

OUR LOVEFEAST.

EXPERIENCE OF FULL SALVATION.

By a Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

At ten years of age I first tasted the joys of redeeming grace and a Saviour's love. At the age of thirteen I joined the Church. I have found a home ever since in the Church of my early choice. During the first five or six years of my experience I was often perplexed and distressed with doubts in regard to the reality of my conversion, arising from the fact that I could not fix upon the precise time when the change was wrought. After severe trials on this point, the Lord enabled me to settle the matter; and many years have passed since I have doubted for a moment the verity of my early conversion.

Up to September 7, 1858, I maintained a general purpose to obey God, and received many spiritual refreshings from the presence of the Lord, suffering but few doubts in regard to my justification and membership in the family of God. During this period I was often convicted of remaining corruption in my heart, and of my need of purity. I was often conscious of deep-rooted inward evils and tendencies in my heart unfriendly to godliness. I seldom studied the Bible without conviction of my fault in not coming up to the Scripture standard of salvation. I never read Mr. Wesley's "Plain Account," nor the memoirs of Fletcher, Bramwell, Carvosso, Stoner, nor Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers or Lady Maxwell, without deep conviction on the subject, and more or less effort for its attainment. By being convicted so often of my need of perfect love, and failing to obtain it, I after a while (like many others, I fear) became a little sceptical in regard to the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification, as a *distinct* blessing. I had no clear or definite ideas in regard to the blessing of perfect love, but came to think of it and teach it as only a deeper work of grace, or a little more religion. I expected to grow into holiness somehow somewhere, and at some time, but knew not how, nor where, nor when. I urged believers to seek a deeper work of grace, and to get more religion, but seldom said to them, "Be ye *holy*." "This is the will of God, even your sanctifica-

tion." I became somewhat prejudiced against even the Bible terms, "*sanctification*," "*holiness*," "*perfection*," and disliked very much to hear persons use them in speaking of their experience. I was opposed to the profession of holiness as a distinct blessing from regeneration.

In May, 1858, I was appointed to Binghamton. I went there much prejudiced against the professors of holiness. I soon found, in my pastoral visitation, that where those persons lived who professed the blessing of holiness, there I felt the most of divine influence and power. I realised a liberty in prayer, and an access to God in those families, which I did not elsewhere. And let me remark, while I was prejudiced against holiness as a *distinct* blessing, and against its *special* advocates, I did desire and believe in a deep, thorough, vital piety, and was ready to sympathise with it wherever I found it. I had attended prayer and class-meetings but few times before I saw clearly that there were those in that society whose experience and piety possessed a *richness*, *power* and *depth* which I had not. The more I became acquainted with them, the more I was convinced of that fact, and the more deeply I became convicted of my remaining depravity and need of being cleansed in the blood of Christ. Through the entire summer of 1858 I was seeking holiness, but kept the whole matter to myself. During this time none of the professors of holiness said anything to me on the subject, but, as I have learned since, were praying for me night and day. God only knew the severe struggles I had that long summer, during many hours of which I lay on my face in my study, begging for Jesus to cleanse my poor, unsanctified heart; and yet I felt unwilling to make a public avowal of my feelings, or to ask the prayers of God's people for my sanctification.

The district camp-meeting commenced that year on the 1st day of September. During six days of the meeting the sanctification of my soul was before my mind constantly, and yet I neither urged others to seek it, nor intimated to anyone my convictions and struggles on the subject. The result was six days of such deep humiliation, severe distress, and hard struggles as I never had endured before. On the last evening of the meeting, a faithful member of the Church came to