

Practical Papers.

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THE biography of Methodism is one of its richest treasures, and an element of its strength of no trifling proportion or amount. The list of its "worthies of whom the world was not worthy" would, of itself, occupy a large portion of the space appropriate to an article like this. Eternity alone will reveal to what extent thousands of characters within its pale, and many without it, have been shaped for greater usefulness, and stimulated to holier living, by this unique literature,—a literature which, reflecting as it does most faithfully, Bible light on questions of experience and practical godliness, is inferior only to the Bible as a help to devotional habit and sanctified character. No denominational history is, in proportion to its extent, so rich in "saints." And while the devotion and self-sacrifice of such men as Baxter, Rutherford, Brainerd, Edwards, Martyn, and others of the children of the Reformation that might be named, and similar qualities found in the lives of such as Fenelon, Lopez, Xavier, and Madame Guyon, of the Romish Communion, have perhaps never been exceeded within the pale of Methodism, yet there is a distinctness and definiteness of experience presented in the biographies of Methodist saints which we seldom find elsewhere. We read of the self-denying labours of one, of the prayerfulness of another, of the great humility of a third, and of the admirable methods of self-discipline of some; and we find, as in the life of McChesney and others, occasional expressions indicating the attainment or obtainment of the highest prizes of holy feeling and divine communion; but only in a very few instances, and those are within the compass of the last few years, do we find that hearty, happy faith in the promises of God, that unflinching hold of a distinct and glorious experience which is ever prominent in the extant lives of the religious celebrities of Methodism.

This peculiarity is to be attributed very largely to the *doctrine* of entire sanctification,—to the belief which until of late was peculiar to Methodism,—that the power of inbred sin may be destroyed in this life; that a distinctly higher place of religious experience than that of the babe in Christ, or the ordinary sincere Christian, is possible; that *perfect love* is for all who will seek it aright. And what a power that belief is in those lives! Dr. Stevens