

## MISTAKES OF THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT

By Peter Wiseman

One of the most serious mistakes made by the holiness movement has been perhaps the lack of serious concern toward division in its ranks. In some cases there has been effort to justify such divisions and overlapping. If the Master did not mean organic union in His prayer for the sanctification of His followers, as recorded in John 17, He surely did not mean to sanction a lot of divisions that we have in the holiness movement. He prayed for the sanctification of His disciples that they may be one as the Persons in the Godhead are one, that the world may believe. About the only unity the world can know is organic unity, and in view of the awful need of the hour, non-essentials should not stand in the way of this unity. Is it not a fact that "true holiness" unifies, and carnality divides? It is our sincere belief that if we had more true spiritual unity, we would have more organic unity in view of the challenge of the hour.

Another mistake in the holiness movement is its failure in the literary field, failure to keep abreast of the times. "Following the flowering of the National Holiness Association," said one of the greatest preachers in the holiness movement, a half century ago, "we have failed to be as creative in our literature and the articulation of our position as we should have been." Another great school man in the holiness movement said, "Scholarly presentation of our points of view is dreadfully lacking. The Calvinists are writers, and the Arminians have been content to read their productions and object to them. There have been a few exceptions in the devotional field and in the comparatively simple approach by which some of the doctrinal treatises must be classified." It might be a good thing if the holiness movement had something definite to present to its people on this very line.

The holiness movement has lacked seriously in its emphasis on the high quality of work-service. Dr. Meredith has made a statement on this subject with which we perfectly concur. "On the subject of worship, there is an appalling lack of depth in our worship services. In fact, there seems to be an attempt to wean our people away from the hymnody of the church with its doctrinal content, and in its place there has come a deluge of light ditties that neither provide the worshipper with a grasp of adequate spiritual living nor provide a sacred regard for the truths which underlie Christian faith. The Word of God is altogether too little observed in our worship services. I have actually attended services within a relatively short time in which the only portion of the Word read was a clause of a verse of Scripture which the speaker of the hour employed for a text. In a characteristic manner, the less studious approach to the passage resulted in the topical sermon with no further reference to the Word whatsoever. It would take quite a series of services like that to impress upon any young believer the worth of the Word.

The holiness movement need not sacrifice any phase of its spontaneity of worship that now characterizes it, even though it incorporates enough of form and liturgy for a new generation to know that we believe in the Apostles' Creed, that the Psalter provides inspiration and atmosphere, and that an entire service can be conducted with dignity and

decorum while at the same time the Holy Ghost is honored, needy hearts are pressed for a verdict, and the altars are frequented with honest penitents and hungry believers. Preludes and postludes are much more preferable than the din of the worshipers' chatter and the commotion caused by juvenile access to the pulpit as soon as there is a benediction."

Have we not in the holiness movement failed to train a Bible-conscious Bible-searching people? "We have left it to the Calvinists," remarked a great preacher of our day, "to rustle the leaves of their Bibles in their conferences, while in our camp meetings and conventions it has been a rarity to find anybody with an open Bible before him while the preacher was preaching." How sad, yet so true! Is it because we have failed to open the Word by our preaching? Have we failed to make our preaching Bible-centered, hence God-centered?

Is it not a fact that there has developed in the holiness movement an alarming shallowness concerning the obtainment of the great and glorious experience of the gift of the Holy Ghost as promised to believers? It would be impossible to read carefully the Rev. John Wesley's sermon on "Sin in Believers," and his sermon on "Repentance of Believers" and not realize this very situation. A consecration viewpoint that does not involve the nature of indwelling sin in its various manifestations, such as self-will, doubt, and the like, will naturally have serious results. There is the danger of a shallow presentation of the subject of consecration that would foster pride rather than lead to a death to sin. It is true that faith is the condition of sanctification as well as of justification, but it is equally true that in both cases there must be a groundwork in order for faith to function: the groundwork of godly sorrow for sin makes possible the action of justifying faith; in like manner the groundwork of the knowledge of sin, and a hatred for it, makes possible the action of sanctifying faith. There is surely need of a checking up on this point of theology in the holiness movement in America.

We have failed perhaps to administer to ourselves enough self-criticism. Our failure to advance as we should have as a movement, our failure to succeed in efforts, our failure to get together, our failure to accomplish what we have felt God would have had us accomplish as a movement, have been passed up without much question as to why the failure. We have been content to leave matters stand. Failures must be accounted for from the human standpoint not the Divine. It is our fault.

Have we emphasized in the holiness movement the ethical results of the experience as we should? There has been much emphasis on the doctrine of the second crisis, but have we emphasized the ethical results in the life? Have we as a people been identified by some nonessential rather than by Christlike living? As "the epistles of Christ" have we given good reading? "As lights in the world" have we been shining? "Institutionally," remarked a preacher friend, "we have brought just censure on ourselves by failing to tie in with our holiness message an administrative efficiency and ethical scrupulousness such as people of the land had a right to expect from us."

How about our business meetings, especially our elections of officers? Have we honored the Holy Ghost as we should in the holiness movement? Have we fasted and prayed that God's man for the office be elected and then practiced true Christian democracy

by keeping hands off? Have we not been inclined to select a small committee to nominate the most important officers in that organization, and leave it at that? Should not holiness gatherings go to prayer and ask the Holy Ghost to select the man? After earnest prayer, the ballot would soon reveal God's order, provided every person would mind God and keep hands off. This was the apostolic order: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:2, 3). What about the holiness movement practicing this order? Might it not mean a new day for the holiness movement if it practiced the apostolic order a little more rather than following the order of back-slidden organizations? Of course, such a procedure would not be popular.

Have we as a holiness movement honored God on the faith line as we should? With the doctrine of spiritual wholeness should there not be more emphasis on physical wholeness by faith? What about carrying out the directions found in James' epistle concerning sick believers? "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:14, 15). As a holiness movement what have we done with this? Has there been failure here to honor God and His Word?

—Wesleyan Methodist.

## CONFIDENCE

First: He brought me here; it is His will I am in this strait place: in that will I rest.

Next: He will keep me here in His love, and give me grace in this trial to behave as His child.

Then: He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends me to learn, and working in me the grace He means to bestow.

Last: In His good time He can bring me out again—how and when, He knows.

Thus: I am here—

(1) By God's appointment.

(2) In His keeping.

(3) Under His training.

(4) For His time.

And He bids: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Ps. 50:15).

—Andrew Murray.

## OBITUARY

The death of **Mr. Bert Smith**, of Hartland, occurred suddenly at his home. Mr. Smith was in his 84th year. He leaves to mourn, besides his wife, one son, Hugh, and six grandchildren. Another son, Edward, died last year at Toronto.

The funeral service was held at the home and was conducted by F. A. Anderson, assisted by Rev. E. J. Chisholm. Interment was in the Hartland Cemetery.

How to be happy: Make the doing of the will of God the business of your life.

—American Messenger.