

But how were they qualified for their work—what were the peculiar characteristics which under God enabled them to succeed? I answer: *they possessed a definite religious experience.* Their experience was not a vague hope that they were accepted, nor was it an opinion formed on a train of reasoning which might, or might not be valid. It was to them a certainty, a reality, an assurance. Their convictions for sin were deep and pungent, and often bordered on despair. Many of them were for days or weeks together under the deepest distress of mind. They cried aloud in their anguish or fell down senseless under the weight of guilt which lay on their burdened hearts. As their penitence was deep and heartfelt their conversion was clear and unmistakable. It was an event never to be forgotten. It was a change from darkness—dense darkness—to light, the clear light of God's love shining in their hearts. They had a conscious personal assurance of acceptance—the direct witness of God's Spirit with their spirit that they were the children of God. Now are there not too many in our day who have not that definiteness in religious experience? Their convictions were never very deep—they never felt sin to be an intolerable burden. They desire to be Christians, want to feel happy, but that is about all. Are there not some who have never obtained a conscious pardon, who would hesitate to say that their sins were forgiven, that they have the witness of God's Spirit to this effect in their hearts? Are there not some who once enjoyed this assurance of pardon, who have lost their definite Christian experience, and perhaps now doubt the possibility of enjoying it and even ridicule those who profess it? They hope they are the children of God, they are trying to serve Him, but farther than that they are not willing to go, indeed perhaps ought not to go. No wonder they are powerless for good. The right arm of their strength is paralyzed. What a power for good it gives us when we can say "What we have felt and seen with confidence we tell." Oh! let us never live destitute of an assurance of our acceptance—the direct witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God.

*The constant and intimate intercourse with God of the early Methodists was another element of power.* They were men of ardent piety. The flame of love to God and man was kept constantly and brightly burning. Their hearts were kept aglow by constant