

in the Spirit, that is, the same obedience to Him alone, would, and must perpetuate the same joy and peace in the soul of the believer.

IS IT WESLEYAN?

We ask anyone to study well Wesley's descriptions of the experience of the witness of the Spirit to forgiveness and adoption, and then put them beside New Testament descriptions of the new birth, or even beside the modern descriptions of the experience of cleansing, and see if any one discounts the others. We refer, of course, to justification in its earliest experience; that is, before there has been any sense of condemnation realized as the result of sin.

It would not be difficult to quote exhaustively from all these sources, and show that it would be absolutely necessary to label each quotation to prevent the reader mistaking any one set of descriptions for either of the other two.

But stay, do not many persons tell of the two experiences having been realized at different periods in their Christian career, and then maintain that the one was essentially different from the other? This is true, and yet the listener, who has heard both experiences told, fails to distinguish between them; that is, when both are good, representative ones.

What we wish to show from this is, that as Wesley exhausted his descriptive powers on the first experience of justifying grace, it is Wesleyan to assert that his description of Christian perfection would be fully met if the experience of initial justification should be made a continuous one. Of course, leaving out of this experience the consideration of growth in knowledge in every direction. The supernatural element, that which constitutes oneness with God, is the witness of the Spirit to forgiveness and adoption, and the continued realization of His presence and witness perpetuates the joy and peace of the Christian's first love, and so fills completely the description of Wesley concerning Christian perfection, or the rapt utterances of the New Testament writers, nay, of Christ Himself.

But, as to the perpetuation of this first love, whilst the Wesleys described it, they neither illustrated it in their own experience, themselves being witnesses, nor taught successfully how it was to be accomplished.

We know that the Methodist Church is divided up into two great parties on this question of John Wesley's testimony to, and experience of, his doctrine of Christian perfection, but we unhesitatingly, after exhaustive investigation, take sides with those who maintain that he made no such claim.

However, he noted well the fact, that, as a rule, his converts, with himself, failed to retain their first experience, and he gave much of his time to remedying this patent defect in their spiritual career, but, as we have shown in some previous articles, when discussing the great revival of 1762, with indifferent success. We say indifferent success, when comparing the few who for a longer or shorter time succeeded, with the many who failed, we are not comparing his labors in this field with others before or since his day. It is quite possible to admit his success as greater than that of all others, without touching the fact that after all his success in securing the perpetuation of the experience of conversion amongst his converts was small.

But the fact, itself, of this failure to walk in justifying grace, he grappled with with all his might, but in his researches he never was led to question the correctness of the teaching of Augustine concerning the inbred sin question as the explanation of this fact of failure. But, as our readers know, he adopted the theory that this tendency could be destroyed, and the soul live in the uninterrupted enjoyment of the favor of God—walking in all His ways, and so find its Heaven on earth begun.

Now, if keeping converted be made to represent John Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection, and we claim that it does, then all that is essential in his teaching is wrapped up in conversion, and learning how to retain justifying grace. His speculations concerning what the fancy quantity inbred sin was, and its necessary presence in every child of God, no matter how bright, how genuine