christ ‘formed in us’ ought to be insisted on, as necessary to our justification.”

I no more believe this than Christian David does, whose words concerning it are these:—

“It pleased God to show me, that Christ in us, and Christ for us, ought to be both insisted on.

“But I clearly saw we ought not to insist on any thing we feel, any more than any thing we do, as if it were necessary previous to our justification.

“And before a man can expect to be justified, he should be humble and penitent, and have a broken and contrite heart, that is, should have Christ formed in him.” No; that is quite another thing. I believe every man is penitent before he is justified; he repents before he believes the gospel. But it is never before he is justified, that Christ is formed in him.

“And that this penitence and contrition is the work of the Holy Ghost.

“Yet I believe that all this is nothing towards, and has no influence on, our justification.”

Christian David's words are, “Observe, this is not the foundation. It is not this by which (for the sake of which) you are justified. This is not the righteousness, this is no part of the righteousness, by which you are reconciled to God. You grieve for your sins; you are deeply humbled; your heart is broken. Well; but all this is nothing to your justification.” The words immediately following fix the sense of this otherwise exceptionable sentence. “The remission of your sins is not owing to this cause, either in whole or in part. Your humiliation has no influence on that.” Not as a cause; so the very last words explain it.

“Again, I believe that in order to obtain justification, I must go straight to Christ, with all my ungodliness, and plead nothing else.”

“Yet I believe we should not insist on anything we do or feel, as if it were necessary previous to justification.” No, nor on anything else. So the whole tenor of Christian David's words implies.

OF THE EFFECTS OF JUSTIFICATION.

27. “I believe a man may have a strong assurance he is justified, and not be able to affirm he is a child of God.”

Feder's words are these: “I found my heart at rest, in good hope that my sins were forgiven; of which I had a stronger assurance six weeks after.” (True, comparatively stronger, though still mixed with doubt and fear.) “But I dare not affirm, I am a child of God.” I see no inconsistency in all this. Many such instances I know at this day. I myself was one for some time.

“A man may be fully assured that his sins are forgiven, yet may not be able to tell the day when he received this full assurance; because it grew up in him by degrees.” (Of this also I know a few other instances.) “But from the time this full assurance was confirmed in him, he never lost it.” Very true, and, I think, consistent.

Neuser's own words are, “In him I found true rest to my soul, being fully assured that all my sins were forgiven. Yet I cannot tell the hour or day when I first received that full assurance. For it was not given me at first, neither at once;” (not in its fulness;) “but grew up in me by degrees. And from the time it was confirmed in me, I have never lost it, having never since doubted, no, not for a moment.”

“A man may have a weak faith, at the same time that he has peace with God, and no unholy desires.”

A man may be justified, who has not a clean heart.

28. (11.) Not in the full sense of the word. This I do verily believe is sound divinity, agreeable both to Scripture and experience. And I believe it is consistent with itself. As to the “hundred other absurdities which might be fully and fairly made out,” it will be time enough to consider them, when they are produced.

29. (12, 13.) But whether I have succeeded in attempting to reconcile these things or no, I verily think Mr. Tucker has. I desire not a more consistent account of my principles, than he has himself given in the following words:—

“Our spiritual state should be considered distinctly under each of these views.

“1. Before justification; in which state we may be said to be unable to do any thing acceptable to God; because then we can do nothing but come to Christ; which ought not to be considered as doing any thing, but as supplicating (or waiting) to receive a power of doing for the time to come.

“For the preventing grace of God, which is common to all, is sufficient to bring us to Christ, though it is not sufficient to carry us any further till we are justified.

“2. After justification. The moment a man comes to Christ (by faith) he is justified, and born again; that is, he is born again in the imperfect sense, (for there are two [if not more] degrees of regeneration,) and he has power over all the stirrings and motions of sin, but not a total freedom from them. Therefore he hath not yet, in the full and proper sense, a new and clean heart. But being exposed to various temptations, he may and will fall again from this condition, if he doth not attain to a more excellent gift.”*

3. Sanctification, the last and highest state of perfection in this life. For then are the faithful born again in the full and

* “Mr. Charles Wesley,” the note says, “was not persuaded of the truth of the Moravian faith, till some time after his brother’s return from Germany.” There is a great mistake in this. I returned not from Germany till Saturday, September 16. Whereas my brother was fully persuaded of the truth of the Moravian faith (so called) on Wednesday, May 3, preceding. The note adds, “This,” that is, justifying faith, “he received but very lately.” This also is a mistake. What he believed to be justifying faith, he received May 21, 1738. (Vol. I. pp. 93, 96.)

perfect sense. Then is there given unto them a new and clean heart ; and the struggle between the old and new man is over.*

30. (14.) That I may say many things which have been said before, and perhaps by Calvin or Arminius, by Montanus or Barclay, or the Archbishop of Cambray, is highly probable. But it cannot thence be inferred that I hold "a medley of all their principles ;—Calvinism, Arminianism, Montanism, Quakerism, Quietism, all thrown together." There might as well have been added, Judaism, Mahometanism, Paganism. It would have made the period rounder, and been full as easily proved ; I mean asserted. For no other proof is yet produced.

31. I pass over the smaller mistakes which occur in the fifteenth and sixteenth paragraphs, together with the prophecy or prognostication concerning the approaching divisions and downfall of the Methodists. What follows to the end, concerning the ground of our hope, is indeed of greater importance. But we have not as yet the strength of the cause ; the dissertation promised, is still behind. Therefore, as my work is great, and my time short, I wave that dispute for the present. And perhaps, when I shall have received farther light, I may be convinced, that "gospel holiness," as Mr. Tucker believes, "is a necessary qualification, antecedent to justification." This appears to me now to be directly opposite to the gospel of Christ. But I will endeavour impartially to consider what shall be advanced in defence of it. And may He who knoweth my simpleness, teach me his way, and give me a right judgment in all things !

* The next note runs thus : "Mr. Wesley has such a peculiar turn and tendency towards inconsistencies in his principles, that in his Preface to Haliburton's Life, (wrote February 9, 1738-9, just after his return from Germany,) he contradicts all that he has said elsewhere for this sinless perfection ; viz., 'But it may be said, the gospel covenant does not promise entire freedom from sin. What do you mean by the word sin? the infection of nature, or those numberless weaknesses and follies, sometimes (improperly) termed sins of infirmity? If you mean only this, you say most true. We shall not put off these, but with our bodies. But if you mean, it does not promise entire freedom from sin, in its proper sense, or from committing sin ; this is by no means true, unless the Scriptures be false. For thus it is written, Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, unless he lose the Spirit of adoption, if not finally, yet for a while, as did this child of God : For his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. He cannot sin, so long as he keepeth himself ; for then the wicked one toucheth him not.'"

The question is not, whether this be right or wrong ; but whether it contradict any thing I have said elsewhere. Thrice I have spoken expressly on this subject, —in a sermon, and in two prefaces. If in any of these I have contradicted what I said before, I will own the former assertion as a mistake.