

The Wesleyan.

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THE PREACHING AND ENJOYMENT OF ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

It was the wont and habit of the old Methodists to believe that they held a sacred trust, received from God, and for the right use of which they were responsible to the Head of the Church. It is to be hoped that no change of culture and progress through which we have passed have in any way modified this belief in a sacred trust. There is no reason why any alterations which have taken place in Methodism during the last forty years should cause a change of view in regard to the fundamentals of either our polity or our doctrine. There is one doctrine especially which is committed to us, and the Rev. R. W. Dale showed the practical sagacity which distinguishes him when he solemnly and devoutly reminded the Conference of its responsibilities in being entrusted with the doctrine of entire sanctification. That there is such a doctrine both in the Old and New Testaments is clear to every Wesleyan, and will one day be clear to all the world. The comprehension, universality, and thoroughness which the Bible employs to set forth the highest effects of Divine grace upon the human soul are indisputable, and all Protestants agree that the words must take effect before death, with the exception of some Universalists who are of no significance on this side of the Atlantic.

But if we are intrusted with the doctrine, it must be for some great practical end. As intellectualists we can admire a beautiful theory, though it may have no practical bearing beyond the effect of intellectual pleasure. Yet the Church of God can hardly be said to be entrusted with a beautiful theory. The doctrine of holiness is also one of the most practical doctrines in the world, and it has been given by our Heavenly Father for the destruction of sin, and for the fulfilment of the law of love, as well as for the beauty of holiness. Are we using the doctrine? Are we making good use of it? Is there anything lacking in this great trust? These are vital questions; let us answer them in the fear of God.

Do the present Wesleyan ministers preach the doctrine of entire sanctification as fully, freely, and frequently as our forefathers? Do the modern pastors profess to enjoy the blessing, as did many of the elder pastors? Then, what of the people? Do they profess to enjoy it in the lovefeasts as much as formerly? Do they speak of it in the class-meeting as much as they did thirty years ago? A perfect answer to these questions could only be given by a scheduled testimony. Ministers who have met classes and led lovefeasts for the last forty years and are doing the same work still can testify whether sanctification is as prominent now as it was forty years ago. Our old friends of the lady who have gone to chapel, class, and lovefeasts for many years can tell whether the former days were better than these for the theme of this article. But how is all this testimony to be got? Who is to issue the schedules, and who will tabulate them? In a question which can only be settled by a mass of testimony which is practically unobtainable it is not safe to hazard opinions; nevertheless the risk is worth running in so good a cause. We do not believe that entire sanctification is referred to either in the pulpit, in the lovefeast, in the class-meeting, or in ordinary Christian intercourse so frequently and decisively as it was forty years ago. Neither preachers nor people profess it so much as they did then. We do not mean to say that our people as a whole, have lost ground; on the contrary, there is more general completeness of Christian character, and a more detailed and comprehensive spiritual culture among us. Never since the days of JOHN WESLEY was the general walk and conversation of Wesleyans more consistent than it is now. If we have lost in concentration of conviction, we have gained in breadth of culture. The misfortune is that we have not held fast the former while progressing in the latter. By all means let us be consistent and completely cultured in all the length and breadth of Christian and secular citizenship. But let us see to it that the central jewel shines like a star in the breastplate of the soul. We must have more grace. We must have

full salvation. God speed the time when many thousands of our Israel, in the pulpit and out of it, shall be able to say "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanse me from all sin."

The doctrine has been injured by the way in which it has been preached. On the one hand, mere conventionalities have been turned into fixed commandments; and fanatical narrowness has usurped authority to close open questions to the aversion of broad and intelligent Christians. And on the other hand, there have been so many subtle distinctions, so many guards, hair-splitting, and refinements in some of the sermons, that common people have not been able to understand. What wonder that they gave themselves no trouble about realising a blessing the doctrine of which was beyond their comprehension? A third mischief has surely been inflicted on the Church of God by the undue and unscriptural exaltation of the standard of holiness. In their anxiety to elevate the Christian life some preachers have put the "second blessing" out of all common reach. In fact they have almost gone the length of making entire sanctification include aesthetics, ethics, and social refinement. Yet who does not see that if the highest finish in such elements of human life is to form a part of entire deliverance from all sin, the blessing of holiness becomes the luxury of the few who have time, means, and opportunity to obtain the brightest polish of the highest civilization. A ploughman may be entirely sanctified without being a courtier, and a godly mother may be free from all sin, though she knows nothing of fashionable drawing-rooms and literary re-unions.

Our fathers preached the doctrine practically; let us be practical. They encouraged the people to seek it and profess it; let us encourage them. Better a few mistakes than universal silence. Better that a few should sincerely profess what they are mistaken in believing that they enjoy than that nobody should profess it lest they should possibly be mistaken. Let the doctrine of entire sanctification be set forth by preachers and class-leaders; let them set it forth practically, encouragingly, and believably; let them tell the people that it is the common privilege of all believers, and that it will be enjoyed by all when the Church is all it ought to be; thus let them brave the sneers of the world and the opposition of lukewarm believers, and let for whom they undertake such work will assuredly give a glorious outpouring of light and life, and zeal and power, and truth and grace!—*Waldman.*

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Some Indian shawls are made of hundreds of pieces, some are so small as to be only an eighth of an inch square, others of various sizes, none larger than a square half yard. Each piece, even the smallest, forms a complete bit of the pattern, and the right side, being the under one on the frame on which it is woven, is not seen by the weaver until the piece is finished. The pieces are all so beautifully joined together that it is impossible to find the joining.

How often we are "discouraged because of the way," because we can only see the wrong side of the pattern our daily life is weaving. We forget that "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and that "all things work together for good to them that love God." And should we not try to remember also, that, though our place in the work may be a very small one, the great fabric, the Church of God, would be incomplete if that place were not filled.

There is another point of similarity; each thread is bleached perfectly white before being re-dyed for the shawl; so we, also, before becoming a part of the Church, must be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, that he might present it to himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

I know the hand that is guiding me through the shadow to the light.
And I know that all bedding me is meted out a right.
I know that the thorny path I tread is ruled by a golden line.
And I know that the darker life's tangled thread, the richer the deep design.

THE HIGHLANDER'S PRAYER.

No man can live in the constant habit of prayer without acquiring a familiarity with the spirit of devotion, which will clearly indicate to others that he is a praying man. A true Christian can generally infer, both from the language and manner of prayer, whether the suppliant is in the habit of daily communion with God. I have even thought that after preaching to a congregation for a few times I could infer from the expression of the countenance and the manner of attending upon ordinances what heads of families are in the habit of regular family prayer.

The celebrated Hugh Miller gives a striking illustration of this in his work on the "Headship of Christ." A Scotch Highlander, who served in the first disastrous war with the American Colonies, was brought before the commanding officer one evening charged with the capital offence of being in communication with the enemy. The charge could not well be preferred at a more dangerous time. Only a few weeks had elapsed since the execution of Major Andre, and the indignation of the British, exasperated almost to madness by the event, had not yet cooled down. There was, however, no direct proof against the Highlander. He had been seen in the gray of the twilight stealing out from a clump of underwood that bordered one of the huge forests which at that period covered much the greater part of the United Provinces, and which, in the immediate neighborhood of the British, swarmed with the troops of Washington. All the rest was mere inference and conjecture. The poor man's defense was summed up in a few words. He had stolen away from his fellows, he said, to spend an hour in secret prayer.

"Have you been in the habit of spending hours in secret prayer?" sternly asked the officer, himself a Scotchman and a Presbyterian. The Highlander replied in the affirmative.

"Then," said the other, drawing out his watch, "never in all your life had you more need of prayer than now; kneel down, sir, and pray aloud, that we may hear you."

The Highlander, in the expectation of instant death, knelt down. His prayer was that of one long acquainted with the appropriate language in which the Christian addresses his God. It breathed of imminent peril, and earnestly implored the Divine interposition in the threatened danger—the help of Him who, in times of extremity, is strong to deliver. It exhibited, in short, a man who, thoroughly conversant with the scheme of redemption and fully impressed with the necessity of a personal interest in the advantages which it secures, had made the business of salvation the work of many a solitary hour, and had, in consequence, acquired much fluency in expressing all his various wants as they occurred and his thoughts and wishes as they arose.

"You may go, sir," said the officer as he concluded, "you have, I care say, not been in correspondence with the enemy to-night."

"His statement," he continued, addressing himself to the other officer, "is undoubtedly correct. No one could have prayed so without a long apprenticeship; fellows who have never attended drill always get on ill at review."

AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

The eleven appearances of our Lord and Saviour after his resurrection, in their order, are as follows:

1. To Mary Magdalene, at the sepulcher.
2. To the women on their way from the sepulcher.
3. To Peter.
4. To Cleopas and his companion, on their way to Emmaus.
5. To the eleven, Thomas being absent.
6. To the eleven, Thomas being present.
7. To the seven disciples, at the lake.
8. To five hundred at once, on the mountain.
9. To James.
10. To all the apostles, at the ascension.
11. To Paul, on his way to Damascus.

VOICES OF HEAVEN.

The land of silence surely extends no farther than to the gates of the heavenly city. All is life and activity within; but from that world, so populous with thoughts, and words, and songs, no revelation penetrates through the dark, silent land which lies between us and them.

Our friends are there. Stars so distant from us that their light, which began its travel ages since, has not reached us, are none the less worlds, performing their revolutions, and occupied by their busy population of intelligent spirits, whose history is full of wonders. Yet the first ray denoting the existence of those worlds has never met the eye of the astronomer in his incessant vigils.

The silence of the departed will, for each of us, soon, very soon, be interrupted. Entering among breaking shadows and softly unfolding light the border land, we shall gradually awake to the opening vision of things unseen and eternal, all so kindly revealing themselves to our unaccustomed senses as to make us say, "How beautiful!" and, instead of exciting fear, leading us almost to hasten the hand which is removing the veil. Some well-known voice, so long silent, may be the first to utter our name; we are recognized, we are safe. A face, a dear, dear face, breaks forth amid the crowded lines of the dissolving sight; a form, an embrace, assures us that faith has not deceived us, but has delivered us up to the objects hoped for, the things not seen.

O beatific moment! awaiting every follower of them who, by faith and patience, inherit the promises—dwellers there "whither the Forerunner is for us entered."

THE BAPTISM OF FIRE.

For us to be baptized with the Holy Ghost is to be baptized with fire. The existence within us of false tendency and proclivity makes it a flame. Once let it fall upon us, and straightway there is turmoil; straight way some hot work begins. Here is a man wholly at ease and quite in pleasant paradise—though it be a fool's paradise of self-content and free self-gratification; but a breath from on high stirs in him at last, a breath of higher impulse and aspiration and now a struggle sets in, in which the soul sways to and fro, and burnings of remorse and repentance are suffered, with daily self-rebusing and self-crucifixion. The man is no longer at peace with himself, but in a great heat of controversy; no longer a tranquil universe, but a troubled conjunction of antagonisms. His life becomes, as the Scriptures represent it, "a battle," "a warfare." A fire of discontent is kindled within him; there rages in him the flame of a conflict between the Spirit and the flesh.

Hence, perhaps, the often less winsome and pleasing aspect of some God-driven soul in comparison with some godless worldling. The latter, concurring lightly with each impulse as it rises, rarely checking or denying himself, never worn with earnest, solemn striving, or stained with tears of bitter mourning and lamentation for defeat, is therefore apt to impress us more agreeably at times than the former does. He, through his frequent self-repressions and self-mortifications, may be wanting in something of a natural grace or charm that belongs to the other, just in consequence of the absence from him of such self-repressions and self-mortifications. A soldier in the midst of heroic fightings often is not always the most attractive looking object; yet infinitely more worth embracing, with his powder-blacked face and bespattered regimentals, than the spotless, and perfumed dandy on parade.

When Christ began of old to baptize with the Holy Ghost, it was a baptism of fire; and even so it is still. The stirring within men of the better self, of the Spirit from above, is invariably more or less with "confused noise and garments rolled in blood." Our God, when he touches us is a "consuming fire." Not out of Christ, as one hears it explained sometimes, but in Christ; for from the God in Christ proceeds the Spirit, and where the Spirit breathes in human breasts there is burning.

OUR NEW HYMN-BOOK.

In answer to the question, When will the New Hymn-Book be ready? a word or two of explanation may be given. A large part of the copy is in the printer's hands; and, so far as the Editors are concerned, there will be no cause of delay, till the work is completed. If by the Hymn-Book being ready is meant simply when the first copies will be complete, we see nothing to hinder that point being reached about the beginning of the year. But, if it be meant, when shall a sufficiently large number of the different editions be finished, to warrant the Book-Steward in offering the work for general sale? then, we may say it will require some months more to reach that stage of forwardness. The mechanical work of printing and binding tens of thousands of copies, to supply our large Church, East and West, is evidently very great. Mr. Briggs, our enterprising Book-Steward, has purchased a full supply of the best type for the different editions; and no pains will be spared to bring out the work in first-class style. We are gratified at the great interest with which the New Hymn-Book is looked for, by our Methodist people. We heard an aged sister lately express her ardent wish, that the Lord would spare her life till she had the gratification of seeing the New Hymn-Book. We pray that desire may be granted. Our personal knowledge of the contents of the book, and of the faithful, discriminating labor spent on the selection and arrangement of the hymns it contains, enables us to anticipate the verdict of all "men of taste"—"these are the only competent judges," as Wesley tells us,—without any misgiving. It will be found admirably adapted for its high purpose, as a book of praise for our families and congregations.—*Guardian.*

THEOLOGY AND LIFE.

It is not uncommon for us to hear it said that what men need is not doctrine, but life; not believing, but living, is the important thing. Preach, say many to the ministry, not doctrine, but duties; do not give us dry theology, but set before us glowing motives to holy living. So much have these idlers insisted on that in some quarters theology has become a term of contempt.

We believe that this is all wrong. We are sure that there can be no right living unless there be right believing. It is true that there are not a few persons in this inconsistent world who live better lives than their professed creeds would lead us to expect; but that does not invalidate the truth of our assertion. A right creed, taking men in general into view, is a condition precedent to a right life; though by creed let us be understood as here indicating simply the great essentials of belief.

Now we go a step farther. We believe that the best, the most thoroughly practical preaching will flow from a thorough theological knowledge on the part of the preacher. There can be nothing more practical, taking hold of the life of men in many ways, than the presentation of the great doctrines—i.e., the truths, i.e., the facts of our most holy faith. The prime essential in one of those great steam ships which in a marvellous way bridge the ocean is what the ship builder calls the "skin." It is a series of iron-plates which form the outer covering of the vessel, and without which she would neither have buoyancy nor capacity. This skin has some measure of rigidity in itself; but it could not stand the strain of the cargo, and of the working of the engines, and of the shocks of wind and wave, were it not held in shape and strengthened by numerous and firm ribs and braces. These do not appear, but without them the vessel would be useless.

Like these ribs and braces is theology to preaching. It serves as practical a purpose, it is as completely essential. As well despise the hidden ribs which make the mighty steamer possible as to despise theology. Without it preaching becomes a series of mere exhortations; which in no long time lose their small hold over the conscience and life.—*N. Y. Chris. Adv.*

ENLARGEMENT.

Contractors.

ERS addressed to the Under-
signed Tenders for the Wel-
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and Western mails on FRIDAY
of NOVEMBER NEXT, for the
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Ramey's Bend and Part Col-
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any tender.

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