

THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Rev. J. A. Wood.

Rev. Joseph Benson: "To sanctify you wholly is to complete the work of purification and renovation begun in your regeneration."—Com. 1 Thess. 5, 23.

Bishop Hedding says: "The degree of original sin, which remains in some believers, although not a transgression of a known law, is nevertheless sin, and must be removed before one goes to heaven, and the removal of this evil is what we mean by full salvation. Regeneration is the beginning of purification. Entire sanctification is finishing that work."—Sermon.

Dr. George Peck says: "By being saved from all sin in the present life, we mean being saved first from all outward sin—all violations of the requirements of the law of love which relate to our outward conduct; and secondly, from all inward sin—all violations of the law of love which relate to the intellect, the sensibilities, and the will."—Christian Perfection, page 65.

Rev. Luther Lee says: "Sanctification is that renewal of our fallen nature by the Holy Ghost, received through faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood of atonement has power to cleanse from all sin; whereby we are not only delivered from the guilt of sin, which is justification, but are washed entirely from its pollution, freed from its power, and are enabled, through grace, to love God with all our hearts, and to walk in His holy commandments blameless."—Theology, p. 211.

Bishop Foster says of the person entirely sanctified, that he is in "a state in which he will be entirely free from sin, properly so called, both inward and outward. The process of this work is in this order; beginning with pardon, by which one aspect of sin, that is actual guilt, is wholly removed, and proceeding in regeneration, by which another kind of sin, that is, depravity, is in part removed, terminating with entire sanctification, by which the remainder of the second kind, or depravity, is entirely removed."—Christian Purity, p. 122.

This statement of Bishop Foster is most admirably expressed, and presents the truth with much clearness. Regeneration removes some sin or pollution, and entire sanctification removes the corruption which remains after regeneration. This will be seen from the authorities given, to be the Wesleyan idea of entire sanctification.

Bishop J. T. Peck: "In the merely justified state we are not entirely pure; but in the work of entire sanctification, these impurities are all washed away, so that we are wholly saved from sin, from its inward pollution."—Central Idea, page 52.

Dr. John Dempster, in an admirable sermon on Christian Perfection, before the Biblical Institute, said: "Do you, then demand an exact expression of the difference? It is this: the one (regeneration) admits of controlled tendencies to sin, the other (entire sanctification) extirpates those tendencies. That is, the merely regenerate has remaining impurity; the fully sanctified has none."

Bishop D. W. Clarke: "Entire sanctification implies an entire cleansing of the soul from its moral defilement, and the plenary endowment of it with all the graces of the Spirit of God."—Beauty of Holiness, May 1857.

Binney's Theological Compend defines holiness as "That participation of the Divine Na-

ture which excludes all original depravity, or inbred sin, from the heart. Entire sanctification is that act of the Holy Ghost whereby the justified soul is made holy."

Bishop Simpson says: "Christian perfection is a term used by Methodists to denote a state of grace implying purity of heart, or a heart cleansed from all sin. Sanctification is that act of the Holy Ghost whereby the justified man is made holy."—Encyclopedia of Methodism.

Rev. W. B. Gorham: "Entire sanctification is the complete purification of the heart, resulting, through the blood of Jesus, from the pervading presence and governing power of the Holy Spirit, continually possessing and occupying the nature and subduing all things therein unto Himself."—God's Method with Man, p. 170.

The German United Brethren Church says: "By perfect holiness we understand the separation and purification from all inhering sin, after regeneration, by the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God; and the filling of the heart with the love of God by the Holy Ghost."

Rev. Wm. McDonald says: "It is the removal from our moral natures through faith in Christ, all sinful desires and tempers—all pride, anger, envy, unbelief and love of the world; and the possession in these purified natures of the unmixed graces of faith, humility, resignation, patience, meekness, self-denial and love."—Scriptural Views, p. 23.

Noah Webster defines sanctification "The act of making holy; the state of being thus purified or sanctified; to sanctify in a general sense is to cleanse, purify or make holy; to cleanse from corruption, to purify from sin."

The Methodist catechism says: "Sanctification is that act of divine grace whereby we are made holy." This definition follows that of regeneration. Catechism No. 3 is more explicit: "What is entire sanctification?" "The state of being entirely cleansed from sin, so as to love God with all our heart and mind and strength."

Methodist authorities are agreed in teaching—

1. That justification and regeneration are not identical with entire sanctification.
2. That entire sanctification is subsequent to regeneration and in an important sense is an instantaneous work.
3. That it is a supernatural, divine work, and is by faith.
4. That negatively it is freedom from all sin; and, positively, it is loving God with all our heart.
5. That it is attested by the Holy Spirit, by consciousness and by its fruits.
6. That it is both the privilege and duty of all believers to be entirely sanctified.

Alike, they all discard absolute, angelic or Adamic perfection, in the entirely sanctified believer. They alike denounce all perfection of degree or of maturity, of judgment or of knowledge, or of any other perfection except that of love and moral purity.

In these important items there is agreement among nearly all our chief ministers, and their disagreements are almost entirely in things more speculative than fundamental.

What is the distinction between regeneration and entire sanctification?

It is that of partial and of complete purity. The Christian who is but regenerated is not cleansed from all indwelling sin, while the Christian who is entirely sanctified is entirely purified. Though regeneration and entire sanctification are of one nature, there is a dis-

inction. There is both a doctrinal and an experimental difference; the first preceeding and falling below the other, and there is a transition from one to the other.

The first includes, in addition to imparted spiritual life, the commencement of purification; the other is the possession of the same spiritual life with complete purification.

The regenerated state and the fully sanctified state differ in moral quality, grace and life in one case have antagonisms in the heart—in the other they have none. The "new life" or "new man" exists in an uncleansed soul in the former case and in a purified soul in the latter. In the regenerate there is the new life unto righteousness, but not the complete death unto sin. In the entirely sanctified the new life with all the graces of the Spirit exist in a pure heart.

1. Mr. Wesley says: "That believers are delivered from the guilt and power of sin we allow; that they are delivered from the being of it we deny. Christ, indeed, cannot reign where sin reigns neither will He dwell where sin is allowed. But He is and dwells in the heart of every believer who is fighting against all sin, although it be not yet purified. Indeed, this grand point, that there are two contrary principles in (unsanctified) believers—nature and grace, the flesh and the spirit—runs through all the Epistles of St. Paul, yea, through all the Holy Scriptures almost all the directions and exhortations therein are founded on this supposition, pointing at wrong tempers or practices in those who are notwithstanding acknowledged by the inspired writers to be believers."—Sermon on Sin in Believers.

2. Bishop Hedding says "The difference between a justified soul who is not fully sanctified and one fully sanctified, I understand to be this: the first (if he does not backslide) is kept from voluntarily committing known sin, which is what is commonly meant in the New Testament by committing sin. But he yet finds in himself the remains of inbred corruption or original sin, such as pride, anger, envy, a feeling of hatred to an enemy, a rejoicing at a calamity which has fallen upon an enemy etc. The second, or the person fully sanctified, is cleansed from all these inward involuntary sins."—Sermon before New Jersey Conference.

3. Rev. Richard Watson says: "In this regenerate state, the former corruptions of the heart may remain and strive for the mastery; but that which characterizes and distinguishes it from a state of a penitent before justification, before he is in Christ, is, that they are not even his inward habit, and that they have no dominion."—Institutes, Vol. 2, p. 450.

4. Rev. Luther Lee says: "The power of sin is broken, the tyrant is dethroned, and his reign ceases in the soul at the moment of regeneration; yet sin is not so destroyed as not to leave his mark upon the soul, and even yet struggle for the mastery."

"There is still a warfare within, there will be found an opposing element in the sensibility of the soul, which, though it no longer controls the will, often rebels against it and refuses to obey it. . . . The will can and does resist them in a regenerate state; but it cannot silence them, renew, or change their direction by an act of violence. . . . These (propensities passions, appetites) belong to the soul and must be brought into harmony with right and the sanctified will before the whole soul can be said to be sanctified or to be entirely consecrated to God. When this work is wrought, then the war within will cease."—Theology, p. 212, 213.