




H. E. JESSOP, D.D.

THE
HERITAGE
Of Holiness

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INTRODUCING THE THEME

We, the holiness people, have a glorious heritage. The doctrines which we cherish and the experience we enjoy go farther back than what is generally known as the Christian era. Their roots are in the Old Testament, and their origin is in God himself.

From the earliest days they have formed a line of truth to which notable spiritual stalwarts have made lasting contribution. These spiritual giants may be compared to mountain peaks; but ranging with them is a host of relatively lesser characters—foothills, so to speak, in this great mountain chain as it has stretched across the years. Then, towering above them every one, and dwarfing even the most important among them into insignificance, is the Son of God himself, the central fact of them all.

Within the scope of these lectures we can consider only what will be a rigid selection of these outstanding *peaks*. Beyond this there is, of course, scope for much productive work with which our present limitations will not permit us to deal.

H. E. J.

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I

THE DIVINE STANDARD AS TAUGHT BY MOSES, THE SERVANT OF GOD, AND INTER- PRETED BY JESUS, THE GOD-SENT SON

BASIS: Exodus 20: 1-21; Matt. 5: 1-48.

SUMMARY:

Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God (Deut. 18:13).
Ye shall therefore be perfect, even as your Father which is in
heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48, R.V.).

In the unfolding of divine revelation it is impossible to ignore the unmistakable relationship between two towering personalities—Moses, Israel's divinely appointed leader, and Jesus, the God-sent Son.

On the one hand they are as diverse as the poles, while on the other hand they stand side by side.

In John's Gospel they are seen by way of contrast: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

In the Book of the Revelation the victors on the sea of glass are described as singing the song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev. 15:3).

Yet even this eternal association only serves all the more clearly to indicate how widely, in reality, they stand apart.

"Moses," says the writer to the Hebrews, "verily was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a Son" (Heb. 3:5, 6).

In their respective lives there are some things which are strikingly similar. They are not by any means equal, but similar nonetheless, one being the shadow of the other.

✦ *They were alike, and yet very different in the renunciations they made:* Moses renouncing the throne of Pharaoh; Jesus leaving heaven's glory and the very throne of God.

✦ *They were alike, and yet very different, in the redemptions they wrought:* Moses, under God, instituting the Passover and bringing Israel out of Egypt; Jesus, by the blood of His cross, redeeming a fallen world.

✦ *They were alike, and yet very different, in the legislations they brought:* Moses giving to the people the commandments on Sinai; Jesus giving to His people the Sermon on the Mount.

✦ Our present interest is in those respective legislations. They are interpretative of the holy life.

✦ In each case the location is a mountain: Sinai with its terrors; the Galilean hillside with its simple calm.

Of that first mountain scene the description is startling:

. . . . there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord

called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up (Exod. 19:16-20).

And God spake all these words, saying. . . .
Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. . . .
Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. . . .
Honour thy father and thy mother. . . .
Thou shalt not kill.
Thou shalt not commit adultery.
Thou shalt not steal.
Thou shalt not bear false witness. . . .
Thou shalt not covet. . . .

And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not (Exod. 20:1-20).

✓ That, with all its attendant terrors, was the official proclamation of *God's standard of perfection*. The whole may be taken as summarized in the words: "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God" (Deut. 18:13).

For fifteen centuries God's ancient people struggled with that law. Those of them who have not seen in Jesus their God-sent Messiah are struggling with it to this day. It was, and still is, God's standard for daily living. To keep it meant blessing; yet those who tried to keep it found in it perpetual difficulty, being concerned primarily with the *letter* and missing the *spirit*, which was the vital part.

Centuries later, however, we come to another mountain. The setting is entirely different. Here there is no rolling thunder. Upon it there is no flashing fire. No quaking earth nor terrifying voice

startles the hearers as had happened fifteen centuries before.

Here is a humble Carpenter-Preacher surrounded mostly by peasants and fisherfolk. Yet within that circle is being issued a manifesto which is one day to govern the world.

Of that Kingdom manifesto, only one section concerns us here, chapter five. We shall approach it through the rear door, where once again we shall find the word with which Moses summarized the divine demands of his day.

“Thou shalt be *perfect* with the Lord thy God,” Moses had declared (Deut. 18:13). “Be ye therefore *perfect*,” says Jesus, “even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

It would be safe to say that there are few verses in the entire range of Holy Writ around which there has been more difficulty of interpretation. The reason may be twofold:

a) Failure to realize the relation of this verse to the rest of the chapter.

b) Endowment of this word *perfect* with imaginary qualities far beyond the ideas in the Master's thinking when He used it. Then, because the practical outworking of the imaginary ideas is obviously impossible, there has been an endeavor to explain away the passage as idealistic—a standard inviting a perpetual approximation rather than an experience for present realization. Let it be noted that whatever may be the acknowledged meaning of this word *perfect*, as used both by Moses and by Jesus, in both cases it is something we are required *to be*. Moreover, it is something which

concerns the present life and is so intensely practical that it expresses itself so as to be recognized by all who contact it.

The key to the passage is the word *therefore*, a word both challenging and provoking, suggesting another word, *wherefore*. Whenever the reader meets this word *therefore* in the Scriptures, a pause with the interrogation *wherefore* will be effective. As we do this, it becomes immediately apparent that the word *perfect* and the verse in which we find it are not so isolated as at first they seemed to be. It becomes evident that they relate themselves to the entire chapter, and can be correctly interpreted only in the light of its teaching. They are also seen to reach back to Moses and Mount Sinai and therefore possess an importance not at first in view.

The main highway of the chapter may be termed, *The Perfect Life in Its Abiding Manifestations*. Broadly speaking, it has two main sections:

1. A study in Christian character (vv. 1-16).

In this section there are nine lovely Beatitudes. The word *blessed* here is interpreted by Dr. Strong as having a threefold meaning. It means, says he, to be supremely happy, specially fortunate, and well off.

Following the Beatitudes are two attractive similitudes, *salt* and *light*. The blessed ones are to be as salt, checking the corruption, and as light, illuminating a darkened world.

2. An evaluation in spiritual content (vv. 17-47).

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The law with its demands is examined, and its inner dimensions are revealed. Then comes this closing summary: "Ye shall therefore be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (verse 48, R.V.).

It is the second section, verses 17-48, which becomes our present concern. In it, the law's abiding permanence is declared and the law's amazing content is revealed.

I. *The Law's Abiding Permanence Is Here Declared.*

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (vv. 17-19).

Every age has had its respective keynote. In the Jewish age the keynote was *law*. In the Christian age the keynote is *grace*. In the millennial age, the keynote will be *peace*. In the Eternal Day the keynote will be *glory*.

In this, the age of grace, two extreme positions have developed with regard to law.

1. *That of a Christian legalism.*

It began early, appearing in the first Christian century. To summarize the position it would be stated thus: Salvation is by grace; but that grace becomes effective only as administered through ceremonial rites and ritual. "Except ye be circum-

cised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1).

The modern ritualistic position would be in terms of baptism, confirmation, and the Lord's Supper, without which salvation, although by grace, cannot be received.

2. *That of a rabid Antinomianism.*

Here is a big word with a bad connotation, teaching that faith in Christ for salvation discharges the believer from all obligation to keep the moral law.

This teaching goes back to the sixteenth century where Johannes Agricola in public debate at Wittenberg in 1537 declared: "A man is saved by faith alone without any regard to moral character. If thou believest thou art in salvation."

Today, we hear a continual harping on that Pauline expression, "in Christ"—a glorious truth, but so often distorted into what becomes a most dangerous error.

In Christ, we are told, all the demands of a broken law are fully met; therefore in Him the law is forever done away. He fulfilled the law for us; therefore, no matter what we may do, the law can make no further demand on us.

This becomes all the more subtle in view of the fact that many of the men who are pushing these ideas are men of fine Christian character and who obviously possess a deep love for their Lord, men who would scorn to do what they insist a believer could do and yet retain his position in grace. Some of these men we know and esteem in the Lord; yet this phase of the doctrine which they hold is to us

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an error so dangerous that we dare not hold our peace concerning it.

Here are some samples of present-day Antinomianism, which without restraint is flooding our land.

A man will come to us and say, "Suppose you are converted and then go out and sin." Well, the answer is, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "But suppose a man is converted and then goes out and kills somebody." The answer is still, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "Suppose a man goes out after he is converted and leaves the church and never comes back, and so on, and on, and on, until the day he dies." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."—Sermon on I John 1:5—2:2, by Dr. Hyman J. Appleman.

The sinning saint is not lost because of his sin, since even while sinning he has an Advocate with the Father.—*Major Bible Themes*, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer.

I have no doubt whatever . . . that Ananias and Sapphira were saved people. When death came to them from the hand of God, I believe they went directly to heaven.—Sermon on Men Whom God Struck Dead, Dr. Donald G. Barnhouse.

The legalistic position is one of bondage. The antinomian position is one of license. Here, however, the Master gives us a clear, balanced statement with regard to law and grace. While through His death on Calvary's tree He abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances, the moral law was magnified and made honorable. It will last as long as God lasts, for it is His eternal word. It is therefore binding on us today.

II. *The Law's Amazing Content Is Here Revealed* (vv. 20-47).

The Master now takes up the law, with which His hearers are so familiar and of which the nation is so proud. For their part they had venerated it

instead of keeping it. To them, *its letter* had become a fetish while *its spirit* had been lost.

When Jesus came, His purpose was to redeem men from the dread results of a broken law, but it was necessary that He should do more. He must rescue the law from the men who had broken it, strip it of the excrescences which had gathered about it, and give to it a spiritual content hitherto unknown. Two things should be noted here:

A. *The Supreme Claim Which Jesus Makes for Himself.*

"Ye have heard that it hath been said . . . but I say unto you." Ten times at least in this chapter do we get this repetition: "But I say unto you."

Here by one sweeping word, on His own authority, He supersedes Moses and claims that:

1. In His own right He is superior to Israel's ancient lawgiver.

2. By His own teaching He is in advance of all previous revelation.

Truly here He speaks "as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

B. *The Spiritual Values on Which He Insists.*

Thus far the law had been an outward letter relating itself to conduct. He now makes it an inward spirit regulating the motions of the soul.

"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," said He, "ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (v. 20).

He now begins to select portions of the law which are universal in principle, starting with the lowest point of morality and working His way with

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amazing skillfulness to the climactic word in verse 48, "Ye shall therefore be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (R.V.).

1. *He insists that the emotional urges of the nature must be pure.*

Murder was forbidden in the Mosaic code, but Jesus goes deeper. There are inward urges which are responsible for the outward act; these must be dealt with so that the act does not even become contemplated.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry (vv. 21-26).

John had evidently caught the Master's thought here when he wrote: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (I John 3: 15).

Adultery was regarded by Moses as a sin to be punished and despised, but Jesus goes past the *act* to the *desire* which prompts it.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh to lust hath committed in his heart (vv. 27-30).

2. *He insists that the intimate relationships of our lives must be held as sacred.*

The marriage tie, in the Mosaic legislation, was to be carefully regulated; and where the desire existed that it should be dissolved, reasonable safeguards were prescribed. To Jesus, marriage is much more than a legal contract; it is a divinely hallowed sacrament, which, once celebrated, becomes a *fusion of lives* so sacred that whichever party

violates its sanctity is to be considered as guilty of the most heinous of transgressions.

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery (vv. 31, 32).

3. *He insists that the speech we use be truthful and simple.*

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but thou shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all (vv. 33-37).

Here, the Master is attacking that subtle evil then existing among God's ancient people concerning the third commandment. A false oath in the name of God was admitted to be perjury; but if by some subterfuge the party taking the oath could avoid the divine name, mentioning instead the heavens, the earth, his head, Jerusalem, the altar, or some other substitute, the oath was not considered binding, and could be broken without guilt.

✓ Without any equivocation our Lord here goes right for the heart of such guilty behavior, whether ancient or modern. Be straight, He seems to say. Have done with double meanings. Say exactly what you mean and mean exactly what you say. Be one whose simple word can be trusted. Anything less than this is unworthy of a professing son of the Kingdom.

4. *He insists that our attitudes toward others must be magnanimous.*

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a. *All revenge is forbidden.*

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil (vv. 38, 39).

Admittedly we are on thin ice here, for this passage has been the battleground of the centuries. The question immediately raised is, Is this to be taken literally? To which we reply: In some cases, yes! but, for all, it contains an indisputable spiritual principle realizable only through an experience governed by the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians.

b. *A self-renouncing spirit is called for.*

This is to be worked out by:

1) *When smitten, turning the other cheek (v. 39).*

Here the inner principle may be stated thus: Trust God to vindicate and defend you, and win your enemies by kindness.

2) *When unjustly pressed, letting the adversary take the cloak also (v. 40).*

Again the inner principle is evident: Forego, if needs be, your just rights if by so doing you can better manifest the spirit of Jesus.

3) *When oppressed, going the second mile (v. 41).*

To the Jew that compulsory mile was an everlasting aggravation. Being under Roman domination, any Jew at any time was liable to be called up not only to furnish facilities for travel but if needs be to go himself, carrying the load. Needless to say, in such cases the spirit of cheerfulness was not too

prevalent, and one can imagine the exactitude with which the *mile* was stepped out.

Here, says Jesus, is your opportunity to show an attitude that is different. The principle: Be willing to help even the most demanding and ungrateful, and do it with a cheerful spirit.

4) *When facing need, giving to him that asketh* (v. 42).

Here again is a passage over which there has been much contention. Must we give to all who ask and give all that is asked? If there is a place for discrimination, at what point shall we draw the line? Beggars accost us, some of whom we know will spend what we give them on liquor or even worse. Shall I give my money, which with myself has been consecrated to God, to some sinful rascal who will squander it in vice?

The answer is obviously No! Once again there is a principle to be observed which may be stated thus: Never shut out the cry of need. Maintain and cultivate a compassionate heart.

c. The whole of our inner nature is to be permeated with love.

This love nature is to be manifested even toward those obviously our enemies.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? (vv. 43-47).

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Your enemies! Those irreconcilable people. *They* curse—hate—despitefully use—persecute. *You* are to bless—pray for—do good to.

Then what could be more striking than that classic illustration of the Father's benevolence? Watch Him, says Jesus, and note how He lavishes the sunshine. See how He scatters the raindrops. You are His sons. Act like it. Be worthy representatives of a good Father. Then, by way of contrast, look at the publicans—giving only where they can get in return. With such a Father as you have, are you content to be like them?

Ye shall therefore be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (v. 48, R.V.).

Here, then, is the standard interpretation of the *perfect life* given to us on the authority of Him whom we trust as Saviour and honor as Lord.

Theologically, there is much more to develop; but now at least the *crust* has been broken and we have been made to see that such a life has to do primarily, not with the enforcement of conduct as dictated by codes, rules, prohibitions, and the like, but with an inner principle of goodness which the law could never furnish but which Christ alone through the power of His indwelling presence can provide.

II

FITNESS FOR THE KINGDOM AS DEMANDED BY JESUS

BACKGROUND: Matt. 23: 13-33; Luke 18: 9-14.

BASIS:

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:20).

In the vocabulary of Jesus those *exceptions* are both startling and amazing. They come in such unexpected places and with such forceful assertion. Listen to Him as He rings them out:

I tell you *except* ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Luke 13:2).

Verily I say unto you, *Except* ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:3).

Jesus answered and said unto him, *Except* a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3).

. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Except* ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you (John 6:53).

Here, however, this declared exception is enforced by a further emphasis:

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall *in no case* enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Literally, You shall under no other condition, with no possible exception enter into the kingdom of heaven.

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In these days of graft, bribery, and corruption, it is refreshing to find some things which are absolute and therefore not subject to the whims of the human mind.

The words before us are weighty in the extreme. They were uttered, not in an evangelistic service, but in the *holiness meeting*, as the first two verses of the chapter show—Jesus leaving the multitudes in the valley and going up onto the hillside, where His disciples followed Him. Why did He leave the multitudes? Because what He had to say on this occasion did not concern them. The truth that day was for His own disciples. "He opened his mouth, and taught *them*."

The one thought pre-eminently occupying the Jewish mind of Christ's day was that of *the Kingdom*, a heavenly rule to be set up on earth in which Israel as a nation chiefly was to participate. The basis of the hope was sound, although some of the deductions were erroneous and misleading. Our Lord does not seem to have paused at this time to straighten out their thinking concerning it; but, laying hold of the Kingdom idea, He applies the spiritual plumb line, insisting on heaven's standard for Kingdom enjoyment.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Here then at once is a recognition of *the Kingdom fact* and a declaration of *the Kingdom fitness*.

A study of the fact itself would take us into a much wider field than these lectures will permit us to cover. Suffice it to say, therefore, as we view Kingdom truth in its widest sweep, that it has three distinctive phases, namely, inward, worldward, and heavenward.

✓ *The inward aspect* sets forth the Kingdom as a spiritual mystery relating itself to the heart.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom Ye must be born again (John 3:3, 7).

The kingdom is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17).

✓ *The worldward aspect* shows the Kingdom as a visible manifestation—the literal reign of the Son of God in power and glory on the earth.

When the Son of man shall come in his glory then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory (Matt. 25:31).

✓ *The heavenward aspect* indicates the Kingdom as an eternal state—the heavenly life of the redeemed in the great beyond.

. . . . The everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (II Pet. 1:11).

Our concern today is with the *Kingdom fitness*. It is summarized in one word, *righteousness*, and that of a distinctive kind. To become assured of Kingdom enjoyment we must make sure of the Kingdom experience. It is here that we meet the danger, which is one of which the Master was keenly conscious—that of becoming content with *less than is offered* and consequently possessing *less than is required*. We shall therefore take up these two thoughts:

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I. The righteousness which Jesus repudiates.

II. The righteousness which Jesus requires.

✓ I. *The Righteousness Which Jesus Here Repudiates*
"The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees."

Such an expression immediately suggests a question. What was wrong with the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees?

We are soon reminded that when approaching this subject we are not dealing with people who are outwardly wicked, but with men who are spending their lives in the service of religion and expending all their strength to extend and establish the creed they hold. Addressing them, our Lord declared:

Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves (Matt. 23:15).

The most dreadful woes, the sternest threatenings hurled by Jesus were directed, not at the outcasts, but at those who made the loudest religious profession. They were censured, not for the profession they made, but because their profession and their experience did not agree.

If we look a little closer here, we may discover that such a condition may not be without application in our own day. A glance at the history of the Pharisees will be suggestive.

Nothing is seen of them in the Old Testament. Search where you will from Genesis to Malachi, they are nowhere in sight. Yet when the New Testament opens they are not only named but found to be functioning as a recognized religious sect, an integral part of the Jewish national life. It immediately becomes evident that we must look for

their origin elsewhere. This we find, as already you may have guessed, in that period between the Old and New Testaments, known to Bible students as *the silent four hundred years*.

✓ If we may state it in modern language, Pharisaism was *The Holiness Movement* of its day, and a mighty movement too. The hypocrisy with which Jesus so freely charged the Pharisees was not marked in their beginnings. A national drift was in evidence. Influences were at work which were not only detrimental to piety but which seemed likely to drag down the nation to spiritual ruin.

At the center of things, however, was a saving remnant; men determined at all cost to be loyal to Jehovah and to maintain a vital religion. The result of all this was the emergence of a new religious order, a body of separatists which became known as the Pharisees.

Like the Holy Club which appeared at Oxford centuries later, these men began to discipline their lives, making rules for daily living, setting special times for prayer, designing a form of dress by which they might be known, and in general seeking to conform to the then recognized canons of piety which would mark them before the world as being loyal to Jehovah and His cause.

Years came and went; but the passing of time left these men supremely occupied with the things which marked their separation, to the neglect of soul culture, until when Jesus came He found them to be the proud exponents of a lifeless orthodoxy but the opponents of all spiritual religion. They never wavered in their fundamentalism, but they dried up in their spiritual experience. "The right-

eousness of the scribes and Pharisees" had four distinctive characteristics.

1. *It was the backwash of a time-honored past.*

In it we see the remnant of an outworn movement which religiously was claiming attention, yet spiritually had ceased to function. It was the relic of an experience which was now merely a memory and a name.

Who were the Pharisees? The backslidden Holiness Movement of their day.

2. *It was an experience which had become woven about themselves.*

The central thought was the capital "I." Watch that Pharisee as he struts to the tune of his own self-importance within the Temple courts: "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18: 11, 12).

"I"—"I"—"I"—"I"—"I." Aren't I wonderful? Glory be to me! So fenced around is he with capital I's that neither God nor men can touch him. Paul called it "going about to establish their own righteousness," and not submitting "themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom 10: 3).

In our Lord's parabolic description two things are prominent. The first is their *assumption* and the second is their *presumption*. "They trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Luke 18: 9).

3. *It was something entirely external.*

It had to do with and majored on how many prayers should be said and what kind of clothes

should be worn. None with a definite knowledge of God and the holy life would deny that these things have their part. They are most certainly products of a walk with God, but they must never be made its central fact.

To those majoring on these things our Lord declared: ". . . ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matt. 23:27).

4. *It was the burdensome endeavor to keep up a spiritual appearance.*

✓ Holiness, to the Pharisees, was a burden on the back rather than a blessing within the heart. This business of keeping up an appearance in the spiritual realm is a perilous thing both for churches and for individuals. Let us beware lest we be found among those who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof.

II. *The Righteousness Which Jesus Here Requires*

It is a righteousness which *exceeds* that possessed by the scribes and Pharisees.

It is at this point that the controversy really begins: first, between the formal religionist and the believing souls; and, further, among believers themselves.

In this, the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord has nothing to say about redemption, either its fact or its method. That, in the early ministry of Jesus, is anticipated rather than stated; its fuller teaching is reserved until the preliminary approach is complete.

According to Matthew's record the ministry of our Lord was sharply divided into two distinct

eousness of the scribes and Pharisees" had four distinctive characteristics.

1. *It was the backwash of a time-honored past.*

In it we see the remnant of an outworn movement which religiously was claiming attention, yet spiritually had ceased to function. It was the relic of an experience which was now merely a memory and a name.

Who were the Pharisees? The backslidden Holiness Movement of their day.

2. *It was an experience which had become woven about themselves.*

The central thought was the capital "I." Watch that Pharisee as he struts to the tune of his own self-importance within the Temple courts: "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18: 11, 12).

"I"—"I"—"I"—"I"—"I." Aren't I wonderful? Glory be to me! So fenced around is he with capital I's that neither God nor men can touch him. Paul called it "going about to establish their own righteousness," and not submitting "themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom 10: 3).

In our Lord's parabolic description two things are prominent. The first is their *assumption* and the second is their *presumption*. "They trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Luke 18: 9).

3. *It was something entirely external.*

It had to do with and majored on how many prayers should be said and what kind of clothes

should be worn. None with a definite knowledge of God and the holy life would deny that these things have their part. They are most certainly products of a walk with God, but they must never be made its central fact.

To those majoring on these things our Lord declared: “. . . ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness” (Matt. 23:27).

4. *It was the burdensome endeavor to keep up a spiritual appearance.*

✓ Holiness, to the Pharisees, was a burden on the back rather than a blessing within the heart. This business of keeping up an appearance in the spiritual realm is a perilous thing both for churches and for individuals. Let us beware lest we be found among those who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof.

II. *The Righteousness Which Jesus Here Requires*

It is a righteousness which *exceeds* that possessed by the scribes and Pharisees.

It is at this point that the controversy really begins: first, between the formal religionist and the believing souls; and, further, among believers themselves.

In this, the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord has nothing to say about redemption, either its fact or its method. That, in the early ministry of Jesus, is anticipated rather than stated; its fuller teaching is reserved until the preliminary approach is complete.

According to Matthew’s record the ministry of our Lord was sharply divided into two distinct

phases, each division being introduced by the words, "From that time."

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (4: 17).

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must . . . suffer . . ." (16: 21).

All this is followed by the doctrinal unfoldings through the apostles by the Holy Spirit in the epistolary writings.

Here, however, in the scripture before us, we are given at least a hint, the fuller content of which is supplied as revelation develops. For the purpose of our present study we must anticipate what later was more fully unfolded concerning the righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. This righteousness is seen to be distinctive in its character, which may be summed up in a threefold statement.

1. *Its origin lies, not in the believing soul itself, but in the Person and merits of Another.*

Here, it will be instructive to compare the Pharisee of whom Jesus spoke with another Pharisee who found a more excellent way.

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you,

this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted (Luke 18: 9-14).

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3: 3-14).

Note the difference in emphasis in the two passages. In the first passage, it is "I"—"I"—"I"—"I," a story of the exalted and inflated ego; while in the second it is "Christ," "my Lord," "him," "his." The "I" is only mentioned as it relates itself to Christ. Now it is "not I, but Christ" (Gal. 2: 20); "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1: 18). Now the all-consuming passion is that "Christ shall be magnified" (Phil. 2: 20).

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*And every virtue we possess
And every victory won
And every thought of holiness
Are His alone.*

2. While originating only "in Christ," the experience of which we here speak is the glorious revelation of "Christ in you."

. . . . he hath made him to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (II Cor. 5:21).

. . . . The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:26, 27).

Here then is not an *imputation* of Christ's righteousness merely, which covers the sinning soul yet leaves it sinful; it is an *impartation* of His very nature, whereby sin is destroyed and the disposition of holiness assured. It is a divine work which is sin-killing and Christ-exalting.

3. This experience "in Christ" and "Christ in you" is of a distinctly practical nature—so much so that it lives itself out with grace and power in the midst of a hostile world.

It is manifest in humble dependence, patient endurance, lowly service, an obedient spirit, and an enduring hope.

It is a present salvation from all sin all the time, with no gaps between.

*His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim.
'Tis all my business here below
To cry, Behold the Lamb!*

III

PETER: THE HERALD OF THE PURIFYING FLAME

BACKGROUND: Acts 2:10, 15.

BASIS:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (2:1-4).

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel (2:14-16).

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (2:38, 39).

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost (10:44, 45).

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith (15:7-9).

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Having considered this experience as taught by Moses and interpreted by our Lord himself, we are to see further evidences of its inwardness as stressed by Peter also. To him, Pentecost was more than a dispensational inaugural; and as an individual experience it was more than an enduement for service. It was *all this*, but it was more.

His utterance in Acts 15: 8, 9 is to be regarded as a declaration of divine procedure for all time. The present speaker can never forget the first time that this passage became luminous to his own spiritual vision. Like shafts of light three great spiritual facts began to shine out. They were simple but exceedingly vital:

- ✓ 1. The baptism with the Holy Ghost is for all believers.
- ✓ 2. The baptism with the Holy Ghost purifies the heart.
- ✓ 3. The baptism with the Holy Ghost is received by faith.

Peter had been authentic spokesman on the Day of Pentecost. It is to be expected, therefore, that his later explanation as given here will be the result of his mature and careful thought. It is his declaration in the conference chamber at Jerusalem.

The Church was facing a doctrinal difficulty and had divided itself into two party groups: one, distinctly *evangelical*, insisting that salvation in all its phases was by faith alone; the other, *legalistic*, taking the position that, while basically through Christ's Calvary work, salvation as applied to the believing heart was bound up with the practices of the Jewish law.

It must have been interesting to hear those men thrash out this thorny question on the assembly floor. The evangelical group was led by Peter, who attacked the legalists with a head-on charge, and won his point. He called attention to the recent incident under his own ministry in the house of Cornelius, where God poured out the Holy Ghost when there were no attendant legal ceremonies. The passage which we are considering is his own testimony concerning it. The value of these verses is twofold, having some pointed implications accompanied by some plain declarations.

I. *The Implications*

The fact and results of Pentecost are seen to be more than historical. They are repeatable and perpetual, intended to meet the deepest need of the neediest heart.

A. *Light is here thrown on the fundamental happenings on the Day of Pentecost.*

The outward manifestations any intelligent Bible reader can recite. There was a phenomenon of sound, "as of a rushing mighty wind." There was a phenomenon of vision in the appearance of "cloven tongues like as of fire." There was a phenomenon of voice, "other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The over-all phenomenon was in the fact that they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2: 1-4).

Now from the Jerusalem Council chamber Peter is looking back to Pentecost through the avenue of years; and, strangely enough, when speaking of the happenings there he does not

mention one of the spectacular things previously reported. He is concerned with something to him far more vital and certainly more radical, a fact which Luke in his narrative does not even mention: the Holy Spirit purified the heart and the purification came in response to faith.

B. *Indications are also seen concerning God's plan for future generations.*

"God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness":

1. "Giving them"—in the house of Cornelius—"the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us"—at Pentecost.

2. "And put no difference between us"—at Pentecost—"and them"—at Caesarea—"purifying their hearts by faith."

On the basis of this, we are justified in making this twofold deduction:

First, since Pentecost has been repeated at least once (there are other instances also in the Book of Acts), there is no reason why God should not continue to repeat it both in communities and individuals down through the age.

In his message at Pentecost, Peter had declared that this would be so: "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39).

Further, since the essential happening on the Day of Pentecost—the purification of the heart—was repeated a second time, and is here emphasized as being fundamental to both occasions, it is reasonable to assume that in this fact we have God's re-

vealed pattern for all time. "God . . . giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us [at Pentecost] and them [at Caesarea], purifying their hearts [as well as ours] by faith."

II. *The Declarations*

Coming more closely to Peter's words, we see three great facts concerning God in His relationship to the human heart.

He is seen in His omniscience, as the great Heart-Knower. "God, which knoweth the hearts." He is further seen in His omnipotence as the great Heart-Purifier. "God . . . purifying their hearts." He is finally seen in His faithfulness, as the great Heart-Certifier. "God, which knoweth . . . bare them witness."

A. *God, the Heart-Knower.*

"God, which knoweth the hearts."

He, and only He, does know the heart. None other dare pretend such knowledge, not even our dearest friend, and certainly not we ourselves.

All vital religion has to do primarily with the heart. The life is just the outflow. The heart is central to all else.

1. *The true condition of the human heart is here recognized.*

It is assumed to be corrupt and needing to be made pure. Concerning man's heart condition there are two extreme lines of teaching, both of which we must be careful to avoid, while between the two is a third position which to us appears to be the most scriptural, sensible, and safe.

a. There is the position of the modernist.

The human heart, says he, while by no means all it should be, is not nearly so bad as the older theologians have pictured it. Their ideas of native depravity and indwelling sin are just overdrawn pictures by sincere but misguided enthusiasts. There is no such thing as total depravity.

b. There is the assumption of the Calvinist.

The human heart, says he, is all that our fathers have declared it to be, and worse. It is corrupt through and through. That corruption is deeper down than we think. It is deeper than our own consciousness, so deep in fact that it is actually part of us. No matter how constantly the cleansing Blood is applied, the corruption is always deeper down. Our very nature is the source from which it springs. It can never be fully cleansed out as long as we live.

c. Between these two extremes lies a middle position, known to theologians as the Wesleyan-Arminian view.

Its teaching may be stated as follows: The blackest picture of human sinfulness is not one bit too strong. Jesus himself endorses it:

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:21-23).

What is overdrawn is the statement that the depravity of nature is so essentially part of our humanity that not even the applied efficacy of the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness can wholly take it away.

For sin, both committed and inherited, says the Wesleyan-Arminian, God has an effective remedy. It is greater than all our sin.

2. *The divine relation to the human heart is here revealed.*

“God, which knoweth the hearts.” Nor does this passage stand alone: “God looketh at the heart” (I Sam. 16: 7). “I the Lord search the heart” (Jer. 17: 10).

This great Heart-Knower knows the heart’s capacity—and demands all its affection. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,” said Jesus, “with all thy heart” (Matt. 22: 37).

✓ He also knows the heart’s carnality—and demands its destruction. His sacred presence is like a searchlight sweeping through the soul. The holiness of His nature demands holiness in His people. “As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy” (I Pet. 1: 15).

B. *God, the Heart-Purifier.*

“God, which knoweth the hearts . . . purifying their hearts.”

✓ Here, a further divine attribute comes into view. This holy God has not only a penetrating eye and an omniscient mind; He is also the possessor of an omnipotent hand. Whatever of sin His holy eye discovers His almighty hand is able to remove.

The method of this purification is dual in its character, two elements, human and divine, being at work which are at the same time both independent and correlated. There is a hand that does the work; there is also a hand that grasps the promise.

✓1. The hand that does the work—the hand of God himself.

“Giving them the Holy Ghost . . . purifying their hearts.”

That, says Peter, is what happened at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, what happened also at Caesarea, and is to happen all down the age. It purified the heart. That is what the fiery baptism of Pentecost is intended to do.

“He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matt. 3:11).

“The promise is unto you” (Acts 2:39).

✓2. The hand that grasps the promise—the hand of faith.

“Purifying their hearts by faith.”

The soul itself is to be by no means passive here. Definitely and consciously it is to take God at His word.

Faith is the receiving hand consciously extended to appropriate the Blessing.

✓ C. *God, the Heart-Certifier.*

“God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness.”

✓When God has done the purifying work, His *certification* will be as sure as His *sanctification*.

✓ Should the question be asked, Where and how is this witness given? we answer: In the depths of the spiritual nature, where the corruption once resided and where the cleansing took place.

✓ The reaction may or may not be emotional in its nature, for the certification is primarily inward and spiritual.

An uncertified cleansing is unthinkable. To be made clean and not to know it is unreasonable.

*Come, O my God, the promise seal;
This mountain sin remove;
Now in my gasping soul reveal
The virtue of Thy love.*

*I want Thy life, Thy purity,
Thy righteousness brought in;
I ask, desire, and trust in Thee
To be redeemed from sin.*

*For this, as taught by Thee, I pray
And can no longer doubt.
Remove from hence, to sin I say;
Be cast this moment out.*

*✓ Saviour, to Thee my soul looks up,
My present Saviour Thou;
In all the confidence of faith
I claim the Blessing now.*

*'Tis done! Thou dost this moment save,
With full salvation bless;
Redemption through Thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace.*

—WESLEY

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IV

PAUL THE APOSTLE TAKES UP THE THEME

BACKGROUND: The Pauline Epistles.

IMMEDIATE BASIS: Rom. 5: 19—6: 11; Phil. 3: 1-15.

Among the apostolic group, the outstanding exponent of the teaching of full salvation was Paul, the converted Pharisee. He, above all others, could present the case for an *inward religion* and the length to which saving grace could go in its application to personal experience of God's great remedy for sin.

The details of his background were by no means accidental.

All that a formal religion had to offer he had explored to the full. If we were seeking a living embodiment of the *Pharisee* as Jesus described him in the parable of Luke 18: 9-14, there could be no more perfect example than Saul of Tarsus.

"After the most straitest sect of our religion," said he, "I lived a Pharisee" (Acts 26: 5).

Neither was his conversion a chance incident.

"He is a chosen vessel unto me," said the Lord, when sending Ananias to greet him (Acts 9: 15).

"The God of our fathers hath chosen thee . . . for thou shalt be his witness," was his testimony concerning the word of the risen Lord to him on the Damascus road (Acts 22: 14, 15).

Paul was not one of the original apostolic group. He referred to himself as "one born out of due time" (I Cor. 15: 8).

Yet he became the recipient of a special revelation which molded his entire career. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (See Gal. 1: 11-24.)

The result of all this was that, while one with the rest of the apostles in the general truth which they declared, he became distinctly individualistic in his emphasis. His theology was deeper and his phraseology distinctive.

Among his outstanding emphases are two thoughts which we shall consider today: First, the fact of sin and God's provision for it; and, further, the perfect life and the God-given power to live it.

Here again we pick up the thought of our previous studies.

I. *Concerning the Nature of Sin—and God's Provision for It*

In order to grasp the significance of the remedy as taught by the apostle, it is essential to understand something of the Pauline conception of *sin itself*. Our conception as to the nature of a disease will, of necessity, govern our appreciation of the remedy offered for it. One person may be inconvenienced by a cold and another may be dying of cancer. When a remedy is offered to each, one may be inclined to argue, but the other will make a desperate grab.

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To Paul, sin was no mere inconvenience. It was a tragic death grip, not only upon the race in general, but also upon the entire man. Paul never minimized the fact of sin. He treated it as the vile thing it was, polluting the entire man and meriting the wrath of a holy God.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Rom. 1:18).

A. Consider, first, *Sin's Reality*, as it is here set forth.

1. *It is seen as a universal plague, affecting every man.*

By many, such a statement may be considered to be hackneyed and trite; but there never was a day when there was greater need that the truth which it contains should be clearly emphasized.

The first three chapters of the Roman epistle, with the multiplied references throughout the other Pauline writings, are emphatic here.

✓ In these chapters, the key phrase is found in the three words, *all under sin* (3:9).

The Gentile world, in all its darkness and corruption, is reviewed—and pronounced *guilty before God*.

The Jew, knowing the law, is considered—and pronounced *guilty before God*.

Paul leaves no room for doubt as to humanity's standing with regard to sin.

2. *It is also seen as an inward pollution affecting every part of every man.*

✓ To Paul, sin was not merely an act; it was a nature. While in the early chapters of the Roman

epistle he exposes sin in the world as rebellion against God, in the chapters which follow (6-8) he shows sin to be a nature within the child of God, and that in such a manner that, were it not for our familiarity with the letter of it, it would cause us to reel with shock.

✓ Paul's portraiture of indwelling sin is seen in his epistles as sevenfold:

a. *It is a dominating tyrant*, as a study of Romans, chapter six, will show. Note that word *sin* in the singular number, occurring at least seventeen times.

b. *It is a hereditary evil*, as a familiar expression will indicate.

Turn to three passages, Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9, and note the words, "our old man" and "the old man."

Here, evidently, is an intruder into our nature. It is declared to be *old*, and there is reason for it. It dates a long way back, being a racial contamination beginning with the fall and consequently passed on as a corrupted birth strain to all who follow.

c. *It is a unitary evil*; for, while its expressions are many, the root cause is one.

Hence it is called "*the body of sin*" (Rom. 6:6) and, in the Colossian epistle, "*the body of the sins of the flesh*" (Col. 2:11).

That word *body* is not to be understood as indicating the *human body* of flesh and blood, but the principle of sin in its totality. It is an inner unit from which all the consequent manifestations come.

d. *It is a body of death* (Rom. 7:24).

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That expression "the body of this death" is thought to be a vivid reference to that old Roman form of capital punishment where the condemned person was chained to a corpse, a body of death, and compelled to drag it along with him until he too died by reason of the stench. This sin principle, says the apostle, is like that.

e. It is a downward drag, called by the apostle "the law of sin and death" (8:2).

f. It is an inward enmity, here called "the carnal mind," which "is enmity against God" (8:7). It is a propensity, a principle, a disposition, sometimes expressing itself in vulgarity, coarseness, and vile-ness, and sometimes in earthliness and weakness; but, whether coarse or cultured, contrary to the mind of the Spirit.

g. It is a corruption of the moral nature, called by the apostle "the flesh" (Rom. 8:8; Gal. 5:16-21).

Concerning the meaning of this word there has been much controversy. Bible dictionaries and lexicons give at least six different meanings, but most of them seem to be agreed on the following: "The seat and vehicle of sin"; "Applied to the carnal nature."

Many wordy battles have been fought around this term which Paul so frequently uses. This, however, is a study which the student must take up for himself.

To the child of God who is spiritually enlightened, sin in the nature is seen to be both dangerous and deadly—a foe with which only God himself can deal.

B. Consider, further, *Sin's Remedy*, as it is here set forth.

In looking for the remedy we must retrace the chapters which we have already covered, for there the disease and the remedy are closely associated, being found side by side.

The key phrase for the remedy is found in chapter three, verse twenty-four: "The redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Within those seven words lie all the processes of saving grace which take a sin-burdened soul all the way from guilt to glory.

✓ 1. For the sinner, there is grace which justifies freely.

✓ "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (3:24).

✓ That act of justification is not to be understood as the dropping of the charges against the sinner, nor as a minimizing of the charge against him. It is, rather, a frank facing of that charge with an undeniable provision; not as an act of pity at the expense of justice, but as an act of mercy on the ground of an indisputable provision.

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (3:24-26).

✓ 2. For the justified soul, there is provision to sanctify wholly (chapters 5-8).

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The fifth chapter closes with the thought that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (5:20).

The sixth chapter opens with the warning, however, that this abounding grace is not intended to cover our sinning, but to cure it. The redeemed soul is seen as enjoying a faith union with the risen Christ in His Calvary death and resurrection. This carries with it a personal knowledge of the fact that "our old man is [was, A.S.V.] crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (6:6).

Here is a provision which presents a possibility. ". . . was . . . that . . . might be . . ." Here, too, is a possibility which invites a participation.

✓ This sin-destroying work is the gateway into a holy life which Moses, Jesus, Peter, and now Paul insist on and call the life that is *perfect*.

II. *Concerning the Perfect Life—and the God-given Power to Live It*

The believer's death to sin, as Paul sees it, is by no means an end in itself.

Like physical death, it is succeeded by an experience of resurrection, leading into the reality of a life beyond. "That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (6:4).

What Moses demanded, our Lord himself interpreted, and Peter endorsed is now seen by Paul to be the normal experience of the soul having claimed a personal identification with the crucified and risen Lord. Taking up the same expression which

both Moses and Jesus had used, Paul did not hesitate to use the word *perfect*.

✓ One outstanding feature of Paul's teaching was his carefulness to distinguish between the perfection to be expected in this world and the perfection to be enjoyed in the world to come.

Take for example the distinction he makes in his epistle to the Philippians. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. [Lit., the resurrection out from among the dead.] Not as though I had already attained [i.e., the resurrection out from among the dead], either [in this resurrection sense] were already perfect; but I follow after . . . Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded . . ." (Phil. 3: 11, 12, 15).

✓ Here, obviously, the apostle sees two perfections, one which the believing soul may *possess*, and the other toward which it must *progress*. It is evident that in his thinking the perfect life is regarded as the norm where grace is allowed to do its work.

"We speak wisdom," he declared to the Corinthians, "among them that are perfect" (I Cor. 2: 6).

Again he writes in a further letter: "And this also we wish, even your perfection . . . Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect" (II Cor. 13: 9, 11).

And to the Colossians he wrote: "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1: 28).

There is, then, according to Moses, our Lord Jesus, and the apostolic writers, an experience of *present perfection*. It is less than the experience possessed by the glorified, more than that possessed

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by the justified, and governed by the degree of maturity which each soul has attained.

In it no two persons, both evangelically perfect, may measure themselves by each other; and certainly none may measure others by themselves.

This experience is neither mystical nor fanciful, but practical, present, and real.

As in the ordinary things of life, so in things spiritual. Whatever accomplishes that for which it was designed is, in its own place and degree, *perfect*. It may be a watch, a clock, a fountain pen, a baby's feeding bottle, a scale, or a railroad train. None of these would be pronounced imperfect because it did not do the work of some other instrument. Perfection lies in the accomplishment of that for which the thing has been made. *What is man's chief end?* asks the Westminster Catechism. The answer given is: *Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.*

Do you want to see this life worked out in its concrete form? The thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians is the answer.

V

THE DESTRUCTION OF SIN AND THE RELEASE OF SELF

At this point it becomes necessary to recognize a vital distinction.

✓ Again and again we have been met with this seemingly perplexing question: When *sin* is destroyed, what happens to *self*? Are sin and self to be regarded as one and the same? Is *self* destroyed in entire sanctification, or must it be crucified continually?

Three scripture passages will help us here:

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin (Rom. 6:6, 7).

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (I Cor. 9:26, 27).

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt. 16:24).

The question is comprehensive. It expresses a mental difficulty which seems to have presented itself to other minds also.

One possible reason for the confusion is the frequent almost indiscriminate use, among those not sufficiently discerning, of the words *sin* and *self*.

Wherever else the phraseology may be cloudy, God's Word is clear. Therefore whatever fog there

may be with regard to this teaching arises, not from the Bible, but from human misconceptions as to what the Bible teaches.

What it teaches on the subject before us may be stated thus:

1. For the *body of sin*, that is, the totality of the sin principle within the believing soul, God has provided a complete destruction through our identification with Christ in His work on Calvary. "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rom. 6:6).

2. For *my body*, that is, the human body of flesh and blood which is part of my redeemed humanity, the house of my essential personality, God has ordained a wise and judicious subjection. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" (I Cor. 9:27).

3. For *my self*, that personal entity to which I refer as *I* and *me*, God has provided and offers to perform a work of complete cleansing. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us" (I John 1:7).

While on God's part there is the work of cleansing, on our part He calls for a rigorous self-denial. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself" (Matt. 16:24).

Three simple thoughts will thus take us right into the heart of our subject:

- I. The Divine Distinction, between sin and self.
- II. The Divine Destruction, of sin from self.
- III. The Divine Direction, concerning self when sin has been destroyed.

X I. *The Distinction Recognized*

✓ Throughout the Scriptures this distinction between *the fact of sin* and *our essential selfhood* is unmistakably real.

“That *the body of sin* might be destroyed, that henceforth *we* should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6).

“It is no more *I* that do it, but *sin* that dwelleth in *me*” (Rom. 7:20).

✓ That same distinction is seen with regard to *our essential selfhood* and the *indwelling Christ*.

✓ “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20).

Whether therefore it concerns *sin* on the one hand or *Christ* on the other, the relationship to *me* is the same. My selfhood is a separate entity in which either of these may nestle, but of which neither is an essential part.

✓ The personality of man and the pollution of sin are entirely different and will ever remain so. When the race was created, the *me* existed before *sin that dwelleth in me*. Man had a *self* before he became *selfish*. He would never have become *selfish* but for the pollution of *sin*.

“The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7).

A living soul. A distinct entity. A conscious selfhood. That selfhood could fraternize with Deity, enter into intimate relationships with other humans, or sell itself to Satan and thus become contaminated with sin.

Every personal being has of necessity a *selfhood* which can never be shed. Even God himself could

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not exist without a *self*. So also our Lord Jesus had a *selfhood* but knew no *sin*.

My self is that which distinguishes *me* from God on the one hand, the devil on the other, and from every other human with whom I associate.

Sin, taking possession of *me*, wrapped itself in *me*; clothed itself with my personality; warped, twisted, controlled, and compelled me, until my true self was no longer free, but became blighted, blasted, and fettered by something within *me* which was not according to God's original plan. It was not part of *me*, and consequently does not belong to *me*.

Self has come to *me* from the hand of God by reason of a benevolent creation, but *sin* has come to *me* from the devil by reason of the fall. *Sin* has invaded *self* and made *me* sinful and therefore selfish.

It is Satan's purpose to make men believe that what he has injected can never be extracted as long as they live. The Bible, however, has a different story to tell.

X II. *The Destruction Wrought*

✓ The separation of *sin* from *self*.

But is this possible? someone asks. We reply with another question, Why not? Has Satan put into man more than an almighty God can take out?

"That the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," surely means something. Is it not possible that God means what He says?

✓ There is evidently a recognition of a distinction between *the body of sin* and *we* who are no longer to serve sin.

✓ "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," says John (I John 1: 7). Does not that suggest that the *sin* in us may be cleansed away and the *us* that was previously sinful may remain without it?

Some years ago we sat in an English home in a Yorkshire woolen district and listened to the interesting conversation of a local mill worker.

"Did you ever hear of 'mungo'?" said he.

"Yes," I replied, "I have seen the word on some of the office windows: *John Jones, Rag and Mungo Merchants*; but I have no idea what *mungo* is."

"Did you ever hear of carbonizing?" he asked.

"No!" I replied, "I don't think I have. What is it?"

"Well," said he, "I am a carbonizer; I make *mun-go*; and I think you might be interested in the process. You have seen the loads of rags that are brought into the town and taken to the mills. They are brought in for the making of *mungo*, and the *mungo* is mixed with the new wool and woven into cloth. It is more than likely that part of the suit you are wearing has been worn by someone else, in fact, perhaps by more people than you would like to think about.

"The name and its origin may interest you. Its inventor was a broad-spoken Yorkshireman. When he was relating his discovery to a friend and suggesting the sinking of money to float the invention, his friend asked, 'But are you sure it will go?' To which, in his broad Yorkshire dialect, the inventor replied: 'Go? It mun go!' We would say, 'It must go!' The words 'mun-go,' if words they could be

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called, were run into one, and the manufactured product became known as *mungo*."

Then my friend went on: "I think you will be interested in the carbonizing process. These old clothes are taken into the carbonizing room, where, by a twofold process of heat and vitrol, every shred of cotton is destroyed and every bit of wool is purified and remains. No matter how firmly the cotton is woven into the texture the process deals with it, but leaves the rest of the garment, *all wool*. This is then torn up and mixed with new material for weaving into new cloth.

"We who work in this process," said he, "dare not wear a bit of cotton. If a man wore a cotton suit when he went in, he would come out of the carbonizing chamber without it; whereas, if he wore a suit which was a mixture of wool and cotton, every shred of cotton would have been destroyed and the fabric remaining would be *all wool*."

Naturally I was interested, and hardly realized I was ejaculating until my own "Hallelujah" made me conscious of it.

"Why 'Hallelujah'?" asked my friend.

"Because," said I, "I have been through the process. They told me that *my natural selfhood* and *indwelling sin* were so closely woven together that they could never be separated as long as I lived. But God has devised a method whereby the separation can be made, and He has done it for me. The *cotton* has been dealt with, and the purified humanity is *all wool*."

Did not God say through Ezekiel: "From all *your filthiness* . . . will I cleanse *you*" (Ezekiel

36:25)? Destroying the *filthiness*, He leaves a cleansed *you*.

✓ Said John the Baptist, referring to Jesus: "He shall baptize *you* with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matt. 3:11). That *you* is not destroyed by the fiery baptism, but purified and made fit for holy service.

✓ By His cleansing blood and purifying flame our nature is to be so thoroughly purged, our spirits so adjusted, our hearts so graciously attuned that the *essential self* is gloriously released—set free to do the will of God.

✕ III. *The Direction Given*

Here, then, is the final question: What about *self* when *sin* has been destroyed?

✓ We shall do well to remember that, although cleansed and made inwardly pure, divinely indwelt and kept clean, we have not been dehumanized; neither has our essential ego been in any way interfered with.

That which is back of all else in our nature, the permanent substance or agent behind the conscious "I," "me," "my"—a *released selfhood*—has been set free to do the will of God. Every fundamental urge within the nature remains the same, except that the pollution acquired is swept away. Our natural idiosyncrasies still characterize us, and it is upon these that worldly influences and satanic powers focus their attacks.

✓ At no stage of our spiritual experience are we ever changed from the human pattern on the basis of which God has made us. The personnel of the apostolic group will help us here.

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And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sickness, and to cast out devils: and Simon he surnamed Peter [lit., a piece of rock]; and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot (Mark 3:14-19).

One of the outstanding things about that group is the distinctive, individual identity of its members. We fellowship with them until we feel that we know them and would recognize them if we met them. There would be no mistake in identifying Peter. The same might be said of the rest of the group.

Fellowship with Jesus helped and refined these men. The experience of Pentecost purged and empowered them. The fires of persecution left their mark upon them. Yet back of all else was that individuality, that selfhood, each peculiarly his own, which nothing could destroy. Into its make-up had gone many contributing factors: heredity, environment, culture, and divine grace, all filling out the pattern in so far as men could work it out.

✓ Entire sanctification is a distinct personality release which now becomes our responsibility as liberated souls.

✓ In meeting that responsibility, if God is to be glorified in our lives, four things at least must be observed:

✓ 1. *There must be a life of rigorous self-denial, and of unabated self-mastery.*

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.” (Read Matthew 16:21-26.) This is not a

meaningless platitude; it is a definite demand which challenges all there is in the redeemed manhood of the best among us.

"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (Read I Cor. 9: 24-27.) No man can afford to trifle with his bodily appetites. On this ground giants have been laid low.

✓ 2. *Further, there must be a life of constant self-abasement.*

He whom we own as Lord is declared to have made himself of no reputation, even to the willingness to die on a cross. That same mind is to be in us (Phil. 2: 5-8).

✓ 3. *Also, there must be a life of continual self-forgetfulness.*

"We that are strong" are exhorted to "bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Rom. 5: 1-3).

✓ 4. *And finally, although these four things are far from final, there must be a life of complete self-renunciation.*

Even our Lord declared: "I can do nothing of myself" (John 8: 28).

This, then, is to be our daily concern: Knowing that by reason of our faith union with Jesus on Calvary's cross, *the body of sin* has been destroyed, we are to be ever yielding *ourselves* to God as those who are alive from the dead and our members as instruments of righteousness unto Him (Romans 6).

VI

THE MESSAGE OF FULL SALVATION AS INTERPRETED BY THE WESLEYS, AND THE REVIVAL WHICH IT BROUGHT

✓ Passing from the Bible itself into the pages of later history, many mighty exponents of full salvation truth are seen to have their place, among whom, standing unchallenged in spiritual leadership, are John and Charles Wesley.

There can be no reasonable doubt as to the content of the message which they gave to the world, nor as to its results both immediate and in its wider reach: John, with his sermons and other voluminous writings, and Charles, with his marvelous poetic gift, creating an emphasis both vital and distinct.

It was through these men and their spiritual contemporaries that God restored to the Church, after its lapse into spiritual deadness, the Pauline conception of redeeming grace, and thereby started the flow of floodtides of salvation destined to girdle the globe.

We shall best get to the heart of our present study as we consider:

First, the background against which this work of God appeared;

Further, the instruments whom God so mightily used in its prosecution;

Finally, the message which God so signally honored.

✓ I. *The Background Seen*

The eighteenth century conditions as the Wesleys and their contemporaries found them.

Broadly speaking, these conditions may be stated as threefold in their manifestation: the teaching of rationalism, the spirit of materialism, and the canker of social corruption.

A. ✓ *The Teaching of Rationalism*

Historians characterize the eighteenth century as in many ways distinctive. Deistic philosophy had made its destructive inroads. Scientific knowledge was making remarkable advance. Political changes were in the air.

In France, atheistic forces were working out what history now knows as the French Revolution. In Germany, nationalism was embodying itself in the armed might of Frederick the Great. In America, the Revolutionary War was being waged. In Britain, serious minds were giving themselves to the pursuit of learning. But few, anywhere, were eagerly seeking after God.

✓ B. *The Spirit of Materialism*

In matters of religion conditions are said to have been deplorable. By a series of wicked purges and persecutions, saintly men had been robbed of their churches, and their places had been filled with time servers, place seekers, and wire pullers. The Puritan fire had ceased to burn, having been transferred through the Pilgrims to the American colonies.

Within the Church, the one place above all others which should have been throbbing with life, death reigned; thus the place which should have

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been alive with spiritual motion had deteriorated into the mockery of a *spiritual morgue*.

✓ C. *The Canker of Social Corruption*

If the descriptions of historians approximate in any degree toward reality, a more complete moral and spiritual breakdown would be difficult to imagine.

There had developed a general indifference to life's finer things, not only among the common people, but also in the high places of the land, even in the court of the king himself.

Drunkenness was the general rule. Vice walked naked and unashamed. Language was foul and obscene. The marriage vow was no longer held sacred. Ignorance, superstition, brutality, crime, and lawlessness were the order of the day. Slave trading flourished. Press gangs roamed the streets taking men by force to man the slave ships. The theater is described as having been "a hotbed of vice surrounded by a halo of brothels."

Criminal laws were a mere parody on justice. Both adults and children are said to have been hanged for no fewer than a hundred and sixty different violations. Executions were so numerous that they became known as *Hanging Shows*. Often ten to fifteen persons were hanged at one time, and their bodies left to rot on the gallows by the roadside.

Prison life in England is described as a *living death*, prisoners being chained with their backs to the foul stone floor, having iron spiked chains around their necks, lying in filth which was sickening, often causing fever and death.

It was over all this that the Spirit of God began to sweep; and by reason of His mighty working, a transformation was wrought which has amazed the world.

II. *The Instruments Used*

We have used the words *instruments* with set purpose here. That is what a soul wholly at the divine disposal really is—an *instrument of righteousness unto God*. Such were these men, John and Charles Wesley, and their associates. They claimed no miraculous powers in their work, and asked no favors for the service they gave.

✓ Three things, however, were outstanding concerning them:

✓ 1. *They knew a personal contact with God—and did not hesitate to date it.*

They knew when the experience of grace began, and where the miracle happened. John Wesley himself never forgot that room in Aldersgate Street and the new experience it brought on Wednesday, May 24, 1738.

Thrilling stories of more than thirty of his helpers, in a set of books entitled *Wesley's Veterans*, tell a similar story concerning each of these men, all of whom knew God and His power to save to the uttermost.

✓ 2. *They had a clear conception as to what they believed—and were not slow to state it.*

Their experience was not some hazy, misty, nebulous thing, dependent upon their changing emotional urges. It was based on an intelligent faith which provided a sure anchorage for the soul.

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✓ 3. *They had convincing testimonies and vital messages—which their souls burned to deliver.*

Their utterances were dynamic and powerful. They were fearless and courageous; and, as they spoke, God never failed to honor His Word through their instrumentality.

Turning again to John Wesley, it is interesting to place him alongside Paul the Apostle and note the striking comparison between the two.

This is seen in their religious backgrounds.

In both men the background was legalistic. Not the same kind of legalism, to be sure—one was Jewish and the other Christian—but legalism nonetheless.

Paul put it thus:

If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ (Phil. 3:4-7).

Wesley had certainly known the struggle of his legal years, as the record of his Oxford days so clearly shows. Yet even those years were by no means wasted. They rather became a sounding board for his victorious testimony when finally he learned the secret of redeeming grace.

His brother Charles expressed it in poetic form:

*Oh, that I might at once go up,
No more on this side Jordan stop,
But now the land possess;
This moment end my legal years,
Sorrow and sins and doubts and fears—
A howling wilderness.*

It was further seen in their scholastic attainments.

They were both men of the schools. Certainly it is a far cry from the feet of Gamaliel to the halls of Oxford; yet in each case God was preparing His man.

It was also seen in their evangelistic passion:

Paul, in his arduous missionary journeys: facing dangers, seeking sinners, founding churches, establishing believers.

Wesley, in his work in Britain: riding horseback almost day and night, stopping to preach, counsel, eat, and sleep.

Nothing but that preaching with its mighty revival results under the power of the Holy Ghost saved eighteenth century England from the bloody revolution which at that time swept through France. England owed its salvation to its diminutive evangelist on horseback.

John Wesley traveled in evangelistic labors, mostly on horseback, 226,000 miles. He preached at least 46,000 sermons, published 223 books and pamphlets, and made a profit on his writings of \$150,000. He never spent more than \$150 a year on himself, and died leaving less than \$50. All he was and all he had—his time, talents, possessions, influence, spirit, soul, and body—were once and forever on the altar of consecration, a living sacrifice unto God.

Earl Baldwin, England's onetime prime minister, once said of him: "I am supposed to be a busy man, but by the side of Wesley I join the ranks of the unemployed."

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It was this consciousness of commission, divine assignment, sacred trust, which gave birth to the hymn which Charles Wesley formulated, but which was the burden of the entire group:

*A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.*

*To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill;
Oh, may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will.*

*Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live;
And, oh, Thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give!*

*Help me to watch and pray,
And on thyself rely,
Assured, if I my trust betray,
I shall forever die.*

III. *The Message Brought*

The character of that early Wesleyan message was distinctive. No effort was made to match the intellectual attack of Deism, although both in intellect and in scholarship Wesley would have had nothing to fear. His chief concern was not to defend the Christian revelation but to declare it, and then to enforce its truth by the testimony he gave.

✓ Those first Methodists were Bible Christians possessing a deep, inwrought personal experience.

They prayed, preached, testified, and sang with all the unction and power of a vital, old-fashioned Christianity. Three things characterized their witness:

A. *The fact of a rugged evangelism.*

Above all else, these men were evangelists. With them, nothing else mattered but the fact of winning men to God. Wesleyan evangelism had at least three distinctive expressions:

✓ 1. *Its outlook was broad: as broad as the world's great need.*

With the insistence that *the world was his parish*, John Wesley set out on horseback and preached wherever a crowd would listen, averaging more than fifteen sermons every week. He believed that God's great salvation should be offered to all men, not as a kindly gesture merely so that the *elect* for whom it was really intended might receive it, but as the divinely made provision for the whole wide world.

He started out from Aldersgate Street after the experience of that May evening in 1738, a new man with a new message on a new mission for God.

As the churches closed against him, he turned to the prisons, workhouses, fields, and streets.

This fine breadth of outlook was put into verse for his followers to sing:

*Come, sinners, to the gospel feast;
Let every soul be Jesus' guest.
Ye need not one be left behind,
For God hath bidden all mankind.*

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*Sent by my Lord, to you I call;
The invitation is to all:
Come, all the world; come, sinner, thou!
All things in Christ are ready now.*

Only one thing could inspire an outlook like that: the indwelling Spirit of the redeeming Christ.

✓2. *Its compassion was deep: as deep as the fact of human sin.*

See that stately Oxford scholar. He is conducting a street meeting. Who does he expect will attend? Certainly not those of his own social station. Their religion is much too formal for that kind of thing. Here is another sample of what they would be likely to sing, suggesting whom they expected to have in the crowd:

*Outcasts of men, to you I call,
Harlots, and publicans, and thieves.
He spreads His arms to embrace you all;
Sinners alone His grace receives.
No need of Him the righteous have;
He came the lost to seek and save.*

One thing alone could account for compassion like that: a conscious identification with the compassionate Christ of Calvary.

✓3. *Its spirit was persistent: through evil report and good report they went determinedly on.*

They were slandered, reviled, mobbed, misrepresented, abused; but they never weakened in their persistent endeavor to spread the good news.

Here are two examples taken from among many:

At Gorton's Green

I made haste to Gorton's Green, near Birmingham, where I had appointed to preach at six. But it was dangerous for any who stood to hear, for the stones and dirt were flying from every side, almost without intermission, for near an hour I afterwards met the Society, and exhorted them, in spite of men and devils, to continue in the grace of God.

At Falmouth

I rode to Falmouth. Almost as soon as I was set down, the house was beset on all sides A louder or more confused noise could hardly be at the taking of a city. "The rabble roared with all their throats, Bring out the canorum"—an unmeaning word which the Cornish people generally used instead of *Methodist*.

No answer being given, they quickly forced open the door and filled the passage. Only a wainscot partition was between us, which was not likely to stand long Indeed at that time, to all appearances our lives were not worth an hour's purchase Some coming up together, set their shoulders to the door Away went the hinges and the door fell into the room. I stepped forward at once and said, Here I am

Only one thing could produce and sustain an unquenchable zeal under circumstances such as these: an irrevocable consecration from which there was no turning back.

✓ B. *The force of a radical emphasis.*

These men were essentially evangelists, but they were in no sense religious entertainers; to them evangelism was a serious business.

✓ 1. *It went out to the sinner, lost in his sin.*

Wesley had nothing but love and compassion for the sinful soul, and ardently proclaimed it. He attacked and exposed sin, however, with all the strength at his command.

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Sin, to him, was not something to be discussed or argued about. It was a hellish thing to be repented of, confessed, forsaken, and divinely forgiven.

Here is a sample of Wesleyan thought with regard to sin as put into verse for congregational song:

*Wretched, helpless, and distressed,
Ah! whither shall I fly?
Ever gasping after rest,
I cannot find it nigh.
Naked, sick, and poor and blind,
Fast bound in sin and misery,
Friend of sinners, let me find
My help, my all, in Thee.*

*I am all unclean, unclean;
Thy purity I want.
My whole heart is sick of sin
And my whole head is faint.
Full of putrefying sores,
Of bruises, and of wounds, my soul
Looks to Jesus, help implores,
And gasps to be made whole.*

Stanzas such as these written and sung by members of the Wesley family, with all their High Church dignity, are a revelation indeed. What but a divine unveiling of the exceeding sinfulness of sin could have inspired it?

It was on this emphasis that God so mightily placed His seal, manifesting himself in overwhelming convicting power.

Here are three examples of this:

April 17, 1739

At Baldwin Street, we called upon God to confirm His Word. Immediately one that stood by cried out aloud with the utmost vehemence, even in the agonies of death.

May 1, 1739

At Baldwin Street, my voice could scarcely be heard amid the groanings of some and the cries of others, calling aloud to Him that is mighty to save.

A Quaker who stood by was very angry and was biting his lips and knitting his brows, when he dropped down as if thunder struck. The agony he was in was terrible to behold. We prayed for him, and he soon lifted up his head with joy, and joined us in thanksgiving.

May 21, 1739—An Outdoor Service.

While I was preaching, God began to make bare His arm, not in a closed room, neither in private, but in an open air service and before more than 2,000 witnesses. One, and another, and another were struck to the earth, exceedingly trembling at the presence of His power.

It is not our intention to suggest here that only such manifestations may be taken as authenticating the message; it would seem, however, that the fact of their repeated appearance is at least an indication of the divine blessing upon it. That, at least, was Wesley's understanding of these things.

✓ 2. *It concerned the believer, and God's power toward him.*

The message of Wesleyan evangelism by no means exhausted itself in its worldward phase. Its emphasis was among the Spirit-born.

This second phase brought further conflict, although this time more refined in its character. Now the opposition was not physical, yet no less difficult to meet. It may be defined as twofold:

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a. *The error of Zinzendorfianism.*

Count Zinzendorf, the Moravian leader, seems to have been the chief antagonist here, although in other phases of his spiritual experience there appears to have been much to admire.

Among the Moravians, Wesley had seen manifestations of confident assurance which only a conscious salvation could bring. It was natural therefore that, following his spiritual awakening, he should expect to find some measure of fellowship among them. Approaching the sin question, however, he soon discovered that their theory of deliverance from it differed radically from his own. It is here that we contact the classic example of what has become known as the *get-it-all-at-once theory*.

As quoted by Wesley, the teaching of Count Zinzendorf was as follows: Immediately saving faith is exercised in Jesus Christ the heart is instantly made pure. There is no need of any further work of grace; conversion settles it all.

It was to combat this error that Wesley preached two historic sermons: one, to prove that even after conversion sin as an indwelling principle remained in every Spirit-born child of God; the other, to show that by a further work of grace this remaining carnality could be removed. Excerpts from each will help us here.

Many well meaning men, particularly those under the direction of the late Count Zinzendorf . . . affirming that "All true believers are not only saved from the dominion of sin, but from the being of inward as well as outward sin, so that it no longer remains in them."

We allow that the state of a justified person is inexpressibly great and glorious . . . But was he not freed from all sin

so that there is no sin in his heart? I cannot say this; I cannot believe it because St. Paul says the contrary. He is speaking to believers in general when he says: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: these are contrary the one to the other." Gal. 5:17.

Nothing can be more expressive. The apostle here directly affirms that the flesh, evil nature, opposes the Spirit, even in believers; that even in the regenerate there are two principles, contrary the one to the other.

And as to this position, There is no sin in a believer, no carnal mind, no bent to backsliding, is thus contrary to the Word of God, so it is to the experience of His children The doctrine that there is no sin in believers, is quite new in the Church of Christ. It was never heard of for seventeen hundred years: never till it was discovered by Count Zinzendorf.

—From sermon, "On Sin in Believers"

Although we may, by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, resist and conquer both outward and inward sin; although we may weaken our enemies day by day: yet we cannot drive them out. By all the grace given at justification we cannot extirpate them Most surely we cannot, till it please our Lord to speak to our hearts again, to speak the second time, "Be clean"; and then only the leprosy is cleansed. Then only, the evil root, the carnal mind is destroyed, and inbred sin subsists no more.

Believe the glad tidings of great Salvation which God hath prepared for all people. Believe that He who is the brightness of His Father's glory, the express image of His person is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through Him. He is able to save you from all the sin that cleaves to your words and actions He now saith "Be thou clean", only believe and you will immediately find, "all things are possible to him that believeth."

—From sermon, "On the Repentance of Believers"

b. *The hostility of his fellow churchmen.*

The chief offending expression here seems to have been that word *perfection*, although it would seem that the word itself was not of Wesley's own choosing. "I have no particular fondness for the

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term *Perfection*," he wrote. "It is my opponents who thrust it upon me continually, and ask me what I mean by it."

These old-time tactics seem strangely modern, don't they?

Actually, Wesley's terminology was far from limited to one word. It was wide and varied. With Dr. J. A. Wood's book *Christian Perfection as Taught by John Wesley* as a guide, we recently made a study of the expressions Wesley used, and found it to be interesting indeed. Here are some of them in the paragraphs in which they occur; taken mostly from his *Journal*.

The moment a sinner is justified his heart is cleansed in a low degree; yet he has not a clean heart, in the full, proper sense, till he is made perfect in love.

I spoke, one by one, to the society at Hutton-Rudby. They were about eighty in number, of whom near seventy were believers, and sixteen (probably) renewed in love.

Abundance have been convicted of sin, very many have found peace with God and in London only I believe full two hundred have been brought into glorious liberty.

A little after preaching one came to me who believed God had set her soul at full liberty.

Many others are groaning after Full Salvation.

I scarcely ever saw the people here so much alive to God; particularly those who believe they are saved from sin.

Nothing is more clear, according to the plain Bible account, than sanctification—pure love reigning in the heart and life.

A second change whereby they shall be saved from all sin and perfected in love.

Six or seven in this society still rejoice in the pure love of God.

That point, entire Salvation from inbred sin.

It is well, as soon as any of them find peace with God, to exhort them to go on to perfection.

On Saturday a few met in Mr. Hunter's room who were athirst for Full Sanctification.

I met again with those who believe that God has delivered them from the root of bitterness.

Here I found some who had been laboring long to work themselves into Holiness.

Note then these eighteen expressions: "cleansed," "a clean heart," "made perfect in love," "renewed in love," "brought into glorious liberty," "set at full liberty," "groaning after Full Salvation," "alive to God," "saved from sin," "sanctification," "a second change," "saved from all sin," "perfected in love," "rejoice in the pure love of God," "Entire Salvation from inbred sin," "Perfection," "delivered from the root of bitterness," "Holiness."

Who, with any degree of Christian charity, could reasonably complain concerning a vocabulary as broad as this?

The story of Wesley's fight against those who opposed his teaching cannot be told here. Suffice it to say, he stood firm and won through, preaching holiness as a second work of grace right to the end of his days.

✓ C. *The flow of a radiant experience.*

Wesley's evangelistic effort and sound doctrinal teaching were by no means the sum total of the eighteenth century revival. All we have considered thus far was a product of something else—a deep, inwrought, personal, spiritual experience.

What these men knew themselves became contagious in the lives of others.

✓ 1. *It brought to its recipients an assured salvation.*

Its first mark was spiritual confidence. Those early Methodists were saved and knew it. This con-

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fidence was expressed in testimony and song. To this their early hymnal is a witness. One hymn out of many will be a sufficient example.

*How can a sinner know
His sins on earth forgiven?
How can my gracious Saviour show
My name inscribed in heaven?
What we have felt and seen
With confidence we tell,
And publish to the sons of men
The signs infallible.*

*We who in Christ believe
That He for us hath died,
We all His unknown peace receive
And feel His blood applied.
Exults our rising soul,
Disburdened of her load,
And swells unutterably full
Of glory and of God.*

*We by His Spirit prove
And know the things of God,
The things that freely by His love
He hath on us bestowed.
His Spirit to us He gave,
And dwells in us we know;
The witness in ourselves we have,
And all its fruits we show.*

Emphasizing this thought, Wesley preached and left on record three sermons, two of which he captioned *The Witness of the Spirit* and the third, *The Witness of Our Own Spirit*. The general theme

of these sermons may be said to be: A repentant sinner may be saved and know it.

✓ 2. *It wrought within its participants a deep purification.*

This we have already seen so far as Wesley's own phraseology was concerned. But to those early Methodists this great salvation was more than either a theology or a phraseology; it was an inward sense of cleanness producing an inner soul rapture which found expression in an outburst of song.

How those old-time Methodists sang! The purification of their inner nature and the possession of the divine fullness was their outstanding theme. Here, for instance, are doctrine, petition, conviction, experience, exultation, all rolled into one.

*Come, O my God, the promise seal;
This mountain sin remove.
Now in my gasping soul reveal
The virtue of Thy love.*

*I want Thy life, Thy purity,
Thy righteousness brought in;
I ask, desire, and trust in Thee
To be redeemed from sin.*

*For this, as taught by Thee, I pray,
And can no longer doubt.
Remove from hence, to sin I say;
Be cast this moment out!*

*Anger and sloth, desire and pride,
This moment be subdued;
Be cast into the crimson tide
Of my Redeemer's blood.*

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*Saviour, to Thee my soul looks up.
My present Saviour Thou!
In all the confidence of hope
I claim the blessing now.*

*'Tis done! Thou dost this moment save,
With full salvation bless;
Redemption through Thy blood I have
And spotless love and peace.*

Wesley's Journal is one great thrill, as he tells again and again of increasing numbers of witnesses who did not hesitate to affirm the fact that they had put their almighty Saviour to the test and that He had witnessed within their hearts to the complete deliverance from indwelling sin.

3. *It manifested itself in a life of victorious love.*

No profession of the possession of this grace was satisfactory to Wesley unless the life carried an accompanying evidence of the Spirit's presence and power.

Answering the question as to how the experience may be recognized, he replied:

By love, joy, peace, always abiding; by invariable long-suffering, patience, resignation; by gentleness triumphing over all provocation; by goodness, mildness, sweetness, tenderness of spirit; by fidelity, simplicity, godly sincerity; by meekness, calmness, evenness of spirit; by temperance, not only in food and sleep, but in all things natural and spiritual.

To Wesley, this experience of full salvation meant divine love mastering the life, having supreme control within, and from that God-possessed center flowing out in usefulness and blessing to a needy world.

VII

ANSWERING THE ATTACKS ON WESLEY'S TEACHING AND HIS OWN EXPERIENCE

Surprising as it may seem, there has developed within the very church which God used Wesley to establish an amazing conflict, not only concerning the doctrine he taught, but also concerning his own spiritual experience.

Some, obviously ignorant of Methodism's historical and theological background, have arrogantly declared the teaching of holiness as a second work of grace to be a *newfangled idea*, as dangerous as it is erroneous.

Others there are who acknowledge that Wesley taught a second instantaneous work of grace early in his ministry, but declare that in his later years he changed his emphasis, and taught entire sanctification as a progressive work.

Some have gone so far as to level their guns at Wesley's own experience, declaring that, while it cannot be gainsaid that he taught second blessing holiness as a distinctive doctrine, there is no evidence that Wesley himself ever professed the personal enjoyment of the experience.

This heavy artillery, with other satanic weapons, has been aimed at the very foundations of this truth with the determination, if at all possible, to destroy its witness before this generation. Fortunately, we are not left to wage a battle of opinions

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in this matter, having the plain statements of Wesley himself. These we shall take up, examine, and seek to evaluate, thus allowing Wesley to make his own reply.

I. *Concerning the Charge That This Teaching Is a Modern Error*

Our answer is that only one of two things can be said concerning such a statement. Either it is the result of an *amazing ignorance* or the product of an *unscrupulous misrepresentation*. Whichever of these it may be, the charge itself is almost unpardonable in view of the possibility of so easily ascertaining the real facts of the case.

Should the question arise as to how these facts may be known, the answer is twofold:

A. *By a study of easily available Wesleyan literature.*

Among many other writings will be found:

1. *Wesley's own works*

Notes on the New Testament; Sermons; Journal; Letters; A Plain Account of Christian Perfection; the many fine old hymns, both original and translated, from the pens of both John and Charles.

2. *Works of Wesley's contemporaries, and their immediate successors.*

John Fletcher, with his priceless *Checks to Antinomianism*. Adam Clarke, with his still popular *Commentary* and other works. Richard Watson, with his *Theological Institutes and Bible Expositions*. Joseph Benson with his *Commentary*.

3. *Arminian theologians* with their later works, among whom are Miley, Pope, Ralston, Wiley, Hills, and others.

4. *Added to these is a host of other creditable writers* both older and more recent.

Within the past few decades hundreds of volumes by reputable writers of Arminian emphasis have been placed at the disposal of all who desire to read them.

B. *By a study of the Bible itself.*

Simply to prove the teaching of entire sanctification to be Wesleyan in its origin would be far from sufficient. If Wesley is its source and origin, such a doctrine is not worth contending for.

Wesley, however, made no pretense of originating it, but repeatedly insisted that the doctrine which he taught had for its basis the unchanging Word of God. We have no hesitation in affirming that the Bible nowhere contradicts the doctrine of entire sanctification as Wesley taught it.

II. *Concerning the Charge That Wesley Changed His Emphasis with Regard to This Experience*

This second attack is even more subtle than the first, but no less contrary to fact. Again, it can only have one of the same two explanations, either ignorance or misrepresentation.

We would not want to go on record, however, as stating that throughout the long years of his outstanding ministry Wesley's thinking underwent no general change. No mind so keen and alert as Wesley's could progress through so many years without some necessary change.

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There were some things on which he deliberately reversed himself. Some statements he definitely modified. There were some truths, however, on which from the beginning he was so positive that they needed neither reversal nor modification; they were his firm convictions right to the end.

A. *He changed his views on the subject of eternal security.*

There was evidently a period when in his thinking he leaned in that direction. In his interesting volume, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley*, Dr. George C. Cell almost makes a case for Wesley as a Calvinist.

Wesley's own writing, however, will prove for us a safer guide.

Discussing the subject of entire sanctification, Wesley wrote:

I do not exclude an impossibility of falling from it either in part or in the whole. Therefore I retract several expressions in our hymns which partly express, partly imply such impossibility . . . Formerly we thought one saved from sin could not fall, now we know the contrary.

("Wesley's Works," Vol. VI, p. 219. Quoted by J. A. Wood)

In a letter to his brother Charles in 1767 he wrote:

Can one who has attained it fall? Formerly I thought not, but you (with Thomas Walsh and John Jones) convinced me of my mistake.

John Wesley was too honest a man to hold on to a theory simply because at one time he had mistakenly endorsed it. Immediately he saw his mistake, he unhesitatingly corrected it. Unconditional

eternal security retained no place in Wesleyan theology.

B. *He modified his position as to what the experience of entire sanctification does in the lives of those who receive it.*

Some statements he had made seemed apt to prove misleading; these he corrected without hesitation. Some interesting examples of this are to be found in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. There he quotes the preface written for the second volume of hymns published in the year 1741, and with amazing candor pauses to correct it in six different places with footnotes.

Speaking of those enjoying this experience of full salvation, he says:

They are freed from self will, desiring nothing but the holy and perfect will of God; not supplies in want or ease in pain.

Footnote in later edition: This is too strong. Our Lord Himself desired ease in pain. He asked for it only with resignation.

Whenever they pour out their hearts in a more immediate manner before God, they have no thought of anything past, or absent, or to come, but of God alone.

Footnote in later edition: This is far too strong. See Sermon on Wandering Thoughts.

They have no fear or doubt either as to their state in general or as to any particular action.

Footnote in later edition: Frequently this is the case, but only for a time.

The unction from the Holy One teaches them every hour what they shall say and what they shall do.

Footnote in later edition: For a time it may be so: but not always.

Nor have they any need to reason concerning it.

Footnote in later edition: Sometimes they have no need, but at other times they have.

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They are in one sense freed from temptations; for though numberless temptations fly about them, yet they trouble them not.

Footnote in later edition: Sometimes they do not; at other times they do, and that grievously.

(Taken from "Wesleys Works," Third Edition, Vol. XI, p. 379)

A stubborn insistence on a mistaken notion for the mere saving of face had no place in the character of Wesley.

C. Throughout his entire ministry, however, he gave neither hint nor suggestion of any change of view on the subject of instantaneous sanctification by faith.

On the other hand, the entire trend of his writings indicates a continual insistence upon it. Some idea of this will be seen as we compare dates and utterances in his writings.

In 1762, in his letter to Bell and Owen, he wrote:

You have over and over denied instantaneous sanctification to me, but I have known it and taught it (and so has my brother, as our writings show) above these twenty years.

In 1733 Wesley preached his famous sermon on "Circumcision of Heart" before the University at Oxford. In his last revision of his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, in 1777, he mentions this sermon as follows:

This sermon was composed first of all my writings which have been published. This was the view I had then, which even then I scrupled not to term *Perfection*. This is the view I have of it now without any addition or diminution.

In 1737 he wrote his first tract on holiness. In 1777 he said concerning it:

Is it not easy to see that this is the very same doctrine which I believe and teach at this day, not adding one point either to that inward or outward holiness which I maintained eight and thirty years ago? And it is the same which by the grace of God I have continued to teach from that time till now.

In 1741, he preached his sermon on *Christian Perfection* and published a book of hymns with preface. In his last revision of *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 1777, he says:

There is nothing which we have since advanced upon the subject either in verse or prose, which is not either directly or indirectly contained in this preface; so that whether our present doctrine be right or wrong, it is however the same which we taught from the beginning.

In 1778, when seventy-five years of age, Wesley wrote:

I know not that I can write a better [sermon] on the circumcision of heart than I did five and forty years ago. Forty years ago I knew and preached every Christian doctrine which I preach now.

—*Journal*, September, 1778.

In 1785, when eighty-two years of age, he wrote:

It will be well as soon as any of them find peace with God to exhort them to go on to perfection. The more you press all believers to aspire after Full Salvation as attainable now by simple faith, the more the work of God will prosper.

In 1790, one year before his death, he declared:

This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists, and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appears to have raised us up.

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In 1791, three months before his death, these were his words:

A man that is not a thorough friend of Christian Perfection can easily puzzle others and thereby weaken, if not destroy any select society.

Wherever you have an opportunity of speaking to believers, urge them to go on to perfection.

In 1791, four days before he left for heaven, he declared:

We may be justified by faith, and then go on to Full Salvation.

Thus we see that, while his thought developed and his capacity increased, while through the years there were necessary adjustments in details in his thinking concerning this great theme, Wesley never ceased to teach and to preach the experience of entire sanctification as an instantaneous second work of grace.

III. *Concerning the Charge That Wesley Himself Never Professed the Enjoyment of This Blessing*

That, in the minds of all fair-minded people, will be considered the most arrogant argument of all. Again only one of the same two reasons can be suggested for it, namely, either ignorance of the real facts or deliberate misrepresentation concerning them.

To this charge against Wesley those familiar with his life and writings have a twofold reply:

A. *The first answer is inferential.*

Such an inference is surely not unreasonable. Through a ministry covering half a century he had, as we have already seen, made this doctrine his

leading theme. He had taught its possibility. He had exhorted others to seek it, and had rejoiced to record the testimonies of those who had professed to receive it. He had preached sermons on this theme, written books about it, composed hymns embodying its truth, and had strongly insisted that his ministers should preach it.

Who could have any respect for or confidence in such a man as a spiritual leader if, after all this, he did not know the experience for himself? If Wesley was the man which the world thinks he was, there can be no doubt about his enjoyment of the experience of entire sanctification.

B. The further answer is his own personal declaration.

The story of his protracted search for a real experience is known to all, and much in Methodist hymnology is expressive of the soul craving which he knew. With John and Charles Wesley, however, *craving after* the experience was not the end. His letter to Bell and Owen already quoted, written October 29, 1762, will again serve us here:

I dislike the saying, this was not known or taught among us until two or three years ago. I grant you did not know it. You have over and over denied instantaneous sanctification to me; but I have known it . . . (and so has my brother, as our writings show) above these twenty years.—*Journal.*

In 1771 he wrote:

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 any 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, in

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public, in print, and God confirmed it by a thousand witnesses. I have continued to *declare* this for about thirty years, and God has continued to confirm the word by His grace.

As to the exact time and place of Wesley's second blessing experience there has been much interesting discussion. Going back "these twenty years" from the letter dated 1762 written to Bell and Owen, "these twenty years" being evidently a round figure rather than an exact number, the nearest location of recorded incidents seems to be the experience at Snowfield, December 24, 25, 1744. Here is his *Journal* record concerning it.

In the evening, while I was reading prayers at 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 never knew before (I mean not as at this time) what it was to be still before God.

I waked 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 confirmed me therein; so that God was before me all 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.

After this outstanding experience, he lived many days, bearing a clear, ringing testimony before a critical church and a sinning world that, in the atonement of a crucified and risen Redeemer, God had provided deliverance for every believing soul from the last remains of sin.

VIII

THE WESLEYAN DOCTRINE IN THE LIGHT OF GENERAL BIBLE TRUTH

Not handling the word of God deceitfully (II Cor. 4: 2).

A workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (II Tim. 2: 15).

Already we have considered the Wesleyan message against the background of its own century. We are now to approach this teaching as it relates itself to the broad background of the Word of God.

The Wesleyan message claims to be scriptural in its content, professing to find its final authority, not in the teaching of man, but in the revealed Word of God himself.

The mere fact of such a claim, however, by no means establishes the truth of its teaching. The Bible, of all books, is the most maligned in the world. Some of the most irresponsible faddists have brought the wildest notions to its pages, therein claiming support. This all the world knows full well. Any teaching, therefore, which would command the respect of thoughtful minds must be based, not merely on an isolated passage here and there, but on the broad teaching of the entire Book.

That the Wesleyan emphasis has its own well-known proof texts which it can glibly quote is

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generally agreed. This, however, is far from being enough.

Dr. W. E. Sangster in his book *The Path to Perfection* finds thirty scripture passages in Wesley's writings which he calls: "The thirty passages on which Wesley chiefly relies for this doctrine."

At first sight, such an expression is apt to antagonize the student of Wesley, suggesting that he was shallow in his thinking, lacking in thoroughness of investigation, and therefore not wholly competent as a leader and spiritual guide. Who, it may be asked, with any conception as to the serious nature of his task would be so foolish as to build so vital a doctrine on so flimsy a foundation?

Dr. Sangster, however, offsets this with a two-fold qualifying statement, reminding his readers that in the eighteenth century the general approach to Biblical theology invariably proceeded on the basis of proof texts, and also making it plain that Wesley had the firm conviction that his teaching was in conformity with the whole tenor of the New Testament.

It is this *general tenor* of Scripture which needs to be stressed, a background so sure that with it we can not only defend our position, but we can also take the attitude of positive aggression, challenging our critics to bring any contrary passage, rightly interpreted, to offset our teaching.

That many *supposedly contrary passages* have been so used is well known to all, but in every case the arguments built upon them wilt and wither when honestly faced.

At some point these *contrary passages*, as they are called, are given a twist in their interpretation.

This is not necessarily with malicious intent; sometimes there is a theological coloring by reason of the interpreter's training or background. Frequently it is a thoughtless repetition of what others have said.

There is one indisputable position where well-informed advocates of the Wesleyan doctrine of scriptural holiness can unhesitatingly take their stand: There is no passage of scripture, viewed in relation to its historic background, examined in the light of its widest context, and read and interpreted in accord with the general teaching of the writer, which does not teach either the need, possibility, or possession of the experience for which the Wesleyan doctrine so uncompromisingly stands.

Before the effort is made to build up an argument of proof texts as a basis for the Wesleyan doctrine the would-be teacher should know something about the Bible in general; and it is on the basis of this general knowledge that the holiness question should be approached.

I. *The General Background, so essential to a clear understanding of the truth we teach*

While Wesley's teaching was in no sense inferior to the best thought of his day, his real strength was not so much in the clarity of his thinking as in the scriptural soundness of his message.

For all who would successfully propagate this truth, the same principle holds true today. Our danger here is twofold: first, the fact of our *aspiration*; and further, the possibility of our *deterioration*.

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The fact of our aspiration lies in the desire to be scholarly. There is a growing tendency in this our day to approach the doctrine of holiness from a philosophic point of view. There can be no question that the teaching of holiness has its philosophic angle of approach. We ought to thank our God for every sign of consecrated scholarship wherever we find it, especially when applied to this important truth for which we unhesitatingly stand. The fact must be recognized, however, that it is possible to become so engrossed in the philosophic aspect as almost unwittingly to neglect its deeper side and thus lose the sense of its freshness and power.

Analysis of the experience of holiness is almost like trying to analyze a rose. As it stands in its completeness, its beauty, fragrance, and form are apparent to all. Take it apart, and these very things which make it what it is immediately elude you. There is a very real sense in which it offers itself in its completeness, yet defies analysis of its parts.

Within recent years several scholarly works have appeared in which a philosophic evaluation of the experience of holiness has been attempted. We have no disposition to cast reflection on their writers nor to question their sincerity; in almost every case, however, it has seemed to us that the same essential factor has been missing—that note of certainty born of an assured personal experience.

The possibility of our deterioration comes in the danger of our becoming slovenly.

We are not thinking now of slovenliness in dress or in demeanor, but in thought and in mental labor; of picking up snippets from others and, without

giving them serious consideration, handing them out as one's own thought; of posing as an experienced exponent of the doctrine of holiness when in reality one is just a spiritual and mental cheap-Jack.

True holiness preaching is highly specialized preaching. The holiness preacher stands before men as a specialist in two fields:

a. In the field of experience, where this of which he speaks is personally known.

b. In the field of exegesis, where, as a basis and authority for the experience, the Bible is laboriously studied.

It is a recognized law among men that every would-be specialist must seek the fullest possible information and equipment in the field in which he desires to work.

Imagine this, if you can. Here is a young man at the doors of the Medical Association asking to be registered as an *eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist*. Asked for his qualifications, he replies:

"I myself have just been cured of a very serious ailment. In addition to this, I have a book on this subject; and, since I have my own cure, I have read a little piece from it every morning and evening. I am now ready to remove anybody's tonsils, take cataracts from the eyes, obstructions from the nose, to operate on the ear, or to deal with anything else that may be wrong."

That young man would immediately be told two things: first, he must give himself to a general medical training; and further, he must pursue more advanced studies of his specialized work.

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One of the dangers with the would-be holiness preacher is the tendency to imagine that all he needs to fit him for the work is a conscious experience of personal recovery from the virus of sin and a general knowledge of Bible proof texts on the subject of holiness. We shall certainly not seek to minimize the value of all this, for that is where most of us got our start and that is as far as many sincere, believing souls will ever go. God will certainly bless them in their life and their witness. With the one who claims to stand out as an advocate and expounder of this experience, however, the case is very different. Here, much more is demanded. There must be a well-rounded knowledge of the Word of God as a background for further specialization.

In these days when Bible colleges and study courses abound, guidance here is not difficult to obtain. Among other things, the following studies should not be neglected:

A good course in the subject of Biblical introduction.

A careful study of Bible content book by book, taking the books in the chronological sequence. It is necessary to know something about a book's content in general before presuming to expound its verses in particular.

There should be a study in Bible biographies—and that in the light of the respective ages in which they lived.

Something should be known about the dispensations, and their related covenants.

There should be a study of the foundational doctrines of Scripture, each as related to the other.

All these are but general hints and are, of course, by no means exhaustive.

We must remember, whenever we preach, that this great truth of holiness must be intelligently related to the Bible's comprehensive background, and every text expounded must be so treated as not to clash with any other revealed truth in the Word of God. If the doctrine we preach will not bear a rigid examination in the light of *all else* which the Bible teaches, that doctrine has no place in the Christian economy, and our insistence on it makes us false witnesses of God.

II. *The Message We Emphasize, as seen against this background of general truth*

As we have already seen, thirty passages have been set forth by a contemporary writer as the Bible basis on which Wesley chiefly builds his doctrine.

All this is good so far as it goes. But, while accepting the general fact with regard to these passages, rather than saying "on which Wesley chiefly relies" we would prefer to put it, *which Wesley quotes in support of*. As we have already seen, Wesley's firm conviction was that this teaching of full salvation was in conformity with the whole tenor of the Sacred Book. Yet, it would not help either an inquirer or a critic just to hand him the Book; neither would it prove to be good sense to multiply *proof texts* beyond reasonable limits. Would it not be better to put it in a manner such as

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this? While Wesley had a Bible background of which he was fully confident, and taught a divinely revealed doctrine which he knew to pervade the entire Book, he took convenient passages which he had wisely selected, and used them as well-chosen weapons from the Armory of Truth. This, we are convinced, is what Dr. Sangster means when he quotes Wesley as saying: "I tell you, as plain as I can speak, where and when I found this. I found it in the Oracles of God, in the Old and New Testament; when I read them with no other view or desire but to save my own soul" (*Plain Account of Christian Perfection*).

Here, then, as would-be exponents of holiness we begin our serious Bible study of this magnificent doctrine; not as novices seeking a few proof texts to bolster a preconceived idea, but as those informed and alert concerning the recognized principles of sound Bible exegesis. We have no personal axes to grind and no denominational positions to defend.

With the general Bible content as a background reasonably mastered, and the teaching of full salvation intelligently related to it, the selection and presentation of reasonable proof texts is not only permissible but really effective. The presentation here must not be the recital of a mere parrot-like memorization, but a dignified declaration of what God hath said.