

"THE GLORY OF METHODISM."

"THE increase of Methodism is one of the wonders of the age. Starting in 1739 with eight or ten persons...the number of its adherents has increased to millions and its influence encircles the globe. Its educational institutions are equal to those of any denomination of Christendom. It numbers among its adherents some of the foremost statesmen, financiers and professional men of the century. Its pulpits are filled by ministers the equal of any in ability and religious zeal. Taken as a whole, Methodism wields an immeasurable influence in the world, and has a tremendous responsibility.

There is a growing danger that these outward material things should absorb our attention, causing us to forget the lowliness and purpose of our origin. When the king of Babylon looked upon the city that had risen to such grandeur under his fostering care, he said: 'Is not this the house of my power, and for the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?' His history is but another illustration of the proverb, 'Pride goeth before destruction,' and should stand as a warning to individuals, nations and churches, not to glory in material prosperity only. There may be much glitter and glare in the church to arrest the attention, and yet 'Ichabod' may be written upon her portals.

"John Wesley said: 'In 1729 my brother Charles and I, reading the Bible, saw we could not be saved without holiness; followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737 we saw that this *holiness comes by faith*. In 1738 we saw likewise that men are justified *before they are sanctified*, but still holiness was our object, inward and outward holiness. *God then thrust us [R2023 : page 195] out to raise up a holy people.*'

"Again, he says: '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.'

"The glory of Methodism is, that its object was, 'to raise up a holy people' and 'to spread Scriptural holiness over the (all) lands.' If that object is lost sight of, its glory will depart. Dr. Adam Clark says: 'If the Methodists give up preaching entire sanctification, they will soon lose their glory.'

"The bishops in their quadrennial address in 1824 said: 'If Methodists give up the doctrine of entire sanctification, or suffer it to become a dead letter, we are a fallen people. Holiness is the main cord that binds us together; relax this, and you loosen the whole system. This will appear more evident if we call to mind the original design of Methodism. It was to raise up and preserve a holy people.' The Centennial Conference of American Methodism which met in Baltimore, 1884, reaffirmed this as our faith and purpose: 'We remind you, brethren, that the mission of Methodism is to promote holiness.'

"That there may be no mistake as to what is meant by holiness in the above quotations, the General Conference of 1832 issued a pastoral address to the church and used the following words: 'When we speak of holiness we mean that state in which God is loved with all the heart and served with all the power. This is the privilege of the Christian in this life, and may be secured [commenced--EDITOR] instantaneously by an act of faith, as is justification.'

"Hear then the conclusion of the whole matter: The germ of Methodism is holiness. The design of Methodism is to spread Scriptural holiness. The shibboleth of Methodism is holiness. The glory of Methodism is holiness.

"Some of the greatest men that ever were connected with Methodism have told us, that when we cease to preach holiness, as above explained, our glory is departed."--*Methodist journal*.

[Evidently the original glory of the "people called Methodists" was the true glory of the true Christianity. But alas! to how great an extent this glory has been lost by this as well as other denominations. It was the seeing clearly of the truths then due to be seen, that produced good effects and results in Wesley's day, although unpopular. It is the "present truth" that is needed to sanctify God's people to-day. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth."--EDITOR.]

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