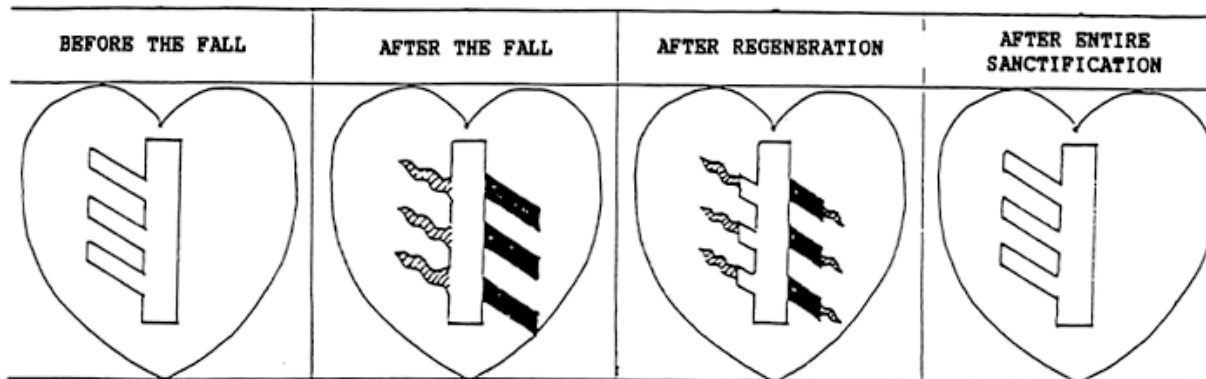


person, the view holds that believers can operate either totally according to one nature or totally according to the other. Thus entirely sinless or entirely sinful thoughts, desires, and actions are possible for the believer. It is therefore possible to live without conscious or known sin. In the fourth stage (after entire sanctification), the believer's old nature has been obliterated through death, and his new nature (still perfect) is now freed from its wretched and weary coexistence with the old. This occurs at death or at Christ's Coming, but not in this life.

PROPOSED VIEW



In the proposed view, the unity and integrity of man's person is maintained, and genuine growth and progress in moral and spiritual character development is possible. In this view, man has one nature (what he is) at a time in each stage of his spiritual history.

In the first stage (before the Fall), mankind was both holy and innocent -- holy in character and innocent in any wrongdoing. He had positively good character qualities. In the second stage (after the Fall) man lost all holiness and became sinful and depraved in the total extent of his being. He retained some small rudiments of the good qualities he had had before the Fall (albeit greatly attenuated), which helps to explain the relatively good actions he performs, as well as the remnants of the image of God that persist in him. In the third stage (after regeneration) a twofold process has begun: the evil qualities in him have begun to attenuate, and the relatively good attributes have begun the process of being made totally new through the new creation. The believer's nature in this view is new, not in the sense that a totally new complex of attributes has been created and infused into or grafted onto his person, but in the sense that his nature (what he is) has been transformed and renovated, so that everything about him is changed. When he acts now, he acts according to this transformed nature, and his overall behavior is modified accordingly. As a result, all of his actions are the actions of his whole person; and thus progress in the sanctification of his whole nature (what he is) is possible.