

The King's Highway.

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness.

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness—Isa. 35-8

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Wesley's Letters of Scriptural Holiness

I have read with much interest and profit the booklet with the above title, issued by the Methodist Publishing House, London, and in this article I have summarized and italicised John Wesley's teaching on this highly important subject. According to his letters, his teaching is as follows:

I. That Christian Perfection is—

(a) "Perfect love or the loving God with all our heart so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks." "The so loving God and our neighbor as to rejoice evermore. He that experiences this is scripturally perfect. I want you to be all love. This is the perfection I believe and teach."

(b) "Loving God with all the heart; receiving Christ as Prophet, Priest and King to reign alone over all our thoughts, words and actions."

(c) "An instantaneous deliverance from all sin, and includes an instantaneous power then given to cleave to God. But is there no sin in those who are perfect in love? I believe not; but be that as it may, they feel none; no temper contrary to pure love while they rejoice, pray, and give thanks continually."

"This perfection cannot be a delusion unless the Bible be a delusion too; I mean loving God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves. I pin down all its opposers to this definition of it. No evasion! No shifting the question! Where is the delusion of it?"

II. That Christian Perfection is not—

(a) "Absolute or infallible perfection."

(b) "A perfection such as enables a person to fulfill the whole law, and so needs not the merits of Christ."

"I acknowledge no such perfection; I do not now; and always did protest against it."

III. That Christian Perfection does not include—

(a) "A power never to think a useless thought."

(b) "Nor ever to speak a useless word."

"Such a perfection is inconsistent with living in a corruptible body. . . . If

Christian perfection implies this, we must not expect it till after death."

IV. That Christian Perfection can be obtained—

(a) "Now, i. e., Instantaneously. Not by a slow and insensible growth of grace, but in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, so as utterly to abolish sin and to renew you in His whole image." . . . Assert and prove that it may be received NOW. . . . Insist everywhere on full redemption received NOW by faith alone. . . . Press the instantaneous blessing.

(b) "By simple faith." . . . "Only believe and it is yours."

"But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified, saved from sin, and perfected in love? This faith is a Divine evidence or conviction:—

(1) "That God hath promised this sanctification in the Holy Scriptures.

(2) "That what God hath promised He is able to perform.

(3) "That He is able and willing to do it NOW.

(4) "To this confidence that God is able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more—a Divine evidence that He doeth it."

V. That Christian Perfection may be lost or it may be kept—

"Two things are certain; the one, that it is possible to lose even the pure love of God; the other, that it is not necessary, it is not unavoidable; it may be lost, but it may be kept. . . . You need never be moved. His grace is sufficient for you. But you must continue to grow if you continue to stand, for no one can stand still."

"It requires a great degree of watchfulness to retain the perfect love of God, and one great means of retaining it is frankly to declare what God has given you, and earnestly to exhort all the believers you meet to follow after full salvation. To retain the grace of God is much more than to gain it; hardly one in three does this. And this should be strongly and explicitly urged on all who have tasted of perfect love."

VI. That Christian Perfection should be preached—

(1) "Constantly; (2) Strongly; (3) Explicitly. The more explicitly and strongly you press all believers to aspire after full sanctification, as attainable now by simple faith, the more the whole work of God will prosper. . . . Where Christian perfection is not strongly and explicitly preached there is seldom any remarkable blessing from God, and consequently little addition to the Society and little life in the members of it."

"Till you press the believers to expect full salvation NOW, you must not look for any revival."

"Do not forget strongly and implicitly to urge believers to go on to perfection. When this is constantly and earnestly done, the Word is always clothed with power."

"Entire sanctification from inbred sin can hardly ever be insisted upon, either in preaching or prayer, without a particular blessing. . . . You can never speak too strongly or explicitly upon the head of Christian perfection. If you speak only faintly and indirectly, none will be offended and none profited."

"This is the Word which God will always bless and which the devil peculiarly hates; therefore he is constantly stirring up his own children and the weak children of God against it."

"Whenever you have opportunity of speaking to believers, urge them to go on to perfection. Spare no pains; and God, our own God, will give you His blessing."

Take now a close summary of this point that Christian perfection should be preached, and you find—

(1) If preached explicitly and strongly," (a) "The Word is always clothed with power;" (b) "The more the whole work of God will prosper."

(2) If preached "faintly and indirectly," (a) "None will be offended;" (b) "None profited;" (c) "The work of God does not prosper."

(3) If not preached, (a) "Seldom any remarkable blessing from God;" (b) "Little addition to the Society;" (c) "Little life in the members."

Methodist preachers in our day might well ponder all the above and also this—a

(Continued on Page Four)