

example, has told of having heard him at any public gathering give such a definite testimony. It is true that he exhorted others to do so, just as many a saintly follower of his has acted since. In his act of urging others to testify concerning Christian perfection, without setting the example, John Wesley has had many imitators.

Methodism was founded on John Wesley's experience of converting grace, and was a permanently established society before his attention was turned seriously to the subject in hand. It was not till some thirty years after that the subject of Christian perfection was brought to the front as a professedly realized experience.

But this revival within a revival was plainly traced to Thomas Walsh, and it was ephemeral in its character. At no time in the history of Methodism has this professed experience been a general characteristic, and to-day not a twentieth part of ministry or laity make the smallest pretension to the experience then made so prominent.

Even whilst Wesley declared himself satisfied with the experiences of the many who, during the great revival of 1762, witnessed to Christian perfection, he in no way changed the machinery of the societies to meet their differing experience. The wording of the covenant and eucharistic services still classed all alike, as having failed, during any definite, lengthened period, to keep converted. Meanwhile, in spite of his teaching that the experience was received by faith any moment, and in spite, too, of those experiences which he accepted as genuine, he still taught, both by precept and example, that it was the outcome of religious exercises, that it was, therefore, a matter of growth.

And this brings us to consider the real, basal experience of Methodism, that which was exemplified by its human founder and which constitutes the normal experience of its members. Plainly, this experience is a clear sense of forgiveness and adoption through the unmistakable witness of the Spirit to these facts, and the pursuit of holy living through the ordinances of the Church, coupled with private religious

exercises. Uninterrupted walk with God—walking in all His commands blamelessly—is an aspiration only, and therefore is not expected to be a realized experience.

Methodism clearly was raised up to spread this experience in the world, and not the ideal experience presumed to exist in holiness creeds. As such it has done magnificent work in the world, work which can scarcely be exaggerated in its importance.

Any impartial student of John Wesley's life must admit that the great bulk of his labours was to accomplish this result. The very emphasis he, ever and anon, gave to the subject of Christian perfection indirectly helped on the basal experience rather than the doctrine or experience he professed to emphasize. Hence, we hesitate not to say that he neither himself succeeded in illustrating the ability to keep converted, nor successfully taught others how to do so.

John Wesley was too clear-headed a man to be imposed on by mere doctrinal teaching or semi-antinomian device in his quest after holy living for himself and others. This is evinced by the careful analysis of his own experiences given above; and it is exceedingly probable that if the professors of holiness in his day had applied to their experiences the calm, judicial examination illustrated by Wesley, there would have been a greater weeding out process than was witnessed. But, be this as it may, it is evident that Wesley demanded for himself a continuance of the experiences of initial justification to satisfy his exacting nature, and when he found them not in perfection he refused to claim his ideal life of Christian perfection; and so, from the necessities of the case, not only the bulk of his definite labours but the whole of his indirect, unconscious influence was confined to propagating the doctrine and experience of justifying grace, and this because he had not succeeded satisfactorily in solving the great question of how to keep converted, his highest practical ideal in Christian life was a life of alternate sinning and repenting.

Moreover, this is the highest ideal hitherto taught by His followers the world over, as we will proceed to show.