

had it become a lost experience that the whole Church, judged by its representative men, already looked upon it as an impossibility, and had begun to adapt all its teaching to this accepted fact.

And yet these were the heroic days of the Church, times when multitudes died for their faith, Cyprian himself, one of the parties here alluded to, having died a martyr's death.

Nor do we, in pointing to these facts, minify in the least the grand history of this martyr age. As a whole, it must ever command intense admiration; nevertheless, what we here make prominent are undoubted facts, and hence we can find no substantial help from the writings of the fathers in solving the mighty problem of how to keep converted.

WHAT ABOUT THE GREAT REFORMATION?

The Reformation under Luther centred in the experience of initial justification. It restored the spiritual element which had been almost universally lost in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and made it the independent right, as an experience, of every individual, apart from the confessional and priestly interference. But it did not solve the difficulties connected with continued justification. Hence, writers of the Calvinistic stamp have no difficulty in establishing their contention that it is impossible to keep converted, from the accepted teachings of the Reformation. The Reformation threw no light on the question we are now discussing.

DID WESLEY FULLY SUCCEED?

Now, let us first premise a few thoughts to clear the way for a frank, full answer to this question. Already, in this the second century of his revival, reverence for his great name is so profound that it is somewhat difficult to get the hearing of his followers to any examination or argument which will not start from the axiom that whatever John Wesley touched he left in such a state of perfection that future ages could not possibly add thereto in any direction. But it must be admitted that he did not write correctly about the North American colonies, that he failed to reach the facts when he discoursed

about the lower animals, and, generally speaking, his writings concerning ghosts, money, and dress are so largely ignored that there must be some inherent weakness in them, or else Methodists already have practically lost their admiration for his teachings.

It does in no wise injure the name or character of John Wesley to assert that he did not discover the planet Neptune, or invent the telephone. No more can it detract from his reputation to discover the exact facts connected with this subject in hand, however he may be related to those facts.

In studying up this question we have gone over all his writings, and so invite our readers to no second-hand theories, or to the relation of facts viewed through another's spectacles; and yet we demand not the acceptance of our views because of this fact. We rather write to stir up investigation concerning the whole matter. However, we do dogmatize concerning what we give as facts, and will demand their acceptance until they are proved to be inaccurate, for they are the outcome of careful, candid investigation.

John Wesley formulated his views of holy living long before he himself experienced converting grace. This will be seen to be correct by turning to his "plain account of Christian perfection," for in it he says are his views held and preached, between the years 1725 and 1777. But it was some ten years after the first date that he was converted. Hence, it is evident that he formulated his views concerning holy living before he wrote fully concerning the witness of the Spirit. Whatever then was the origin of these views, they clearly were not the offspring of experience.

His account of his own conversion is as follows:

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's preface to the epistle of Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the changes which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ—Christ alone—for salvation. And an assurance was given