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QUESTIONS CONCERNING PERFECT LOVE.—No. 4.

“ IS ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION A GRADUAL OR AN INSTANTANEOUS WORK ? ”

THIS is one of the most important questions ordinarily put in connection with this subject. It has been the occasion of most of the controversies which have existed within the pale of Methodism, with reference to this doctrine and experience.

That there is a gradual work of sanctification in the soul of the true Christian, is a fact evident to every thoughtful mind. For as entire sanctification is the complete ascendancy of the religious principle over the heart and character of man, then every movement of the soul away from sin, every welcome given by the heart to God's claims, is a contribution towards that result. So then awakening, conviction, repentance, pardon, good works after the new birth, are all steps towards that blessed consummation. But while all those whose opinions are worthy of notice agree as to the reality of a gradual work, some will have it, that the gradual is the only work ; and others, of whom we are one, believe that a gradual work prepares for the instantaneous, but is so far from making the instantaneous unnecessary, that one of its main uses is to develop in the soul such a “ hunger and thirst after righteousness ” as alone prepares it to be “ filled ”—so filled as to be entirely sanctified.

By the phrase “ entire sanctification,” we mean that state of the soul in which there is no consciousness of sinful motive governing the will, even for a moment ; in which there is, on the other hand, a definite consciousness of being moved by the love of God, and gov-