

# 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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THE SECRET OF SPIRITUAL TRIUMPH  
By Rev. G. W. Rideout, Corresponding Editor  
in the Pentecostal Herald.

The theme is the Methodist Doctrine of Sanctification. I want The Herald readers, ministers especially, to enjoy a notable discussion of this subject by an English writer, a Cliff College man, Rev. J. I. Brice, M. A., who writes in the Methodist Recorder of London, on the subject, "What is the Secret of Spiritual Triumph?" Has Methodism been diverted from its aim? I shall condense the article and put it in paragraphs so as to make the reading easier and the article better understood.

### I.

It was at Herrnhut, I believe, that Wesley's experience became articulate and the Methodist Evangel took form. From that time Wesley urged all believers to "press on to Perfection." To his helpers in the Revival he said, "Insist everywhere on the Second Blessing, as receivable in a moment and receivable now by simple faith. . . This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propogating this chiefly he appears to have raised us up." Methodism by the invincible conviction of its founders, was raised to announce that the normal Christian life is not a losing struggle, but a pageant of victory, and that the secret of spiritual triumph is Sanctification through Faith in the Power of the Indwelling Christ.

### II.

It was the faith of our fathers that no believer in Christ need "go mourning all his days." There was open to all, on the simple conditions of surrender and faith, a life of freedom, joy, and mastery, a life of unbroken communion with God, blessed with the full assurance of his constant presence, fully furnished for effective service, and motived in all its relations by perfect love.

There were no vagaries in the doctrine. It was plainly Scriptural, practical, and explicit. "All here is strong, sterling sense; there are no extravagant flights, no mystic reveries, no unscriptural enthusiasm," said Wesley concerning the testimony of a typical Methodist saint. The quibble about sinlessness raised no fears. "Whether sin is suspended or extinguished, I will not dispute," said Wesley, "It is enough that those who are perfect in love feel no temper contrary to pure love, while they rejoice, pray, and give thanks continually." Yesterday morning I came across this terse and graphic comment on the Methodist doctrine, in the beautiful sayings of Mother Eva of Friedenshort: "Christ does not bring us into a position where it is impossible to sin, but where it is possible not to sin. Sin in the case of a true believer should be only analogous to a railway accident, and never according to time-table."

The Methodists never contended for a spiritual attainment beyond which there can be no development, nor any further ethical choice. The spiritual life may be perfect though not perfected, just as a child may be physically perfect

though not yet grown to manhood. There is the distant ideal of being perfected, and there is the practical ideal of being now freed from defect and brought into that wholeness of spiritual health and moral efficiency, which is the will of God for all his children. That soul is perfect, in the sense of the Methodist doctrine, from which everything antagonistic to the mind of Christ has been cast out, and in which all affections are united in the love of him and are solely in his control. Wesley believed that the practical ideal can be attained instantaneously, by a second work of grace, here and now, through faith; but never did he deny the further growth of a soul so blessed.

The sanctified heart, said our fathers, is a single heart, a heart rid of inward dissension and replete with heavenly power and passion, "a heart in every thought renewed and full of love divine," a heart completely delivered from the tyranny of sin and triumphing in the dominion of Christ. Let me quote Mother Eva again:—

"The Presence of Jesus is the joy of my life—  
The Will of Jesus is the law of my life—  
The Service of Jesus is the vocation of my life—  
The Glory of Jesus is the crown of my life."  
That is the sanctified life.

### III.

But where is the old evangel of full salvation now? These are stirring days. In the mercy of God our satisfaction with the poor average of Christian life and service has been mightily disturbed. Surely, Methodism came to the kingdom for such a time as this. But are the awakened and dissatisfied coming to us for the answer of power and the secret of triumph? No! We are letting others take our crown, Oxford Groups and holiness sects of one sort or another.

Just before his death, Wesley sensed the dangers ahead of his Church, and he wrote to one of his preachers, "God is aiming at one thing, to spread holiness over the land. It is our wisdom always to have this in view. A thousand things will be presented by men and devils to divert us from our point." I believe that has happened — we have been diverted from our point. "Other days, other terms," is mere evasion. Methodist as a Church has not been preaching "the Second Blessing" in any terms for some time. Definite holiness preaching is now generally anomalous, and "the holiness movement" is a side-show of the Connexion. Furthermore I suggest that in Methodism, as elsewhere, there is widespread and deeply-rooted prejudice against the doctrine of a second work of grace. There is no mystery in the fact that hundreds of our young people "have not so much as heard that the Holy Ghost is given."

As a matter of fact, the doctrine of Sanctification has been and still is, under a general cultural eclipse. It is not difficult to account for the prejudice against it.

For one thing, the distinctive Methodist experience is decisively conditioned by Bible-truth. Consequently, as Dr. Perkins points out, "it has in our day been profoundly affected, and undoubtedly chilled, by the historico-critical method

of Scripture study." We are always loth to admit it, but the critical issues go to the very roots of religious conviction; the logical destination of rationalizing modernism is far away from the old evangelical position.

Strangely enough, the doctrine was further shadowed by the social awakening. All at once "the social implications of Christianity" came to view; and henceforth, self-edification in any form was intolerable. Religion was, in fact, more than morality touched with emotion; it was humanitarianism with a religious sanction; and a man who was primarily concerned with his own sanctification was anything but a Christian.

Then came Evolutionism. "The meaning of Pentecost is hidden from us," said Nathaniel Micklem, "partly because our modern thinking is always cast in terms of evolution."

The decisive factor for common Christian thought and practice is not the pure theologian, but the popular preacher. When the modern preacher began to synthesize and apply the intellectual tendencies described above, the preaching of "the Second Blessing" naturally ceased. The old Evangel with its crises was replaced by the cult of the quest, with Jesus as Teacher of a school of seekers after moral betterment, social reform, and a sentimental philosophy. The word "discipleship" was re-orientated with a new emphasis upon the sheer process of seeking instead of the old insistence upon the need for regeneration and the second work of grace. And so the old doctrine was eclipsed.

### IV.

In writing this one has in mind the great company of young people to whom the new interpretation has not brought satisfaction and victory. I want them to know that the secret of spiritual triumph is the old Evangel of Sanctification through Faith in the Power of the Indwelling Christ; and that the prevailing prejudice against the Evangel is merely academic, not practical. It is not that it was tested in the hard school of life and discredited; it just proved intractable to the new thought and was dismissed. But it is still the word of power and triumph to those who allow their need to prevail over prejudice.

A doctrine is not invalid because the pundits dismiss it. Heart-need, after all, is the criterion of Divine truth. "As to Wesley on Perfection," said Whyte to his students, "when you wish to master that subject, besides Wesley's Sermons, read Wesley's once oracle, William Law. . . but, above all, read your own evil heart." That is the way to truth. That alone is true which answers the primal needs of the soul; and a genuine theology follows experience. To him who comes with his need uppermost, to be satisfied, cleansed, empowered, the doctrine of Sanctification presents no difficulties. What is a problem in speculative theology becomes a song of praise to him. Wherefore, I say, let go your prejudice and be led by your need. The process may work havoc with your credal logic, but it is better to rebuild one's faith on the basis of a triumphant experience than to conserve a creed which is divorced from the root-problems of life.

Mrs. Geo. Tedlie, Oct. 34