

# 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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## EXPERIENCE OF J. A. WOOD

Mr. Fletcher says, "When you are solemnly called upon to bear *testimony to the truth*, and to say *what great things* God has done for you, it would be *cowardice or false prudence* not to do it, with humility.

I was often convicted (after question of conversion was settled) of remaining *corruption* in my heart, and of my need of *purity*. I desired to be a decided Christian and a useful member of the church; but I was often conscious of deep-rooted inward evils and tendencies in my heart unfriendly to godliness. I found my bosom foes troubled me more than all my foes from without. They struggled for the ascendancy. They marred my peace. They obscured my spiritual vision. They interrupted my communion with God. They crippled my efforts to do good. They occupied a place in my heart which I knew should be possessed by the Holy Spirit. They were the greatest obstacles to my growth in grace.

I was often more strongly convicted of my need of inward purity than I ever had been of my need of pardon.

God often showed me the importance and necessity of holiness as clear as a sunbeam. I seldom studied the Bible without conviction of my fault in not coming up to the Scripture standing of salvation.

I often commenced seeking holiness, but at no time made any great progress; for as I read and prayed, some duty was seen to present itself which I was unwilling to perform, and so I relapsed into indifference.

Often I was on the very point of grasping the prize, and then would sink back, suffer defeat, and another season of comparative indifference upon the subject. I was often led to see my need of purity while studying for the ministry with Rev. William Hill, of Cambridgeport, Vermont.

Brother Hill was an able Presbyterian minister, and for a number of years was pastor of a Presbyterian church in Newberg, New York. He became convicted of his need of entire sanctification, and obtained the blessing at a meeting for the promotion of holiness at Mrs. Palmer's in New York City.

The society and influence of that holy man were a great blessing to me. I think more than one hundred times I have bowed with him in prayer in his study, and held sweet communion with God. These seasons of devotion still **linger in my memory as among the most precious hours of my early ministry.**

By being convicted so often of my need of perfect love, and failing to obtain it, after awhile, (like many others, I fear) became a little skeptical in regard to the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification, as a distinct bless-

ing, subsequent to regeneration. I had no clear or definite ideas in regard to the blessing of perfect love, but came to think of it and teach it as only a deeper work of grace, or a little more religion. I taught, as many do, a gradual growth into holiness, or *modern gradualism*. I threw the whole matter into the world of indefiniteness and of vague generalities. I expected to grow into holiness somehow, somewhere, and at some time, but knew not how, nor where, nor when.

I became somewhat prejudiced against even the Bible terms "*sanctification*," "*holiness*," "*perfection*," and disliked very much to hear persons use them in speaking of their experience. I was opposed to the profession of holiness as a distinct blessing from regeneration.

I became prejudiced against the special advocates of holiness; and at camp meetings and in other places I felt disposed to discourage and oppose direct efforts for the promotion of holiness. During a number of years, this was about my state of mind upon this subject.

And let me remark, while I was prejudiced against holiness as a *distinct* blessing, and against its *special* advocates, I did desire and believe in a deep, thorough, vital piety, and was ready to sympathize with it wherever I found it.

In May, 1858, I was appointed to the Court Street Church, Binghamton. I went there much prejudiced against the professors of holiness in that church. I had attended prayer and class meetings but a few times before I saw clearly that there were those in that society whose experiences and piety possessed a *richness, power and depth* which I had not.

The more I became acquainted with them, the more I was convinced of the fact, and the more deeply I became convicted of my remaining depravity and need of being cleansed in the blood of Christ.

Through the entire summer of 1858 I was seeking holiness, but kept the matter to myself. During this time none of the professors of holiness said anything to me on the subject, but, as I have learned since, were praying for me night and day. God only knew the severe struggle I had that long summer, during many hours of which I lay on my face in my study, begging for Jesus to cleanse my poor, unsanctified heart; and yet I felt unwilling to make a public avowal of my feelings, or to ask the prayers of God's people for my **sanctification.**

That September about eighty of my members went with me to the district camp meeting. During six days of the meeting, the sanctification of my soul was before my mind constantly.

On the last evening of the meeting, a faithful member of the church came to me weeping, a few minutes before preaching, and said, "Brother Wood, there is no use in trying to dodge

this question. You know your duty, and may as well commence seeking holiness first as last. If you lead the way, and define your position as a seeker of entire sanctification, you will find that many of the members of your charge have a mind to do the same."

The Lord had so humbled my heart that I was willing to do almost anything to obtain relief. After a few minutes' reflection I replied: "Immediately after preaching I will appoint a meeting in this tent on the subject of holiness, and will ask the prayers of the church for my own soul."

Glory be to God! The Rubicon was passed. In an instant I felt a giving away in my heart, so sensible and powerful, that it appeared rather physical than spiritual. In a moment after I felt an indescribable sweetness permeating my whole being. I immediately walked up into the stand. The presiding elder asked me to exhort after his sermon. I replied, "I will, if the Lord will help." Just as he gave out his text,—*Ecclesiastes xii. 13*, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter," etc.—the baptism of fire and power came upon me.

For me to describe what I then realized is utterly impossible. It was such as I need not attempt to describe to those who have felt and tasted it, and such as I cannot describe to the comprehension of those whose hearts have never realized it.

The most of which I was conscious was that Jesus had me in His arms, and that the heaven of heavens was streaming through and through my soul in such beams of light, and overwhelming love and glory, as can never be uttered. *The half can never be told!*

It was like marching through the gates of the city to the bosom of Jesus, and taking a full draught from the river of life.

Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! I have cause to shout over the work of that precious hour.

I had always been much prejudiced against persons losing their strength; consequently, as might be expected, when the Holy Ghost came upon me in the stand, surrounded by some thirty preachers, it was God's order to take control of both body and soul, and swallow me up in the great deep of His presence and power.

After about three hours I regained sufficient strength to walk to the tent, and we commenced a meeting for the promotion of holiness. I told the brethren and sisters my purpose to ask their prayers as a seeker of holiness, and that Jesus had forestalled my design by accepting my soul **the moment I consented to stand up for holiness**, and was willing to be anything or to do anything to obtain it.

And let me here say, that a willingness to  
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Mrs Geo Tedlie, Apr 27