

## PLACING THE BLAME: FINAL.

(Rev. W. E. Smith.)

Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

When Rev. George Sharpe had been preaching entire sanctification a few months in a Congregational Church in Glasgow and a goodly number had sought and found the experience, he was waited upon by several deacons of his church, who urged him to be less radical in his teaching. Said they: "Brother Sharpe, you can easily be one of the most popular men in Glasgow if you will not preach so strongly on the destruction of inbred sin, and will emphasize the baptism with the Holy Ghost for service."

Mr. Sharpe replied: "I realize the fight is wholly on that question. To compromise here will mean to give over the whole thing. You are putting a price on my soul."

A few days after these same deacons voted Mr. Sharpe out of his church, but after ten years he still is holding up the banner of holiness in Scotland. Compromise is the rock upon which every spiritual movement has stranded. The purity of the apostolic church was maintained so long as the fires of persecution were kindled against it. Nero, Diocletian, Trajan, Julian and others of the Roman Emperors, by trying to stamp out Christianity fanned the zeal of its devotees to a flame. They could suffer shame and endure torture and death, and shout the praises of God amid it all, but they could not recant. The saddest day for the Christian Church came when Emperor Constantine renounced his hostility, and by the edict of Milan made Christianity the religion of the State. Persecution ceased, Christianity became popular; experience declined; doctrine became corrupted; worldlings by the thousands were baptized in the name of Christ; the Roman Catholic hierarchy developed and the dark ages followed. Governmental sanction and temporal prosperity led to a compromise that devitalized Christianity and made it little better than a heathen philosophy.

And the success of any great movement subsequent to that time has had in it the prophecy of its decline.

The doctrine of Justification by Faith preached by Luther produced the Reformation; but the glory of the Reformation was eclipsed by the evils that sprang up due to the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, being perverted by good work not being emphasized as absolutely essential to attest the character of the faith. Mr. Wesley said, "I have no fear that the people called Methodists shall ever cease to exist, but I greatly fear they will become a cold formal sect, having the form without the power of godliness. He also said, "When we fail to emphasize the experience of Holiness we are a fallen people." The average Methodist today will get red in the face and call us a croaker if we say that Mr. Wesley's fears have been realized.

We look at our great church buildings, many of them of cathedral-like proportions, our great colleges and universities, that turn out a cultured ministry; our great membership that surpasses that of every other evangelical denomination; our social service enterprises and publishing interests, yes, we look at everything that can be tabulated in figures and computed in dol-

lars and cents and say "we are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing."

But Methodism has so lost sight of its great distinctive doctrine (which Dr. Dale, a Congregationalist, said was the secret of her early power) that the average Methodist preacher regards it with indifference, and the Methodist preacher who emphasizes it so as to get people into "the blessing," has about the same sympathy accorded him as John Wesley had in the Anglican Church. The great material and numerical success of Methodism has produced the condition.

History repeats itself in every organization. Never has there ever been a church that has confessed its backslidden condition and thus the greatest hindrances to the propagation of holiness are those that have come in among holiness people themselves.

Not more than a generation ago there were in the Empire State several great holiness camp meetings when the fire fell as in the days of old. Inskip, Macdonald, Cookmen and others of eloquent speech and glowing hearts proclaimed the double cure. But the time came when the management deemed it advisable to take more heed to reform work. Temperance day was introduced, social reform had its place, recreational features were added, none of which was bad in itself but it was an entering wedge. Today those camp grounds are absolutely devoted to a semi-religious, an educational and recreational propaganda. A speaker on entire sanctification would hardly be welcomed. The Chautauqua has captured the place. And they who attend make light of the shouts, groans and tears of those of former days. They congratulate themselves that they are away up the road in the process of spiritual evolution, and all that noisy demonstration and emotional fervor belonged to the uncultured past. So then we may well beware when a camp ground begins to become popular as a rest and pleasure resort. When men begin to praise it greatly God's blessing may be less manifest.

Again, the prosperity of holiness organizations makes possible the ambition for leadership to become selfish, and an earnest, aggressive, holy, lovable man may lose out the love and sacrificial devotion and degenerate into a hard driving boss. A so-called holiness church may soon lose its early zeal and love and be unwilling to tolerate a real straight, aggressive preacher who will show them the way and call them back to their first love. It may be easy for a preacher to think because he is identified with the holiness movement, has suffered for the cause and fights for the doctrine, that God must be perfectly pleased with him. But in his zeal and labor the selfish spirit may have entered to be the fly in the ointment that spoils the experience of perfect love. It is easy for those who belong to holiness organizations to imagine a peculiar sanctity is their's by right of such a relationship, and thus they may become careless and prayerless, looking at people rather than looking to Jesus. Those who trust in their environment and past experience rather than in the blood of Jesus that leads them ever in the pathway of loyal obedience to him, are leaning on a broken staff.

It means a great deal for holiness people to be delivered from themselves. The most subtle and difficult opposition one can encounter is from those who profess the blessing and do not possess. Some seem sanctimonious enough to be about ready for glorification, but are unwilling to die out and get real holy fire in their souls; others may become so extreme that they know nothing of slowing down on a curve or shutting off steam on a down grade. After all, however, if a spiritual movement is really moving it must breed a few fanatics. Someone said, "A train is going very slowly that does not have a hot box once in a while." Wesley found it so in his day.

How easy it would be to increase our crowds, our collections as preachers and evangelists by refraining from talking about the negative work of holiness, getting rid of inbred sin! All you have to do is to get an evangelist who leaves out the destruction of sin and many people will come in and begin to praise that holiness church. But the definite testimony to the second work of grace will be less frequent and the love and fire and real victory will be found lacking by one who has a heart that is sensitive to spiritual conditions. Mr. Wesley said: 'A preacher who is not clear in the experience of holiness can only do harm to a society.' It will not be long before the church under such a ministry becomes filled with those who doubt the second work of grace, and are strongly opposed to it. Let a real holiness man come in all on fire, these will soon get uncomfortable and finally go off to find a preacher who will smooth them down and make them feel all right with all their carnal affections un sanctified. So the great question is not, are we so called holiness preachers or members of a holiness organization; the question is not what we did and suffered once, but have we the glory of God in our souls today? Does the Spirit witness and our own spirit witness to the fact that all is upon the altar and the blood now cleanses from all sin? Do we know down deep in our souls that shame, suffering and sacrifice are a precious heritage to us when Jesus leads that way.

The dry dead doctrine of entire sanctification is unattractive, yea, repulsive. It must be clothed with the flesh and blood and life of the real experience of joy, gladness and victory to make anybody want it. And there will always be some hungry souls that will want it, and others who stand off must be convinced of its reality. It costs just as much to retain the blessing as it did to gain, but if we keep our hearts full of love the devil cannot overthrow us; the world cannot allure us; the flesh cannot conquer us and instead of always contemplating past victories and blessing as it did to gain it, but if we keep sent deliverances and pressing forward to better things ahead.

Brother, Sister, do you know what it is to have the glory fall upon your souls today more richly and fully than ever before; do you have a passion for the souls of lost men and a great desire to see believers sanctified wholly; are you conquerors outside and in? If so, you have good symptoms that you are not living in memory, but living by faith on Him who makes the path of the just as the shining lights that shineth more and more even unto the perfect day."