

HOLINESS OUR HOPE.

Unquestionably, the clear experience of holiness or perfect love subsequent to the regeneration is a doctrine of our Methodism. And just as unquestionably, the holiness doctrine, by whatever name it is called, is the power-doctrine: that is, holiness is power, and indispensable to spiritual power, whether you call it perfect love, the pure heart, entire sanctification, full salvation, complete consecration, or what you will. Holiness is power. The very conditions of knowledge, experience, and grace on which it is obtained and retained make it a power. No man can possess genuine holiness and fail to be a power for good. A man may think he possesses it when he does not; but he cannot possess and retain it without making himself felt for God and truth, and the souls of men. Some who think they have it not may be nearer its possession than some that boast they have it. But however men may differ about it, and however they may misjudge one another or themselves as to having it, this thing is certain, they cannot have power with God unless they possess it. And the converse proposition is equally safe: they cannot possess and retain it without having power with God. And in the degree they approach and possess it they increase in power with God. Men may long approach it and not secure it, and after they have secured it they may make great advancements in knowledge and godliness. So there are likely as many grades of spiritual power as there are varieties of religious experience. Methodism in this country is talking of union; is uniting. Men are making their arrangements to bring their separate bodies together. They are adopting the politics, adjusting the boundaries, equalizing the finances, consolidating the institutions, reconstructing circuits, districts, and conferences, re-forming classes and societies, and gathering all under one general conference and superintendency. But is all this the true and desirable union? Will all this secure to us the anticipated benefits of union? If placing the waggon on the roadside without the use of the horses will move the produce; if placing the locomotive engine on the siding without the steam will sweep the train along; if connecting wire and lever will transmit the message without electricity: then these ecclesiastical arrangements will be union without holiness, without the power of God. But the waggon alone would rot and fall to pieces on the roadside; the locomotive on the siding would rust and sink into the