



"You will know them by their fruits." Mt. 7:16

Preach It!

SECTION 14 HOLINESS MUST BE PREACHED

(an excerpt from "Perfect Love" by J. A. Wood)

148. Should the doctrine, experience, and practice of Christian Holiness be preached frequently?

This subject should receive (as it demands) great prominence in all our ministerial labors. While it should not be the only topic in our pulpit ministrations, it should be a prominent one. The apostle Paul states the great object of an established Christian ministry to be "for the perfecting of the saints." In regard to his own labors, he says: "We warn every man, and teach every man, ... that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." The minister of Christ should give the doctrine and practice of holiness the same prominence the Bible gives it.

1. Bishop Foster says: "It breathes in the prophecy, thunders in the law, murmurs in the narrative, whispers in the promises, supplicates in the prayers, sparkles in the poetry, resounds in the songs, speaks in the types, glows in the imagery, voices in the language, and burns in the spirit of the whole scheme, from the alpha to the omega, from its beginning to its end. Holiness, holiness needed, holiness required, holiness offered, holiness attainable, holiness a present duty, a present privilege, a present enjoyment – is the progress and completeness of its wondrous theme!" -- Christian Purity, p. 80.
2. The Discipline, on the matter and manner of preaching, is very explicit. It reads: "Let us strongly and closely insist upon inward and outward holiness in all its branches." This insisting upon "inward and outward holiness in all its branches" is to be constant -- "TO DO THIS, IN SOME MEASURE, IN EVERY SERMON." -- Dis., p. 86.
3. Rev. John Wesley says: "Therefore let all our preachers make a point to preach of perfection to believers constantly, strongly explicitly." ... "I doubt not we are not explicit enough in speaking on full sanctification, either in public or private." Vol. 6 p. 529.

"I am afraid Christian perfection will be forgotten. Encourage Richard Blackwell and Mr. Colley to speak plainly. A general faintness in this respect has fallen on the whole kingdom. Sometimes I seem almost weary of striving against the stream of both preacher and people." "I hope he is not ashamed to preach full salvation, receivable now, by faith. This is the word which God will always bless, and which the devil peculiarly hates therefore, he is constantly stirring up both his own children and the weak children of God, against it." -- Letter to Mrs. Bennis, 1771.

"I wish, when opportunity serves, you would encourage him: (Isaac Brown)

- To preach Christian perfection constantly, strongly, and explicitly.
 - Explicitly to assert and prove that it may be received now: and (which indeed is implied therein)
 - That it is to be received by simple faith." -- Letter to Miss. Ritchie, 1782.
4. Dr. Adam Clarke says: "If the Methodists give up preaching entire sanctification they will soon lose their glory."....."This fitness, then, to appear before God, and thorough preparation for eternal glory, is what I plead

for, pray for, and heartily recommend to all true believers, under the name of Christian perfection.”

“Let all those who retain the apostolic doctrine, that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin in this life, press every believer to go on to perfection, and expect to be saved, while here below, into the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.” Theology, p. 201.

5. Bishop Peck says: “The duty of ministers is plain: to set the whole work of grace upon the heart, constantly and plainly, before the people ... to hold out, with the clarity of light, to the Israel of God, everywhere, the glorious privilege of perfect love, and urge it; not as all the gospel, but the grand result sought in the gospel; not merely as a privilege and a probability, but as a duty, as an attainment, which we are in danger of missing, and which is indispensable to our ultimate preservation in the favor of God, and our introduction into heaven?” -- Central Idea, p. 66.
6. Bishop Foster says: “Let the pulpit experience and teach this glorious privilege as it deserves to be taught, and great evil will be obviated. (made unnecessary)” -- Christian Purity, p. 277.
7. Dr. Stephen Olin writes: “I trust the day is near when our church will bear a clearer testimony on this subject. It was the peculiarity of early Methodism. ... I do not for a moment allow myself to doubt that the great plan of redemption provides for a perfect work here below. *I can take no view of the gospel which tolerates lower views. I cannot PREACH the gospel in any other light.*”
8. Bishop Asbury wrote to the Rev. Henry Smith, and closed his letter as follows: “Night comes on, and I will close with saying, ‘Preach sanctification, directly and indirectly, in every sermon.’ “ He wrote to another, “O purity! O Christian perfection! O sanctification! It is heaven below to feel all sin removed. Preach it, whether they will hear or forbear. PREACH IT.”
9. Bishop McKendree wrote the following to the eloquent Summerfield: “But superior to all these, I trust you will ever keep in view, in all your ministrations, the great design which we believe God intended to accomplish in the world, in making us a ‘people that were not a people,’ -- I mean the knowledge, not only of a free and a present, but also a full salvation in other words, a salvation from all sin unto all holiness.”
“INSIST MUCH ON THIS; build up the churches herein, and proclaim aloud, that ‘without holiness no man shall see the Lord;’ under the guidance of the Spirit of holiness, this doctrine will be acknowledged of God: ‘signs will follow them that believe’ and press after this uttermost salvation, and our people will bear the mark of their high calling – become a holy nation, a peculiar people.”
10. “The only really effective method of preaching it,” says Dr. L. R. Dunn, “is from the standpoint of experience, and with the spirit of the gentle and loving Jesus. Methodist preachers, to be consistent, must preach it.” -- Address at Holiness Conference.
11. The Rev. George Pickering, after fifty years in the ministry, in his semi-centennial sermon, exhorts brethren to “preach to the people the blessed doctrine of holiness;” adding, “This is the only thing that will hold the Methodist church together.” When on his dying-bed, being visited by all the ministers of Boston, grasping the hand of the brother who was acting as spokesman for the whole, he exclaimed, “Tell – oh, tell the brethren to preach Christ and Him crucified, an all-able, all-powerful, all-willing, all-ready Saviour, a present Saviour, saving now. Preach, ‘Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.’ Oh, tell them to preach holiness. Holiness is the principal thing. Preach holiness, HOLINESS, HOLINESS! God help you to preach holiness.” Thus ended the dying charge of that holy man, George Pickering, of the New England Conference. -- Stevens: “Eminent Dead,” p. 328.

149. Did Mr. Wesley preach often upon the subject of holiness?

We think he did, and for the following reasons:

1. Mr. Wesley was a consistent man, and it can not be supposed that he would in conference, in private, and by letter, urge and press his preachers to preach constantly, strongly, and explicitly on the subject, while he himself did not set them an example to be followed.

2. Mr. Wesley says, in his Plain Account, p. 88: "If I were convinced that none in England had attained what has been so clearly and strongly preached by such a number of preachers, in so many places, and for so long a time, I should be clearly convinced that we had all mistaken the meaning of those Scriptures."
3. In the journals of Dr. Adam Clarke, Bramwell, Carvosso, Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers, and Lady Maxwell, where a great number of Mr. Wesley's Sermons and texts are noticed, you will find a large proportion of them are on the subject of full salvation or perfection. More than one half of the hymns composed by Mr. Wesley were upon the subject of holiness.

The fact that (only a) few of his published sermons are devoted specifically to the subject of Christian perfection does not argue against his preaching much upon it. The sermons which he published were designed to present a general survey of Christian theology. There are more of them, however, devoted specifically to the subject of holiness than to any other one topic.

Let it be remembered that we have but about one hundred and forty of his sermons; while he preached over seven hundred times a year during his ministry, and in his lifetime over forty-two thousand sermons.

150. Is there not a serious lack on the part of the ministry in preaching on this subject?

1. The special work of the Methodist ministry, is "to spread scriptural holiness over these lands." We are compelled to believe there is much less prominence given to this subject by our ministers than there should be. There is a serious neglect among us in not adhering to the matured advice of our great founder under God. "Therefore all our preachers should make a point of preaching perfection, to believers CONSTANTLY, STRONGLY, and EXPLICITLY; and ALL believers should mind this one thing, and continually agonize for it." This direction was given by Mr. Wesley in his mature years, and after an experience in the gospel ministry unequalled since the days of the apostles.
2. Bishop Peck says: "Alas! The truth can not be denied. The great privilege and duty of present salvation from all sin is omitted in so large a number of sermons as to leave many in doubt whether there be any such gospel, and grievously to discourage and mislead those whose spirits pant for full redemption." -- Central Idea, p. 113.

How true in many places, at this day, the declaration of Mr. Wesley at one period of his ministry: "I find almost all our preachers, in every circuit, have done with Christian perfection. They say they believe it; but they never preach it, or not once in a quarter."

151. Is the doctrine and experience of holiness the great peculiarity of Methodism?

It was strikingly so in early Methodism, and is claimed to be so now by our leading writers.

1. Mr. Wesley said: "It is the grand depositum which God has given to the people called Methodists and chiefly to propagate this, it appears, God raised them up." "We believe that God's design in raising up the preachers called Methodist in America was to reform the continent, and spread scriptural holiness over these lands." -- Methodist Discipline.
2. Dr. J. V. Watson says: "Holiness! It is the ark of the Lord among our doctrinal ideas. ... It is the very essence of our spiritual life, the vital artery of our whole system. It is the central sun around which the satellites all revolve in harmony, rejoicing in its broad, warm, genial, life-imparting smile.
O for holiness individually in the membership! O for a holy ministry! Together they make an omnipotent church." -- Helps to Revivals, p. 222.
3. Dr. George Peck says, in his able and standard work on Christian Perfection: "The doctrine of entire sanctification, as a distinct work wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost, is the great distinguishing doctrine of Methodism. This given up, and we have little left which we do not hold in common with other evangelical denominations." -- Christian Perfection, p. 363).
4. Rev. William Arthur, of the English Wesleyan Church, said in a London address recently: "Methodism was not in its original life more marked by seeking justification by faith, than by seeking sanctification by faith."... "On us Methodists the past and the present join to lay an obligation even greater than that which rests on all our beloved brethren of other branches of the living vine, in regard to the doctrine and practice of holiness."

152. Did the early Methodist preachers in the country make holiness a prominent item in their ministry?

They did, and preached it clearly and powerfully all through the land; such men as Bishop Asbury, Bishop McKendree, Bishop George, Bishop Hedding, Bishop Whatcoat, Jesse Lee, George Pickering, Billy Hibbard, Freeborn Garrettson, Benjamin Abbott, and hundreds of others proclaimed this blessed doctrine. Dr. Olin says, "Preaching holiness was a peculiarity of early Methodism." Dr. Bangs says, in his History of the Methodist Episcopal Church: "The doctrine more especially urged upon believers [in early Methodism] was that of sanctification or holiness of heart and life, and this was pressed upon them as their present privilege, depending for its accomplishment now on the faithfulness of God, who had promised to do it. It was this which fired and filled the hearts of God's ministers at that time."

Rev. Asa Kent, of the New England Conference, said in the Guide thirty years ago "I think the preachers fifty or sixty years ago (that is, eighty years ago), were generally more particular in explaining the doctrine of holiness of heart, and more earnestly urged the necessity of going on unto perfection, than is the case among us at the present time."

153. Is it wise to use the phrase "second blessing"?

We can see no objection to its use, nor any great demand for its use. It has been in use among Methodists for over a hundred years, as Mr. Wesley and the early Methodists frequently used it. Mr. Wesley writes thus: "It is exceedingly certain that God did give you the second blessing, properly so called." ... "One found peace, and one found the second blessing." -- Vol. 7 p. 45.

Charles Wesley put it into his hymns, and without caviling (making petty objections) over it, millions have sung for a century:

"Give us, Lord, this second rest."
Speak the second time, be clean."
Let me gain that second rest."

Even the Calvinistic Augustus Toplady wrote:

"Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of in the double cure,
Save from wrath, and make me pure."

Sin is of two kinds, wrong acts, and wrong states, as a "transgression of law," and as a defilement or "unrighteousness." Salvation has a double or twofold aspect: pardon and purity, justification and sanctification. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

Pardon applies to guilty actions, and cleansing to polluted states. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Pardon, as we see in this scripture precedes the cleansing. The two blessings are presented in the declaration: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." It is also set forth in the great prophetic declaration: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin, and for uncleanness." This twofold blessing runs all through the scriptures, and is taught by precept, promise, and history. Ancient Israel typified them in crossing the Red Sea, and the Jordan; in leaving Egypt, and in entering Canaan.

Rev. B. W. Gorham says: "The attainment of heart purity is, and must be held to be, a distinct epoch in the Christian life. It is the point up to which all grace received performs the office of saving, and beyond which it performs the office of endowing." -- Gods Method with Man, p. 248.

St. Paul asserts in Rom. 15:29, his possession of "the fullness of the blessing;" which must mean more than simply the blessing," just as "entire sanctification" means more than "sanctification," "perfect love " more than "love," "full assurance of faith" more than "faith," and full salvation, more than salvation.

The apostle also teaches this "second grace" in 2 Cor. 1:15 "And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you

before that you might have a second benefit,” (margin, “second grace.”) The original word, Barin, here translated “benefit” is translated “grace” one hundred and thirty-one times in the New Testament, and is never rendered “benefit,” only in this single instance, and then is corrected by inserting “grace” in the margin. Here the inspired apostle uses the very form of expression used by teachers of distinctive holiness, and which is so distasteful to some people.

McKnight translates it “That ye might have a second gift of the Spirit as soon as possible.” AMEN! To those who make sarcastic flings at the use of this term to express perfect love, we commend the following from the address of Rev. Dr. Pope at the British Conference: “I have sometimes very delicately scrupled at this, that, and the other expression, and I have wondered whether it is right to speak of a ‘second blessing;’ and I have taken a text in which our Saviour takes a blind man and partially restores him his sight, and then, holding the man up before us for a little while, that we may study his state, which is a great advance upon what it was, that we may watch him in this state of struggle between sin and the flesh. He touches him again and he can see every man clearly. In the face of that, text, and in the face of the experience of multitudes of our fathers, in the face of the testimonies of multitudes now living, and in the face of the deep instinct, the hope and desire of my own unworthy heart. I will never again write against the phraseology referred to.”

154. Is it wise to make holiness a specialty in the church and in Christian effort?

1. It is. The Bible makes it a specialty. It is the grand objective point of the whole Christian system – the center where all the lines of truth meet. The commands, promises, invitations, exhortations, and counsels all run to this “central idea” of Christianity.

Bishop Foster says: “It is the truth glowing all over, welling all through, revelation; the glorious truth which sparkles and whispers, and sings and shouts in all its history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy, and precept, and promise, and prayer. The great central truth of the system.” -- Christian Purity, p. 80.

We hardly need say, in harmony with this, that Christian perfection, or “perfecting the saints,” is a specialty in Methodist theology and history. Why, then, may it not be pushed to the front, or why should it be deemed contraband in our meetings and church work?

2. The expediency of making it a specialty is seen in its importance, and in its essential relation to the whole work of God. (See Section 16) When this prospers, every other interest of religion prospers; and when this is neglected, all other interests suffer, and none other can compensate for it. Making a specialty of this doctrine and experience, more than any other cause, produces all manner of precious fruit, both in heart and life hence, in its highest gospel form, holiness ought to be the specialty of the whole church.

3. To make it a specialty, or give it prominence, does not involve the neglect of other truths, as many seem to suppose. There can be no true presentation of holiness, without presenting its correlated truths in the Gospel. A moment’s thought will show that human depravity, the atonement, the work of the Spirit, faith, obedience, and the conversion of sinners, all stand intimately related to it.

4. This is the most common and popular form of objection to efforts for the spread of holiness in the church and world. This opposition stands against distinctively teaching it, or giving it prominence by word or pen. Making holiness a specialty, of course, involves presenting it distinctly, distinctively, and persistently, and this is the main point of the objection. Mr. Wesley said “Let all our preachers make a point (specialty) to preach Christian perfection to believers constantly, strongly, explicitly.” -- Plain Account, p. 169.

5. No one excels, except he makes his pursuit, for the time, a specialty. College and Seminary profess understand this for in teaching it is deemed essential. Why should “perfect love.” as a specialty, be an exception. “Love” is declared to be “the fulfilling of the law,” and love out of a pure heart the end of the commandment.

6. The cry of “fanaticism,” “extravagance,” “division,” and “secession,” as against making this subject a specialty, is rather too wholesale, and too common to frighten intelligent, thinking people.

These have been the staple so long with infidels, worldly men, and cavilers (liars), it is unseemly for those who call themselves Christians to adopt them.

7. The assertion that those who make this subject a specialty become “narrow,” and are “men of one idea,” is not

disparaging to any man's character. If a man has an idea large enough to take in all other true ideas, he has no occasion to abandon it, nor need he fear being made "narrow" by it. One idea, and that a good one, is better than no ideas at all, or than a number of very poor ones. Holiness is the grandest and most comprehensive idea in the universe.

8. The world is indebted to men of one idea for its inventions, its discoveries, and its great moral and religious reformations.

Columbus was a man of one idea, and he discovered a new world. John Wesley resolved to be "a man of one Book," and "a man of one work." What has been the result? St. Paul proclaimed his devotion to one idea. "This one thing I do." "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." "Teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Was the apostle wise?

Newton, Herschel, Shakespeare, Howard, Luther, Fulton, Morse, Edison, and Longfellow, were all specialists. Were they "narrow," and lacking in breadth because of their one great idea?

9. The Methodist Church has always had her specialists. Do they become "narrow"? Did Dr. Durbin become narrow because he made the missionary cause a specialty for more than a score of years? And how in regard to Drs. Whedon, Curry, Vincent, and Kynett? On the other hand, who believes that the Missionary Society, Sabbath School, Church Extension, and Quarterly Review, have suffered in their interests because these men have made them specialties? Suppose, now, that some make, in study and effort, the grand "central idea of Christianity" a specialty, and devote themselves fully and intensely to the work of "perfecting the saints," or spreading holiness through the church, will that belittle them, make them "narrow," or be out of harmony with the policy of the church which makes a large use of specialists as book agents, presiding elders, bishops, editors, secretaries, presidents of colleges, etc.? Where do we look for the deepest penetration, or the highest skill? Where?

155. Did Mr. Wesley organize special societies and meetings for the promotion of holiness, and attend them himself?

He did. This is stated distinctly and repeatedly in his journals. He alludes to their organization, to his attendance, and to their results in scores of instances. In many places he organized these societies himself; he called them the "Select Society," or "Select Band." He attended them in numerous places, and gives items concerning them in a multitude of cases. Declarations like the following are common in his journal "I met the Select Band." "Afterward I met the Select Society." "I joined again the Select Society." "I met at noon, as usual, those who believe they are saved from all sin." "Met Select Society and talked with twelve of them." As to the origin of these Select Societies, see Works, vol. 5 pp. 184, 185.

Dr. Stevens, in his Church History, vol. 2 p. 458, says: "Mr. Wesley established meetings for penitents and backsliders, and select societies for persons who were especially interested in the subject of Christian perfection." Mr. Tyreman says: "The select societies were taken from the bands, and were composed of those who seemed to walk in the light of God's countenance. Tyreman. Vol. 1 p. 444.

156. Is there to some extent a spirit of opposition in the Methodist Church to the doctrine, experience, and profession of sanctification?

The doctrine, as an item of Methodist theology, is generally received. But it is quite generally believed by those who have obtained the grace, and who confess it, and endeavor to advocate and vindicate it, that there is more opposition in the church to it than many are willing to believe. *In so far as any man has the remains of indwelling sin in him, he has opposition to holiness within him.* We heard a minister say not long ago that "he found something in himself that kicks against holiness." We did not doubt that since the carnal nature always "kicks against holiness." When men are opposed to holiness, it is because holiness is opposed to them. This is the philosophy of the fact that the presentation of holiness provokes latent repugnance to the subject.

The same was true in Mr. Wesley's day; some of his preachers and members would not receive the doctrine, and he was often at his wit's end (as Paul was before him) in keeping them from dropping it altogether.

We can not avoid the conviction that in our own loved communion there are some, in both the ministry and laity,

who discard Mr. Wesley's views altogether. Many who profess to believe the doctrine, and who neglect to seek it, will oppose and reject it when its claims are urged and pressed home upon them. As long as it is left in the standards, in our book-cases, or as long as it is only preached as an item of the Methodist creed, in an indefinite and general aspect, it meets with but little opposition. But when it is urged home upon believers as a present duty and privilege to be sought now and not to be neglected, -- in many of our churches it is met with stern opposition in both the ministry and membership.

Dr. H. Bannister says: "Christian holiness, though required of all, is the most opposed of all things. Sad to say, it is opposed by good men. *It always was so.*" --Advocate of Holiness, 1875.

The doctrine of regeneration may be so presented as not to lead one sinner a year to seek it, and so as never to trouble sinners concerning it. The doctrine of holiness may be so presented as to stir up no opposition against it on the one hand, nor lead any believers to seek it on the other.

There is too much foundation even in our day for the following from Dr. Adam Clarke: "But most who call themselves Christians hate the doctrine of holiness never hear it inculcated without pain; and the principal part of their studies, and those of their pastors, is to find out with how little holiness they can rationally expect (to get away with) to enter into the kingdom of heaven." -- Theology, p. 203.

157. Is there any opposition in the ministry to putting this subject in the foreground and giving it prominence?

There is, and always has been. During a hundred years past, those who have confessed and preached perfect love, and urged believers partially sanctified to press after "the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ," have seen opposition and suffered from it.

Dr. John P. Brooks says: "Notoriously, there are ministers not a few, who are the authorized expounders of doctrine in the denominations for which they speak, who steadily and purposely ignore the subject of holiness in their pulpit ministrations. -- There the pulpits, and many of them, from which holiness is declaimed against; from some of them, misrepresented; from others, berated; from still others, calumniated. (made false or malicious statements about)" -- Address at Holiness Conference.

Mr. Wesley wrote to Dr. Adam Clarke:

"Dear Adam: The account you send me of the continuance of the great work of God in Jersey gives me great satisfaction. To retain the grace of God is much more than to gain it: hardly one in three does this. And this should be strongly and explicitly urged on all who have tasted of perfect love. If we can prove that any of our local preachers or leaders, either directly or indirectly, speak against it, let him be a local preacher or leader no longer. I doubt whether he should continue in the Society. Because he that could speak thus in our congregations can not be an honest man." The British Wesleyan Conference, in order to preserve its societies from heresies and erroneous doctrines, in 1807, resolved, that "No person shall on any account be permitted to retain any official situation in our societies who holds opinions contrary to the total depravity of human nature -- and Christian holiness, as believed by the Methodists."

158. Is it not claimed that the opposition is in regard to the measures adopted, rather than to the doctrine or experience?

It is so claimed to some extent; but those who make objections to the measures adopted almost invariably do not claim to possess perfect love themselves, and manifest no sympathy for instantaneous sanctification, or any special meetings, or direct means for its promotion. They rarely preach upon the subject specifically, and when they do, they either labor to fault those who teach and profess this grace, or to throw the whole subject into vague and indefinite generalities. Their treatment of the doctrine and experience is the same as those ministers in churches that reject instantaneous sanctification altogether, and only teach growth and Christian culture. The results are precisely the same: none are led into the clear light and experience of perfect love, and whole churches become prejudiced against instantaneous sanctification.

159. Should we not ASSUME, that there is no opposition to the spread of this doctrine and experience?

We should not. To assume that there is no opposition to it, is to assume what is not true, and what is very generally known not to be true. "To be forewarned is to be forearmed," and there is an opposition, strong and persistent, that

every faithful worker in this regard has to encounter. To refuse to look at difficulties and dangers that surround us is not courage, but folly and cowardice.

We should not unduly magnify this opposition, nor dwell much upon it. We should not give it too much attention, nor attach very much importance to it. We are to work as though there were no opposition, and not talk too much about it, so as to let it hinder us. It is especially important that we do not allow it to engender bitterness in our minds, which is the most dangerous item. This should be carefully guarded against, as the many little annoyances and frictions from this source, are calculated to sour or embitter the spirit of those constantly subject to them.

160. How is this opposition usually manifested?

By misrepresentations, false accusations, and by taunts and sneers at those who give it prominence. (even today, this continues. This website gets its share -and from people you would expect better from... ES)

There is no doctrine of revealed religion that has suffered more misrepresentation than this blessed doctrine of perfect love. There is rarely an article written against it, that states it fairly, or that does not more or less misrepresent the teachings of its special advocates. (This also continues today ...)

The sneers and taunts, “He is one of the sanctified ones,” “He makes a hobby of Holiness,” and the like, are so common, and so fruitful of evil, as to demand attention.

That some go to an unwarrantable extreme in regard to the subject of Christian holiness, we admit, and it is a source of grief to all the true friends of holiness. Untimely and unintelligent efforts are injurious to any cause. Nevertheless, where there is one thus chargeable in regard to this subject, there are fifty who fail to seek this grace, and live beneath their privilege and duty.

1. To make a hobby of holiness is both rational and scriptural. Noah Webster defines a hobby; “Any favorite object of pursuit.” “That which a person pursues with zeal or delight.” In the sense of Mr. Webster’s definition, every Christian should make a hobby of holiness. But this is far from the sense in which it is used by these accusers. In its proper sense it would be a commendation rather than a taunt.
2. To say a man makes holiness a hobby, is the same as saying he makes a hobby of religion, for entire sanctification or holiness is religion in full gospel measure. Those who accuse their brethren of making a hobby of holiness do not mean this, and they should say what they mean. They deny making any thrusts at holiness, and say they are not opposed to it. “Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee.” (Luke 19:22.)
3. These accusations breathe a spirit of opposition to the discipline of the church. The discipline says: “Let your **MOTTO** be **HOLINESS TO THE LORD.**” This is to the point, and is good authority. The bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church say: “We believe that God’s design in raising up the preachers called Methodists, in America, was to reform the continent, and spread scriptural holiness over these lands.” This has been subscribed by all our bishops, from Asbury down to the latest one elected.
4. These accusations are indicative of a heart unfriendly to the Wesleyan and Bible doctrine of entire sanctification as a distinct blessing to be received subsequently to regeneration. Any man who preaches this doctrine “constantly, strongly, and explicitly,” as Mr. Wesley directs, will incur these taunting accusations from the opposers of this doctrine.

Dr. W. F. Warren, president of the Boston University, said in his address before the Boston Preachers’ Meeting: “If there is any sin next to the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, it is the making fun of His work in the sanctification of a human soul.”

Bishop Foster rebukes this conduct: “There can be no excuse for sneers and epithets, and for an uncharitable spirit which is but too apparent. It is far from creditable to the piety of a Christian minister, when he can so far forget himself as to seem to (lack) sympathy with sanctity, or with the souls which seem to be aspiring after it.” -- Christian Purity, p. 279.

5. These railing accusations come from those not walking in the light of perfect love, and whose religious experience is indefinite and uncertain, and who manifest no special desire for a better experience.
6. This mode of opposition serves to quiet the convictions of many who are dissatisfied with their spiritual

condition, and feel the need of a clean heart. The mad dog cry of hobbyism has frightened multitudes of timid souls from the pursuit of holiness.

7. These accusations are now made mainly by persons within the pale of the Methodist church itself. The time was when the early Methodist preachers had plenty of this kind of treatment from without. They were accused of making a hobby of “free grace,” and of “full salvation,” by the opponents of those doctrines in other churches. Now, while that kind of opposition from abroad has ceased, we have an abundance of it at home.

Christian holiness and its friends have sufficient opposition in the depraved hearts of the unconverted, and in those who reject the doctrine altogether, without an ambush fire of this kind from their professed friends.

Dr. H. Bannister says: “The animus of such offense, however, seems too like that exhibited in flings and taunts at all religious people.” -- Advocate of Holiness, 1875.

We ask, in the language of John Wesley: “Why have the preachers of it been hooted at like mad dogs, even by men that fear God, nay, and by some of their own children, some whom they, under God, have begotten through the gospel? ‘ -- Plain Account, p. 170.

Dr. Abel Stevens says: “Ministers who profess and preach holiness have to encounter suspicion, denunciation, theological and ecclesiastical ostracism.” And he asks, “Is it not time that this thing was not only abandoned, but regarded with shame and penitence?”

8. How would such accusations sound from the lips of John Fletcher, or William Bramwell, or John Nelson, or from that great and good man, John Wesley? Who said “Therefore ALL our preachers should make a POINT of preaching PERFECTION to believers CONSTANTLY, STRONGLY and EXPLICITLY; and ALL believers should mind this one thing, and constantly agonize for it.”

Whoever read or heard of Wesley or Fletcher accusing or reproving anybody for making a hobby of holiness? Wesley said to all his preachers, “Let your MOTTO be, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” He declared holiness “the peculiar doctrine committed to our trust” -- and for this he suffered the greatest opprobrium.

Mr. Wesley never accused even George Bell of making a hobby of holiness. He reproved Bell and others for mischievous extravagances, but never for making a hobby of perfect love.

9. These scoffing accusations prevent the subject of entire sanctification from receiving the attention and prominence in ministerial labor its interests demand. Our preachers know, if they follow the advice of Mr. Wesley, and the directions given in the Discipline, and give this subject prominence (and they cannot enjoy it without), they will be accused of being “sanctificationists,” and of “riding the hobby of holiness.” Many are not willing to trust their ministerial reputation with the advocacy of this doctrine. Our ministers know also, that some of our churches have been so poisoned and prejudiced, that they will not have a preacher who is known to profess and preach it.

10. Odium (widespread dislike, moral stench, offensiveness) is no weapon for theological controversy. Throwing smut and mud helps no man to God, and furthers no good cause. Christian men should have too much conscience and honor to use odium as a battering ram to break down truth, or a scarecrow to keep people from an open avowal of gospel privilege and duty.

These unbrotherly accusations help on this condition of things; hence, the attention we have given them as evils, as only evils, and that continually.

Mr. Wesley wrote: “I hope brother C. is not ashamed to preach full salvation, receivable now by faith. This is the word which God will always bless, and which the DEVIL PECULIARLY HATES therefore he is constantly stirring up both his own children and the weak children of God against it.” There is a class of temporizing, self-indulgent, tobacco using men in some of our pulpits, who neither believe in, preach, nor enjoy much religion – these are ready to utter such accusations against any who profess or preach Christian holiness, and these manifest and shameful facts are neither palliated nor concealed by their stale cry of “Croaker!” against wholly consecrated persons who weep over the desolations of Zion.

Should we address any such, we ask: If you neglect your duty – do not seek or enjoy this grace, and fail to lead the

church to seek and obtain it; ought you to find fault with and hinder those who are keeping their ordination vows, following the Discipline, and are trying to do the very best they can to lead the hungry thousands in the church into the clearer light and deeper experience of perfect love?

The Bible gives prominence to the subject of holiness. All the standards of Methodism, the Discipline, and the Hymn Book, give prominence to it. Why, then, is it censurable (proper to judge) to give it prominence in pulpit and pastoral labor? It is undeniable that multitudes in our ministry but seldom preach a sermon specifically on the subject of holiness, notwithstanding thousands in the church are but partially sanctified, and the church is suffering for the want of purity and power.

161. Is it not often objected to (those who profess) holiness that they indulge in censoriousness?

It is, and it always will be, so long as there are so many worldly, formal, backslidden members in the church. No man can successfully wage a campaign against the formalism or deadness which hides itself under the pretense of dignity and decency without appearing to be censorious. We do not deny that some may have given an occasion for this objection; but let any Christian, in the ministry or laity, do his whole duty to the church and the world in their present state – let him speak to them and of them as they really are – and he will of course incur the charge of censoriousness. Who suffered more of this than Mr. Wesley?

With some people it is a common thing if a brother has not “charity” enough to apologize for sin and cover up the “works of the devil,” to charge him with “censoriousness,” “sour godliness,” etc.

There can be no holiness which has no rebuke for sin, or opposition to Satan. Look at the Great Exemplar – the Son of God. The Spirit of God and the spirit of the world can never harmonize they are perfect antagonisms.

162. Are there two kinds of holiness among men, one a sweet, loving, peaceful holiness, and the other a fighting one?

Holiness is the same in kind in God, angels, and men. It invariably secures peace, meekness, and love as sweet as heaven. But these very elements make men hate the devil, and oppose sin with all their might. Perfect love makes its possessor as meek as a lamb and as bold as a lion. While it inspires love and gentleness, it teaches an uncompromising opposition to all unrighteousness. It makes its possessor a burning, shining, loving, fighting, conquering soldier of Christ.

They said the meek and lowly Jesus had a devil. John Wesley was accused incessantly, for years, of being heady, willful, self-conceited, censorious, and bigoted. He could be led by a hair in the right direction, but the combined powers of earth and hell could not move him an inch contrary to his honest convictions of duty.

If standing up straight for God, loving all he loves, hating all he hates, and opposing all sin, either in or out of the church, constitutes a fighting Christian, we hope to live and die one.

163. Who are the most virulent opposers of entire sanctification?

Those profess who have received the most light on the subject, and have been frequently convicted of their need of it, and yet have failed to seek it. There is a large class of such persons who have been a long series of years in the church, and yet have no experiential knowledge of entire sanctification as a blessing distinct from regeneration. As might be expected, (a result of not seeking holiness,) many of these have become cold, indifferent, and backslidden. These are the persons generally in the church who oppose entire sanctification.

Mr. Wesley said: “Those who love God with all their heart must expect much opposition from (those who) profess who have gone on for twenty years in an old BEATEN TRACK and fancy they are wiser than all the world. THESE ALWAYS OPPOSE THE WORK OF SANCTIFICATION MOST.” -- H. A. Rogers’ Journal, p. 177.

If Mr. Wesley had cause to utter this in his day, what would be his language were he to visit the formal, proud, popular churches of this time, in hundreds of which there is not a single witness of entire sanctification?

164. Who are the best friends of the church?

Those who have most of the Spirit of Christ, and who, under God, do most to lead sinners to seek pardon, and believers to seek purity. He who loves the church most, other circumstances being equal, will do the most for her, and will watch over her purity, usefulness, and interests with the deepest godly jealousy. Her true friends will never

heal the hurt of the daughters of her people slightly.

To be faithful to the church, and point out her duties, her faults, and her dangers, is one of the strongest evidences of love for her. "He who tells me my faults is my friend." To faithfully point out the duties, defects, and sins of the church, is very far from "stabbing," "bleeding," or "abusing" the church, as some appear to believe.

A time-serving, temporizing man, who seeks more to please men and make the church popular with the world, than he does to lead sinners to God and believers on to holiness, is very far from being the best friend of the church. And the minister who maintains a strict fidelity to God, and who, like Wesley and his coadjutors, deals faithfully, though kindly, with the church and the world, and gives sin of every kind, either in or out of the church, no quarter, is very far from being an enemy of the church.

The worst enemies of the church are some within her own pale (walls). A compromising, self-seeking, worldly-minded, backslidden minister will do more to run down her piety, kill off her converts, and scatter spiritual desolation through all her borders, than all her enemies from without combined.

SECTION 15 HOLINESS IDENTIFIED WITH THE PROMOTION OF THE GENERAL WORK OF GOD

165. Is the general work of God identified with the preaching and the promotion of holiness?

It is in every respect. This must be so in the very nature of the case, and it cannot be permanently promoted in any other way. We give the following authorities on this question:

1. Mr. Wesley says: "I examined the society at Bristol, and was surprised to find fifty members fewer than I left in it last October. One reason is, Christian perfection has been little insisted on; and wherever this is not done, be the preachers ever so eloquent, there is little increase, either in number or in the grace of the hearers." -- Works, vol 4 p. 220.

"I preached at Bradford, where the people are all alive. Many here have lately experienced the great salvation, and their zeal has been a general blessing. Indeed, this I always observe, wherever a work of sanctification breaks out, the whole work of God prospers. Some are convinced of sin, others justified, and all stirred up to greater earnestness for salvation." -- Vol. 4 p. 437.

"I found the plain reason why the work of God had gained no ground in this [Launceston] circuit in all the year. The preachers had given up the Methodist testimony. Either they did not speak of perfection at all (the peculiar doctrine committed to our trust), or they spoke of it only in GENERAL TERMS, without urging the believers to go on unto perfection, and to expect it every moment. And wherever this is not done, the work of God does not prosper." -- Vol. 4 p. 459 "Here began that glorious work of sanctification which had been nearly at a stand for twenty years.

But from time to time it spread; and wherever the work of sanctification increased, the whole work of God increased in all its branches." -- Vol. 7 p. 376.

"The more I converse with the believers in Cornwall, the more I am convinced that they have sustained great loss for want of hearing the doctrine of Christian perfection clearly and strongly enforced. I see, wherever this is not done, the believers grow dead and cold. Nor can this be prevented but by keeping up in them an hourly expectation of being perfected in love." Vol. 4 p. 137.

Where Christian perfection is not strongly and explicitly preached, there is seldom any remarkable blessing from God: and consequently little addition to the society, and little life in the members of it. Therefore if Jacob Rowell is grown faint, and says but little about it, do you supply his lack of service. Speak, and spare not. Let not regard for any man induce you to betray the truth of God. Till you press the believers to expect full salvation

now, you must not look for any revival.” -- Vol. 6 p. 721.

These declarations come from a minister of Christ, whose life, labors, and usefulness have not been equaled since the days of the apostles, and whom Macaulay declared “The greatest church organizer of the last thousand years.” Dean Stanley said, in his address at St. Paul’s, “It is no disrespect to say that no one has arisen in the Methodist society equal to their great founder, John Wesley.”

2. Dr. Lovick Pierce, in his sermon before the General Conference of the Methodist Church, South, said: “Just so far as our church has ceased to believe in entire sanctification, and to seek after it as the only phase of religion, revealed to us in the New Testament edition of it, that saves us from all sin, just so far we are a corrupted and a God-forsaken church, and it is useless to try to sustain ourselves by eulogies or what we have been. -- Sermon.
3. Dr. Olin says: “For nearly the last half century little has been said about it in this country. Now the doctrine is reviving again. With it will come many blessings – great power and grace.”
4. Bishop McKendree said to Summerfield: “Never forget that no doctrine which we have ever preached has been more owned by the Head of the Church; and I doubt not the success of your mission may mainly depend upon your zealously holding forth this great salvation.” -- Letter to Summerfield.
5. Rev. William Bramwell writes to Mr. Sigston: “But I am certain the doctrine of ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION is upon the decline and if it is not enforced, there will follow a declension in the work among the people. I do not see how this is to be restored among us because the greater part of the persons in authority, arising from riches, etc., are much averse to this in their minds. And as the number of such authorities increases, the doctrine will decrease and this from fear of displeasing such authorities. Here the glory is departing, and, I fear, will depart. We have to pray that the number of those may be increased who boldly, as at THE FIRST, declare the whole counsel of God.” -- Life of Bramwell.
6. Dr. Stevens, in his “History of Methodism,” says of the early Methodist preachers: “Every one of them, at his reception into the traveling ministry, avowed his belief in the doctrine, and that he was ‘groaning’ after, if he had not already attained, this exalted grace. Perhaps no single fact affords a better explanation of the marvelous success of Methodism.
“Wesley observed and declared that wherever it was preached revivals usually prevailed. ‘It is,’ he said, ‘the grand depositum which God has given to the people called Methodist, and chiefly to propagate this, it appears, God raised them up. Their mission was not to form a religious party, but to spread holiness over these lands.’ The doctrine of personal sanctification was, in fine, the great potential idea of Methodism ... These holy men, in making an entire public sacrifice of themselves, did so as a part of an entire consecration to God, for the purpose of their own entire sanctification as well as their usefulness to others – History of Methodism, vol. 2 p. 406.
7. Rev. William Arthur says, in an address in London: “The doctrine of holiness is opening the way for that of conversion, and that of conversion preparing subjects for that of holiness and both knock at the door of all Methodists, saying, This is your work.”
8. Rev. L. Tyreman, author of “Life and Times of Wesley,” says, in a letter to E. C. Estes, Esq.: “All who are acquainted with Methodist history are well aware that Methodism has always prospered most when the doctrine of entire sanctification has been most popular.”
9. Bishop Soule writes to Rev. Timothy Merritt in 1841: “It should be an occasion of gratitude and joy to the whole ‘household of faith’ this blessed doctrine of scriptural holiness is reviving in the churches, -- that Christians and Christian ministers of different denominations are waking up to this great concern.”
10. “The calm voice of history will persistently declare,” says Rev. Alexander McLean, “that when from within the denomination, this doctrine and experience was assailed by argument or innuendo; or by its being placed in a light so false as to make it repellent, the spiritual and temporal interests of the church correspondently suffered.” -- Address at Holiness Conference.
11. The following is from the pastoral address of the General Conference of 1840: “The doctrine of entire sanctification constitutes a leading feature of original Methodism. But let us not suppose it enough to have it in our standards; let us labor to have the experience and the power of it in our hearts. Be assured, brethren, that if

our influence and usefulness, as a religious community, depend upon one thing more than any other, it is upon our carrying out the great doctrine of sanctification in our life and conversation. When we fail to do this, then shall we lose our pre-eminence; and the halo of glory which surrounded the heads and lit up the path of our sainted fathers, will have departed from their unworthy sons. O brethren, let your motto be, 'HOLINESS TO THE LORD.'"

SECTION 16 RESULTS OF NOT SEEKING HOLINESS

166. What are the results of neglecting to seek holiness?

1. It affords fearful advantage to Satan, our great enemy.

He comes to enslave the soul with fear, to inflate it with pride, to inspire it with the love of the world, to inflame its lusts, to excite anger, to obscure the path of duty, and induce rebellion against God. In the soul but partially sanctified Satan finds some tendency, more or less, to unbelief, to fear, to pride, to covetousness, to lust, and, indeed, to every sin. The seed of all sin is yet in the heart.

What a fearful advantage is thus allowed to the enemy!

“But of all the foes we meet,
None so oft mislead our feet
None betray us into sin,
Like the foes that dwell within.”

2. It is the occasion of frequent defeat in spiritual conflicts.

Sinning and repenting, rising and falling, are prominent characteristics of those who refuse to seek the blessing of holiness. How truthfully does this familiar stanza describe the lives of multitudes of converted men!

“Here I repent and sin again;
Slain with that same unhappy dart
Now I revive, and now am slain
Which, oh, too often wounds my heart.”

“We are compelled to declare,” says Bishop Peck, “in our honest judgment, there are few cases of only partial sanctification in which every single day does not make bitter work for repentance...”

How many, through the influence of remaining depravity, have been betrayed into angry passions, into vanity, pride, and unbridled lusts! How many have gradually yielded to the suggestions of an evil heart, and found at length that their strength was lost, their confidence gone, their Saviour grieved, and their souls brought into bitter condemnation!” -- Central Idea, p 122

3. It is the origin of those grievous apostasies which have dishonored the church and ruined souls.

- “Can there be any question of this ? Who, that believes in the possibility of either temporary or final apostasy, could suggest a mode of backsliding more effectual, more inevitable, than to allow the sinful propensities of our nature to remain undisturbed – to disobey the great law of progress, which is revealed as sacredly binding upon every converted man?” Central Idea, p. 124.
- Dr. George Peck says: “Leaving ‘first principles,’ and going on to perfection, is the only way to be secure against final and total apostasy. ... If, then, we do not wish to end in the flesh, to fall from grace, to lose our first love, to be deprived of the talent committed to us, to have the candlestick removed out of its place, and finally to be cast into outer darkness, we must leave the things which are behind, and go forward to those

which are before. ... It is our only security against utter apostasy, the dismal gulf of infidelity, and the pit of hell.

“If we resist or neglect it, we are guilty of disobedience; we contract guilt, and come into condemnation. What, then, is the condition of those Christians who do not seek at all the entire sanctification which God requires? Are they doing the will of God? Let all concerned lay their hand upon their heart, and decide this question according to truth and evidence.” “But what I do mean is, that those Christians who do not seek, and seek CONSTANTLY, for an entirely sanctified nature, FALL INTO CONDEMNATION. And I may add that this condemnation must be removed by pardon, upon repentance, or it will finally ‘drown the soul in destruction and perdition.’ “ -- Christian Perfection, pp. 16, 23, 419.

- Rev. Timothy Merritt says: “If Christians would not backslide, and bring a reproach upon the cause of Christ, they must go on to perfection. There is no (middle way) between going forward and drawing back. As soon as any one ceases to press forward, he declines in spiritual life.” -- Christian Manual.
- Mr. Wesley’s views are presented by Dr. Peck as follows: “We must either be in possession of this high state of grace, or be pressing after it, if we would retain the favor of God, and be certain of heaven.”
- Dr. Doddridge says: “To allow yourself deliberately to sit down satisfied with any imperfect attainments in religion, and to look upon a more confirmed and improved state of it as what you do not desire, nay, as what you secretly resolve that you will not pursue, is one of the most fatal signs we can well imagine that you are an entire stranger to the first principles of it.” -- Rise and Progress, chap. 20.
- President Mahan gives you his views on this subject, in his work on Christian Perfection, thus: “We are also prepared to account for a melancholy fact which characterizes different stages of the experience of the great mass of Christians. From the evangelical simplicity of their first love they pass into a state of legal bondage and, after a fruitless struggle of vain resolutions with ‘the world, the flesh, and the devil,’ they appear to descend into a kind of Antinomian death. “ -- Christian Perfection, p. 100.
- Here backsliding often commences. He who fights against sin, and overcomes it, will soon be convicted that it is his duty and his privilege to seek a clean heart. Let him hesitate to do it, and he does not remain where he was before. He has taken back part of the consecration which he made.

His power is gone. He is under condemnation.” -- Rev. B. T. Roberts: Editorial in Earnest Christian.

We are fully convinced that a neglect on the part of regenerated souls to seek entire sanctification, is a more fruitful occasion of losing the witness of justification, and of backsliding, than all other causes combined. Indeed, it includes, virtually, all other causes. The witness of a justified state can no more be retained without seeking holiness, than a witness of entire sanctification or holiness can be retained without a further and constant growth in grace and knowledge of the truth.

The very conditions upon which a state of justification is retained inevitably lead to Christian purity. The same is true of the conditions of retaining a state of perfect love – they are those by which the soul is to grow and mature in holiness. A violation of the conditions of increase and growth in holiness forfeits the state of holiness itself. The way for a regenerated soul to obtain the blessing of perfect love, is to abide closely by the conditions of retaining his justification. If he does, he will soon, very soon, bathe in the fountain, and come out pure through the blood of the Lamb.

The converted soul cannot retain the clear light of justification long without a knowledge of its need of being cleansed from heartfelt impurity, of unreserved submission to God, and trust in the blood of Christ for full redemption. Glory to God! In this way millions have obtained the perfect love of Christ.

4. Many good men think the church is sadly backslidden on account of this neglect.

- Bishop Peck asks: “Is it not true that the large majority of real Christians are yet without it? -- that, in consequence of its neglect, the church is loaded with a body of death filled with backsliders, and comparatively powerless for the great purpose to which she is ordained of Heaven? ...

“How many thousands have been slain by harbored inward foes, which have seemed to be harmless! What a

mass of backsliders there are now in the Church, for the very reason that they have been satisfied without going on unto perfection.” -- Central Idea, p. 315.

- President Mahan says: “We see the reason of the aspect of living death which the church now presents to the world. It is simply this: she is in a state of unbelief in respect to the nature and extent of the provisions and promises of divine grace. Christian Perfection, p. 51.
- Bishop Foster says: “To say that the church is now living, and from the time of the beginning has been living, beneath her privilege, below her mission, would certainly be but a mild and moderate, though humiliating, utterance of the conviction of Christendom.” -- Christian Purity, p. 25.

A neglect to seek holiness causes a spirit of opposition to holiness.

It is usually the case that persons who have been repeatedly convicted of their need of holiness, and of their duty to seek it, and have refused to do it, or have put forth at times some slight efforts to obtain it, and then relapsed into indifference upon the subject, become its worst enemies. They become displeased with those who faithfully preach it, and dislike to hear it personally professed.

This is the natural result of neglected duty, and of grieving the Holy Spirit. They become opposed to holiness because holiness is opposed to them. Sinners who pursue a similar course in regard to regeneration, experience similar results.

167. If I lose the blessing, must I tell others of it?

Usually this would be very improper. It would weaken the feeble-minded, and stagger those who are seeking. Fly directly to Christ. Take Him again by simple faith as a present Saviour. Cry, Lord, here I am; I repent; I give up all; I am fully Thine. Thou art my Saviour; I will, I do believe. You might tell an intimate friend or two; they would help you by their prayers.

198. Is not the church subject to many and great dangers?

She is; and in view of it needs holiness as a coat of mail and a strong tower, to secure her safety.

She has frightful dangers in her outward prosperity. She has dangers in her accumulation of wealth and numbers, and in her increasing popular and secular power and unless her purity and moral power are kept clear and strong, she will inevitably meet with sad and deplorable reverses.

The Methodist Church is in great danger of drifting away from her primitive simplicity, spirituality, and healthful discipline. It is believed by many that while she is increasing in numbers and becoming wealthy and popular, there are sad and unmistakable evidences that in many places she is losing her original zeal, sacrificing spirit, and spiritual power.

When the Methodist Church, or any other church, relies for her success upon anything but deep, vital, and practical godliness, she will inevitably fail in accomplishing her great mission. Numbers, wealth, learning, position, or popularity, can never supply the place of piety. This is indispensable, and it must be first, last, and always.

Were Mr. Wesley to leave his mansion near the throne, and visit the Methodist churches of America, we fear he would have occasion to cry out, in many places, in the language of the venerable Asbury, who, just before he died, preached in Baltimore, at the Eutaw-Street Church with great plainness of speech; and after expressing his fears that the Baltimoreans were departing from the simplicity of Methodism, he raised his voice and cried aloud, “Come back! COME BACK!! COME BACK!!!

These are times of peril and danger to Christians. “Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” It is not as easy now to serve God faithfully as many appear to suppose. The path of duty is being obscured in many ways. Efforts to popularize Christianity, by driving Christian morality to the very bounds of evil, are constantly put forth.

Worldly compromise is on the increase. The great problem of the age appears to be, not how to be Christ-like; not how to bring the human heart into complete conformity with the heart and life of Christ; but how may we conform to the world, and not lose our hope nor our Christian reputation? How much like the world may we live, and still maintain a profession of friendship for Christ and a hope of heaven? Efforts to work out this problem are having a terrible influence upon the practical and experiential Christianity of this age. Such is its molding power upon the sentiments and practice of a large portion of professing Christians, that they bear only a slight resemblance to the sentiments, practices, and experience of the apostolic church. Hence the way to heaven, instead of becoming more plain and easy, as men have sought to make it, has been rendered vastly more perilous. The difficulties in the way of a truly godly life are not less than formerly, but in some respects are on the increase. This, to the really wise and deeply spiritual, is becoming more and more apparent. We live in an age of deep, insidious, satanic operation.

Many of the most spiritual duties and exercises of true religion, such as private devotion, self-examination, self-abasement, and penitential sorrow before God, have, with many, become old-fashioned and obsolete; while precisely those parts of worship and items of truth are retained which serve to excite and amuse the senses and play upon the surface of the emotions without stirring up the muddy, putrid depths of the heart's corruption. We have plenty of sentimental music and sentimental preaching. We have a brilliant display of rhetoric upon whatever is magnificent, and entertaining; while there is a scarcity of fearless, uncompromising, honest-souled men, who "cry aloud and spare not," and lift up their voice like a trumpet to "show Jacob their transgressions and Israel their sins."

There is a want of men who fearlessly apply the great law of God, and the law of love, to all the vices of the age, and the time-serving, worldly tendencies of the church. These are not the dreams of a morbid fancy, or the suggestions of an uncharitable judgment; would they were either, rather than the painful truth. We are aware there are many precious exceptions – many thousands who are true to God, and are ready to meet and bear a baptism of blood, if need be, for the cause of Christ; but still facts enough are before our eyes to prompt, press, and push the questions: How many professed Christians participate with the ungodly in vain amusements? How many follow, and how many even lead in extravagance and worldly follies? How many do business on principles which will not bear the light of Bible morality? "LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF." Or, to come to the fountain-head of these streams, how many are utter strangers to real communion with God? How many in all our churches are without the witness of the Spirit to their Divine acceptance? Has not the love of Christ in many – alas! in very many – waxed grievously cold? How many never go to any religious meeting, except to a sermon on the Sabbath, and not even to that if the preacher is a plain, faithful man?

A little further back still: How many will not endure plain dealing in the pulpit, or a faithful rebuke of their sins, and will neither employ nor sit under a preacher whose heart is really set on their repentance and holy life? And farther back still: How many even of the ministry fearfully conform to these demands, and are ready to preach smooth things and palatable things, however low the spiritual life of the church may degenerate? These things seen all about us lie with oppressive weight upon our heart. It must be seen the world is yet far from being in sympathy with Christ, or in allegiance to His scepter. Truly, "in the last days perilous times shall come."

211. What class of people most commonly believe in, and seek full salvation?

The great mass of Christian people have always been more from the humble walks of life, than from the higher classes, the elevated ranks of life. This is true regarding those who seek and possess full salvation. Divine grace has been most displayed in reforming and purifying the lives of the common people. True virtue excellence, sincerity and amiability, honesty and purity, are usually found most in humble lives.

God is no respecter of persons, and there is no royal way to His favor, or to heaven. Human distinctions are mainly confined to man and to this world, and human depravity has much to do with them. Some people judge of religion by those who embrace it, and are ever asking, "Have any of the rulers believed on Him?" forgetting that the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, to a great extent, has always been rejected by the rulers of this world, by rich, popular, and worldly people.

A life of mortification, self-denial, and humility does not mix with the notions and inclinations of those who have their portion in this life. Godliness conflicts with pride, dignity, self-importance, and love of applause. People in high life find it difficult to avoid placing too high an estimate upon their noble birth, rank, or wealth, so as not to over-estimate themselves, and under-estimate others. St. Paul says: "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many

mighty, not many noble are called.” Such find salvation very difficult; they are so inclined to self-importance, and so impatient under restraint. Because they are great in some things, and usually those things the least important, they imagine they are great and wise in all things. This is a very common mistake. Most great men are only so in some things, while in other things they are on a level with, or even below mediocrity.

It has been no uncommon thing for the proud and haughty to oppose Christian holiness, and ridicule its friends and advocates as poor and ignorant, weak and credulous. Pride and contempt, standing in the way of candor (honesty, straightforwardness, openness), argument, and truth, have kept many a man from salvation. Many look down with contempt upon the deluded friends of holiness, and overlook the fact that God has great regard for the common people, the teachable, and the humble, and out of this class has always selected most of His chosen instruments and favored people. “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? “ It is very natural that the blessed doctrine and experience of perfect love should have its full share of opposition and cold indifference from those occupying positions of prominence and influence, or from those who wallow in wealth and forget God. This has always been so, and in the nature of the case is not strange.

No Christian truth or experience depends for its success on human wisdom or greatness, and the work and influence of Christian sanctification is not dependent on any class of men, high or low, great or small, rich or poor. Any religious system built upon human power, wisdom, or wealth, will be confounded and brought to naught. It is only safe to trust in God.

The foolish toadyism developing in some of our churches over some supposed great ones, is sickening to all conscious people. This foolishness appears to be growing among us, affording amusement and disgust to some of our more conscious neighbors. The truth of God is adapted to all classes, and entire sanctification, correctly understood, commends itself to the most profound intellects as well as to the common mass of ordinary people.

While it is no virtue to be poor and despised, nor a sin be rich and honored, yet very few of those honored the most, and worth the most, are the most worthy. Those possessed of rank, wealth, and honor, are usually satisfied with rank, wealth, and honor, and do not feel their need of Christ and holiness. They are surrounded with objects which flatter their vanity, which minister to their pride, and which throw them into the circle of worldly pleasure. Well might the Saviour declare: "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:23 NKJV

This article was sourced from the Wesleyan Heritage Library CD and is to be distributed free of charge.

*Edited and published by Earnest Seeker 2005. We hope this selection has built your faith to
enter His own Rest..*

For further information or purchase details for the complete CD see <http://www.EnterHisRest.org>
