

HOLINESS FROM NON-HOLINESS SOURCES

By Dr. B. L. Olmstead

For many years I have been impressed with the fact that from sources entirely outside the holiness movement there frequently come to our attention writings which set forth the possibility, and sometimes describe actual examples, of an experience after justification which tallies in essentials with what we call the experience of holiness, though various other names or forms of describing it are usually used. We see a good many exchanges from other denominations; and if we had undertaken to make a scrapbook of all the material of which we speak, it would be a sizable one by now. Not always are the writers of such articles entirely consistent with themselves. Indeed, consistency is not usually a characteristic of Calvinistic writings, which at one time may talk about everything being predestined by God, and a little later talk "whosoever will." But we have seen and heard enough actual witnessing to a second work of grace from non-holiness sources to convince us of the reality of such a thing if we had never been in a holiness meeting or had never read a line from John Wesley. As to just what the second work of grace does, there may be more or less disagreement within the holiness movement itself.

I can never forget some things which were said in the classroom of Dr. Willis G. Craig, an old man and an old-time Calvinist and former moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, under whom I studied theology in the McCormick Theological Seminary forty years ago. He had been an acquaintance of D. L. Moody. One day when some student brought up some point about Moody, Dr. Craig replied with emphasis that in Moody there was no pride, no self-seeking, and such like, but that all had been cleansed away. I could not help but think that if such an experience was possible in the case of Moody, it is possible in the case of others, too.

Dr. Craig had been in a Methodist meeting on a camp ground led by the noted holiness leader, Mrs. Phoebe Palmer. What he heard made a profound impression upon him. He said Mrs. Palmer was absolutely the finest devotional leader he had ever heard. The testimonies to which he listened impressed him much; but he heard a few honest souls confess that they had received the experience of holiness and had lost it. From Dr. Craig's Calvinistic standpoint of "once in grace, always in grace" this seemed almost impossible. How would God, who brings everything to pass, give such an experience to anyone and then take it from him? In spite of this difficulty, Dr. Craig was so impressed that he said if we saw anyone whom he thought had the experience he would admit it rather than attempt to fight it. And he closed with an emphatic word of caution to the Presbyterian young men in front of him: "Men, you mustn't fight holiness; that will never do." And he undoubtedly had a chew of tobacco in his mouth when he said it.

The great emphasis made by present-day advocates of a higher life who are outside the holiness movement is upon the baptism by the Holy Spirit after conversion, bringing to men new spiritual power and victory. An example of this was seen in the convention of Youth for Christ International held in July in Winona Lake. Opportunities for every effective altar work were lacking, but I watched with

interest as Dr. Oswald J. Smith of Toronto tried to lead the thinking of a large group of young people who knelt as seekers in one section of seats. First he attempted to lead all who were not sure of their salvation to an acceptance of Christ as their Saviour from sin. Then he talked about a complete yielding of themselves into God's hands and accepting definitely by faith the Holy Spirit as their Victory. Such acceptance was indicated by a raising of the hand. How deep this went in the experiences of those present, perhaps God only knows. But when the Holy Spirit comes in His fullness into the hearts of men, He produces essentially the same results, whatever their theology may be. Part of the hesitancy about ascribing to Him a cleansing from all sin is due to the traditional Calvinistic definition of sin, which includes mistakes and all deviation from a perfect standard of rectitude.

In the last annual printed class letter which is circulated among the members of the writer's seminary class is a letter by a man who has had almost a world-wide ministry as a Presbyterian evangelist. This year his letter simply consists in exhorting his fellow Presbyterians to go on to "full salvation," which he says is our birthright. He speaks about the first half of salvation and the second half. He quotes, among others, the passages, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" and "Be filled with the Spirit," and then says: "This is a direct command. It takes this second work of grace to bring full and complete salvation. It was our resurrected Saviour who promised the fullness of the Spirit which completes salvation, delivering us from the love, power, and practice of sin. Let us be content with nothing less than this full salvation." He urges his readers to read *The Spirit-Filled Life* by John MacNeil, whom he calls the greatest of all Scotch Presbyterian preachers.

I had already read that book, and I have it before me in writing this. In his chapter on "Cleansing" he asks: "What is it to have a clean heart?" He answers: "It is to be saved from all known, conscious sin." In answer to the objection, "That is perfection!" he says: "It is amazing how frightened some people are of being perfect! It were well if they were equally afraid of being imperfect, for it is imperfection that grieves God. This dread of perfection has been called by someone 'a scarecrow set up by the devil to frighten away God's people from the very finest of the wheat.'" As to whether this doctrine is perfection, he adds, very much as Wesley might have done: "Yes and no. It is the perfection which is not only allowed but commanded in the Word of God. But it is not absolute perfection; it is not sinlessness" — which brings us again to the Calvinistic idea that all mistakes are sins.

Later on Mr. MacNeil speaks of the objection that this cleansing is not in the "Standards" of his church. He answers: "That may be; but it is in the Bible." He quotes Dr. Andrew Bonar as saying, "I believe more than is in our 'Standards,' for I find some things that are in the Bible that are not in the 'Standards,'" and MacNeil adds, "for the simple and very obvious reason that you cannot get a quart into a pint measure." Immediately following this he argues from Scripture that "cleansing is a crisis, an act, something done in a moment, just as conversion is, and not a process drawn out indefinitely."

Recently I purchased the privately-printed *Life and Letters of Praying Hyde* from one of his sisters. John Nelson Hyde went out as

a Presbyterian missionary to India in 1892, and his labors there ended in 1911. There was nothing of special note at first about his missionary career. But in a letter addressed to fellow Christians in December, 1896, he tells of a great spiritual struggle and victory which came to him in India. I quote:

"I gave myself to Bible study and prayer two hours every day. Four months passed this way in seeking. Then, one Saturday night, I consecrated myself utterly to God, and at once came on the next day a fight which meant the absolute surrender of my will to God at any cost. It was a hard struggle, and I was in the thick darkness for six weeks. Then I was enabled to say, 'Not my will but Thine be done, O God.' I learned also that 'if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness'. I never knew what those words, 'faithful and just to cleanse us' meant till then. I saw God take an evil habit I had fought as hard as I could for years, and put it away forever in one night. It was an all-night struggle before I could claim by faith the verse I have just written. But claiming it was not till first my will was yielded to God."

It is easy to see that at that time Mr. Hyde received the experience of holiness, which, in conjunction with a life of prayer, was the secret of his subsequent marvelous effectiveness and fruitfulness and spiritual power. A fellow missionary, Dr. Haslam, in an address about him in 1941, said near the close, "All may be summarized in the thought—perfect surrender to the will of God." Soon after his death Dr. Robert E. Speer said of him, "He was recognized by the Indian people as a 'Holy Man' who knew God and the deepest secrets of life, and they came to him in unreserved confidence and trust."

In pointing out real holiness in non-holiness sources, we might go on and on. But this must suffice, at least for now.—Free Methodist.

OBITUARY

The death of **Mrs. George Somers** occurred at her home at Victoria on August 9th, at the age of 76 years. Her husband predeceased her only a few months. She was born in India, the daughter of an officer in the British Army. She came to Canada about 30 years ago and married Mr. Somers in 1938. In religion she was an Anglican. The funeral was held on August 2 in the Reformed Baptist Church at Victoria of which her husband was senior deacon. The service was in charge of A. D. Cann, assisted by Rev. P. J. Trafton and Rev. Albert Northrup. She is survived by one brother in Australia; two nieces in England and several step-children.

The death of **Franke M. Clarke**, aged 87, occurred at his home at Victoria Corner on Aug. 24 after an illness of 8 months. Mr. Clarke was born at Weston, Maine, and lived most of his life in Hartland. Brother Clarke is survived by his wife and son, Herbert, both at home; a step-son, Paul Seeley, of England; a step-daughter, Faith Jones of Simonds; three brothers, Ephraim, of Mainstream; Walter, of Ontario; and Robert, of Bristol. Brother Clarke was a member of the Reformed Baptist Church at Hartland. He was faithful in his responsibilities to the church and was regarded by those who knew him as a responsible Christian. The funeral was in charge of the pastor, A. D. Cann, assisted by Rev. K. M. Robins.