

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

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WHITHER HASS GONE OUR GLORY?

By G. F. Wimberly

"A lot of wild firre," you say? Yes, but they are reaching the peeople.

From all quarters of the nation come reports of the multiplication of "independent" religious movements, "undenominational" churches, and free-lance "evangelistic campaigns."

They are evangelizing in empty store buildings, lodge halls, tents, schoolhouses, brush arbors, cheap tabernacles, camp meetings, mill villages, and on vacant city lots. And tens of thousands of good people are listening to them.

They are going out into rural sections, mill villages, slum districts, mountain fastnesses, and mining camps, obeying the Lords' injunction concerning highways and hedges.

In some cases the promoters are no better than brazen grafters who betray the people without conscience. But in vast numbers of instances, their preachers are honest, earnest, godly men with a genuine passion for souls.

To berate these zealous people, or to condemn those who make up their audiences, accusing them of ignorance, will not solve the problem. The Church can do no better than to make a serious and open-minded study of the underlying causes for this defection from the established churches. Let us find out why the masses flock to hear these people in their ugly meeting places, and leave our trained ministers and our beautiful cathedral churches half empty.

The glory of early Methodism was its New Testament doctrine demonstrated in human testimony. Also, "the poor had the gospel preached unto them." John Wesley's messages could have commanded respect in the most learned circles in England, but he and his co-workers majored on the unchurched and submerged. The gospel of the finished work of the Atonement filtered down into the masses.

This we must admit. The masses, both in England and in pioneer America, received from the fathers of Methodism an answer to their deepest soul hunger. In this realm they carried on almost without competition. Theirs was a gospel that emphasized three cardinal doctrines: the new birth, the witness of the Spirit, and entire Sanctification.

We hold in our possession a bound copy of the Conference minutes dated from about 1790 to 1813. Questions were asked then as we now ask them in the Annual Conference. Here are some of the questions from this old volume: "How many have been converted during the year?" "How many have been sanctified?"

When Mr. Wesley sent Bishop Coke to America, Francis Asbury was none too well pleased. The bishop was announced to preach at Barret's Chapel, ten miles northwest of Dover, in Delaware, and at first Asbury thought he would not attend. But he did, sitting far back in the audience.

The bishop preached on "Christian Perfection," and spoke with such power that Asbury was completely won over to him, and at the close of the service met him at the altar and the two kissed in greeting. A brass star marks the spot today. That afternoon they planned the Christmas Conference.

The episcopal address of the General Conference of 1824, referring to the doctrine of entire Sanctification, closed with this remarkable statement, "When Methodism forsakes this doctrine, we are a fallen Church." The burden of the entire address, in fact, was related to this doctrine. Concerning it Wesley had said that the Lord had raised up the people called Methodists to spread scriptural holiness over the earth. This was his statement.

During the next two decades the dispute which finally resulted in the division of the Church had the effect of cooling the evangelistic fervor of Methodism, and at the same time the doctrine of Sanctification was also neglected. No one can know what the later history of Methodism might have been if we had kept these two great doctrines to the fore—the new birth, and entire Sanctification—instead of becoming involved in un-Methodistic controversy.

In the late decades of the nineteenth century a galaxy of stalwart champions appeared on the scene, preaching across the continent and reviving this time-honored Methodist doctrine, and giving it new emphasis. Men like Inskip, MacDonald, Keen, Wood, Carradine, Joyce, Fowler, Morrison, and others blazed with a holy zeal. The ministry of these men brought on the issue. In the opinion of this writer Methodism came to a parting of the ways during this particular religious renaissance.

On the one hand there was a militant, aggressive evangelism. On the other hand, a tendency toward ecclesiastical formalism. Bitterness appeared, and actual persecution began. Men with great gifts were labeled "second blessingists" in derision or contempt.

No doubt the proponents of the Holiness Movement made serious mistakes, but they were not alone in that respect. Godly men suffered at the hands of the Church because of their deep convictions on the subject of Sanctification.

The doctrine which Methodism discarded became the central theme of the preaching of numerous groups which, under one name and another, went out of The Methodist Church. The Nazarenes, to mention but one, today have 3,000 buildings, 4,000 ministers, a membership of 180,000, 2,000 licensed local preachers, a woman's society of 50,000, a young people's organization of 60,000, an enrollment of 180,000 in their Sunday schools, 100 missionaries, and six colleges, with a flourishing and vigorous publishing organization.

Throughout the years they have carried on a vigorous evangelism and have laid great emphasis upon the doctrine of Sanctification. To-

day they are serving a large group of people with which Methodism has lost contact. Their churches are well attended, their enthusiasm is high, and they are growing.

There is the Assembly of God, with 209,549 members, 400 missionaries, 4,348 ordained ministers, 6,500 Sunday schools, training schools in seven states. They have added a "third blessing" and "speaking with tongues" to their doctrinal position.

Yes, there have been fanaticism and some excesses. But if such groups could have found sympathy in our Methodism, and if they could have had wise leadership, such extravagances could have been minimized and Methodism would have been immeasurably the gainer.

The two groups just mentioned are but a small fraction of the number who might be described. Most of them have their parishes on "the other side of the tracks." Some of them butcher the king's English, but the multitudes to whom they minister understand what they are talking about. The simple-hearted and unsophisticated find among them something which satisfies the restless soul—something they do not seem to find in our modern Methodism.

The crux of this whole situation, in the earnest opinion of this writer, lies in the doctrine of early Methodism called "entire Sanctification." This is the seismic center from which the waves of evangelistic earthquakes have spread throughout the land.

We have been too vague and too uncertain in our teachings. Our fathers knew what they believed. Our children do not know what they believe. Our fathers pointed to the very hour when they came into a personal knowledge of Christ. Our children are not sure they have ever had such a deep and abiding experience.

We have organized machinery, built great Gothic cathedrals, "enriched" our services, and become formal. And all the time we have neglected the great doctrine of the Church which would have made us a powerful and dynamic spiritual force.—Pentecostal Herald.

"AFTER DEATH THE JUDGMENT"

The greatest deterrent of crime so far as law is concerned is punishment. When the criminals find that punishment is not inflicted, except in a minority of cases, crime will increase. When preachers leave hell out of their preaching they are removing one of the greatest safeguards of society. Preachers are supposed to know, and when they leave it out, or even go so far as to say there is no punishment after death, the common criminal with no Bible, and no desire for one, easily drifts along in the way of crime. The worst he fears is extinction of life, and that is soon over. But after death is the judgment. The warning needs to be sounded of what the broken law will bring a man to, and then the gospel remedy preached whereby men can be delivered from the love of sin.—The Gospel Minister.

Mr. Donald Teddie, Feb 41