



# 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."

VOL. XXXVIII.

MONCTON, N. B., APRIL 30TH, 1948

No. 200

### WESLEY'S PERSONAL TESTIMONY

By Rev. F. W. Gress

(The author and compiler of this article handed his copy to one of our editors in the last months of his life. He was a western pastor, camp meeting president, graduate of Taylor University).

Some of our church leaders have blundered most seriously, in saying that John Wesley did not profess or testify to the experience of entire sanctification, or, in Wesley's phrase, Christian perfection.

In a book by the late Rev. J. A. Wood entitled Wesley on Perfection is an introduction by Bishop Willard F. Mallalieu as follows:

Of two things we may rest assured. The first is, that Wesley taught the possibility of this experience. The second is, that he leaves no room for doubt that he professed to have the experience.

The author quotes Wesley as follows: In January, 1738, I expressed my desire in these words:

O grant that nothing in my soul  
May dwell but thy pure love alone!  
O may that love possess me whole,  
My joy, my treasure, and my crown!  
Strange flames far from my heart remove,  
My every act, word, thought be love.

And I am still persuaded this is what the Lord Jesus has bought for me with his own blood.

"Now, whether you desire this blessing or not, is it not an astonishing thing that you, or any man living, should be disgusted at me for expecting it; and that they should persuade one another, that this hope is subversive of the very foundation of Christian experience? Then, my brother, Mr. Fletcher and I, and twenty thousand more, who seem to both love and fear God, are, in reality, children of the devil, and in the road to eternal damnation." Journal, May, 1765.

"Many years since, I saw that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. I began by following after it and inciting all with whom I had intercourse to do the same. Ten years after, God gave me a clearer view than I had before of the way to attain it, namely, by faith in the Son of God. And immediately I declared to all, we are saved from sin, we are made holy by faith. This I testified in private and public, in print, and God confirmed it by a thousand witnesses." Vol. VII, p. 38. This was written in 1771. In 1744, nearly thirty years before, he wrote: "In the evening, while I was reading prayers in Snowfield, I found such light and strength as I never remember

to have had before. I saw every thought as well as action or word, just as it was rising in my heart, and whether it was right before God, or tainted with pride or selfishness. I awoke the next morning, by the grace of God, in the same spirit; and about eight, being with two or three that believed in Jesus, I felt such an awe, and tender sense of the presence of God, as greatly to confirm me therein; so that God was before me all the day long. I sought and found him in every place; and could truly say, when I lay down at night, Now I have lived a day." Journal, December, 1744.

Then the author makes this concluding statement: "There is just as much propriety in the light of his Journals, to say that he did not claim to be justified, as that he did not claim to be sanctified."

In the volume entitled The Christian Faith, by the late Olin Curtis, once professor of Systematic Theology at Drew University, the author quotes the same statement from Wesley's Journal of the same date on pages 375-376, and makes the following conclusion, "To anyone familiar with John Wesley's careful, and realistic manner of speech, it is evident that we have here the same sort of testimony to the experience of holiness that we have in his Journal, May 24, 1738, to the experience of conversion. I find it almost impossible to read Wesley's words in the light of all his later utterance about the doctrine of Christian perfection, and not consider this date, Dec. 24, 1744, as the probable time when he began to love God supremely."

In the heyday of the late Dr. J. M. Buckley's editorship of the New York Christian Advocate, with a reputation of the authenticity of his editorials, accepted by all the editors of the New York dailies without question, there appeared an editorial by him as follows:

This question reappears from time to time as though of great importance (referring to Wesley's experience of holiness). We know of no record of his explicitly professing or saying in so many words, "I am entirely sanctified," no record of uttering words to that effect. But we no more doubt that he habitually professed it than that he professed conversion. The relation John Wesley sustained to his followers and to this would be no special record of it.

1. All Wesley's followers assumed him to be what he urged them to be.
2. He preached entire sanctification and urged it upon his followers.
3. He defended its attainableness in many public controversies.
4. He urged and defended the profession of it, under certain conditions and safeguards;

made lists of professors; told them that they had lost it because they did not profess it and said and did so many things only to be explained upon the assumption that he professed to enjoy the blessing, that no other opinion can find support.

Here we have three responsible witnesses to the profession and experience of entire sanctification, holiness, or Christian perfection by Mr. John Wesley. It is begging the question for any one to set himself to controvert the fact.

In the Historical Statement to the Methodist Discipline, we find these words: "In 1729 two young men in England, reading the Bible, saw that they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others to do so. In 1737 they saw, likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified; but still holiness was their object. God then thrust them out to raise a holy people."

In the 1924 Discipline in the Episcopal Address, the bishops use Wesley's own words, when they state, "We believe that God's design in raising up the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was to aid in evangelizing the continent and 'to spread scriptural holiness over these lands'."

Wesley and, his followers sought and received the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon them, as at Pentecost, and it was this power that impelled him and his followers to preach entire sanctification to all hearers; and the fact that thousands experienced the blessing is incontrovertible evidence that Wesley and his followers had this experience, else they could not have led the many thousands into an experience which they did not possess. Would to God that some John Wesley would rise among our educated men in high places in positions of our beloved Church, and proclaim this Scriptural experience from the editorial tripod in clear terms, as did Wesley, to the Methodists of our day. He would be assured of a large hearing.

This preacher knows whereof he speaks in this article, for he personally became convicted for this blessing of hearty purity, sought it, and God for Jesus' sake cleansed his heart, giving him the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

—Pentecostal Herald.

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Gal. 6:11-12).