

GROWTH IN GRACE AND HOLINESS Hebrews 7: 25

“Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”

John Wesley never used the statements that we now call “The Four Alls of Methodism” himself but we use them as useful pegs for his teaching from the Bible. That may sound a wordy way of putting it but I think that it’s important to put it that way. We are not people who are obsessed with John Wesley, though it may seem as if we are. We’re not even people who are obsessed with the hymns of Charles Wesley - though I wish that we were more obsessed with them than I think we are these days! We are people who say that the teaching of the Wesleys and “The Four Alls” have mediated into our culture and experience what we now have judged to be the essential message of the Scriptures. That’s why we’re regarding them as important. The four useful pegs on which we hang the teaching from the Bible that we find in the writings of John and Charles Wesley are these:

ALL NEED TO BE SAVED

ALL CAN BE SAVED

ALL CAN KNOW THEY ARE SAVED

ALL CAN BE SAVED TO THE UTTERMOST

It is clear that the Wesleys and the early Methodists believed that the message of the Bible was a message of salvation. In short, numbers one and two of the “Four Alls” teach universal sinfulness (all need to be saved) and unlimited atonement (all can be saved). It is the message of the cross that meets the human condition. This is beautifully summed up, of course, in the favourite text, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Wesley didn’t leave it there: salvation is the beginning, not the end, of the Christian road. When Wesley preached, he preached “All need to be saved”, “All can be saved” but he went on,

“All can know they are saved” or in older English “All can have the assurance that they are saved” (‘assurance’ is a good word, but ‘know’ does it just as well I think).

“All can be saved to the uttermost”

We now consider III. ALL CAN KNOW THEY ARE SAVED

I had a conversation with someone yesterday who asked me: “How can we know that we are saved?” given that I was saying that sometimes our emotions (that is, our feelings about forgiveness) don’t necessarily tally with remission of sins, and the two need to go together.

John Wesley was profoundly influenced by both his parents. Susanna seems to be the more famous of the two. She had a strong personality and strong nonconformist Christian convictions.

She is particularly known for her quaint views on the upbringing of children: that they should fear the rod and cry quietly; that they shouldn't be taught anything about English language until their fifth birthday, on which day they should be taught the alphabet; and that on the following day they should be taught how to read, beginning in Genesis chapter 1 and verse 1. Samuel was in many ways as eccentric as his wife, but he made a great impression on his son's life. He died in April 1735 when John was nearly 32 years of age, before John's disappointing years as missionary to the American Colonies, and more than three years before his Aldersgate Street "heart-warming" experience. (I read in one book that one of the contributory factors to John Wesley's experience at Aldersgate Street was that he was going through the mid-life crisis of the 35 year old man, which explains all that I am going through this year!). In those days, they attached great significance to death-bed words, On Samuel's death-bed he confided to John: "The inward witness, son, the inward witness; that is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity."

Ten months after his father's death John set out for Savannah, Georgia. When he arrived he was perplexed by all that had happened on the trans-Atlantic journey. On the voyage a storm washed across the decks and split the masts and the main sail in pieces. John watched the Moravians as they quietly went about their business and he even questioned one of the Moravian Brethren afterwards, "were you not afraid to die?" "No, I wasn't." "Were not your women and children afraid to die?" "No, they weren't." John knew one thing - he was petrified of dying and he didn't know why these Moravian Germans from Hernhutt, crossing the Atlantic for religious exile in the New World, were not. On his second day in Savannah, Georgia, having journeyed up the river, he met one of the Moravians' leaders August Spangenberg (he wrote the hymn "What shall we offer our good Lord, Poor nothings for his boundless grace?"). Wesley asked Spangenberg for some guidance in his work, and that gave the German an opportunity to press some questions. Discerning that Wesley was uncomfortable, Spangenberg asked him point blank:

"Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? Do you know Jesus Christ?"

Wesley stalled. Good upbringing, religious devotions, good education, Oxford don, ordained priest in the Church of England, leader of the Methodist Societies which he perpetuated with his travelling companions even on the journey across the Atlantic - but with these questions from Spangenberg he stalled. "Do you know Jesus Christ?" said Spangenberg. "I know he is the Saviour of the world," John replied. But that wasn't good enough for Spangenberg. "True" he said, "but do you know he has saved you?" That was the vital thing. Wesley was perceptibly hesitant: "I hope he has died to save me." Still the pressure was maintained. "Do you know yourself?" Wesley weakly mumbled: "I do" to spare his embarrassment but knew in his heart, as he was later to record in his Journal, that they were "vain words". "Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? Do you know Jesus Christ?"

("The inward witness, son, the inward witness; that is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity.")

The Scriptural basis for Spangenberg's questions is Romans 8, where Paul tells the early Christians:

“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

After his conversion Wesley felt an assurance, he felt that Christ had taken away his sins - “died for my sins, even mine. An assurance was given me that he had saved me from the law of sin and death.” Wesley consistently regarded the assurance of present salvation as the privilege of believers which they could, or should, claim if they lacked it. Attempting a definition in his preaching, where again I am referring to the modern text of Wesley’s sermons in James Holway’s update:

“The witness of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul in which the Holy Spirit says directly to my Spirit that I am a child of God. It further assures me that Jesus loves me and has given himself for me, and that all my sins are blotted out, and that I am reconciled to God.”

Or more familiarly, in the words of the hymn: “Arise my soul, arise”

“The Father hears him pray,
His dear Anointed One;
He cannot turn away
The presence of His Son:
His Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.

My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father! cry.”

No wonder Rattenbury said that these hymns of Wesley are “the Bible in solution”!

Claiming Bible promises is important for the Christian. We are not celebrating mere emotionalism, important as emotion itself is. We are claiming Bible promises. We are experiencing them by the witness of the Holy Spirit sealing them to our hearts. We are confirming them by the change of heart. It used to be said (and I’m sorry for those of you who have not the luxury of knowing just how true this is) that I sounded like my Father and looked like my Mother. A child of God has the Father’s characteristics. That’s the essence of childhood as I can understand it. The major characteristic of the Father is love, and the major characteristic of the child should be love. Salvation is proved in a double way. It is proved by Scripture, it is proved by experience. God’s grace praised and proved is the essence of the authentic Methodist

experience. “Father of everlasting grace, Thy goodness and thy truth we praise, Thy goodness and thy truth we prove;”

A new love for God and a new love for our neighbour are signs of the New Birth. I think that’s what the First Epistle of John is all about. The Christian will also bear fruit. What, you say, is the essential fruit of the Christian? I’m not a horticultural expert, as anyone who has ever seen me in the garden would understand. In fact, the truth of the matter is you won’t ever have seen me in the garden - only passing through from time to time! A horticultural expert will tell you this: the fruit is also the seed. The very essence of fruit is to be seed. When we’re thinking about fruit for Jesus, I believe we’re thinking about fruit that grows into new life in others. Only by bearing witness to the salvation we have received in the Gospel by Christian testimony can we ever begin to understand what the Gospel is. How do I know that? Because the Spirit will give to us in that moment the words that we are required to give, the words that will interpret our own Christian experience. I’ve never been surer that I am a Christian than when I have been witnessing to others. When I feel down as a Christian (and I guess we all feel down from time to time) I think about the way that God, by his grace, has used my witness to bring Christian experience into the lives of other people. Then I think, “I can’t be wrong, because just look at them!”

I do want to ask you a question: “Who did you expect to be won by your witness to Christ who wasn’t won?” I think that’s a powerful question and it’s a bit threatening. I know it threatened me.

If people did not have faith, Wesley urged them to “seek faith”. If people did not have assurance of salvation, it was not because assurance of salvation was not available. This message is still as relevant today. We “can know, we can feel our sins forgiven, blessed with this foretaste (antepast) of heaven.” I mean this in terms of the distinction that I have already made between Christian experience and emotion. The promises of the Scriptures, the inward work of the Holy Spirit, a love for God, a love for our neighbour, and others responding to Christ’s love through our work and witness: all these confirm that we are born from above by the Spirit of God and are saved in eternity. All those factors are contributing towards our assurance. If you want me to give them to you in order of importance, I’ve done it

The promises of the Scriptures

The inward work of the Holy Spirit

A love for God and our neighbour

Others responding to Christ’s love through our work and witness

I think they’re all important, but that the Scriptures are most important - but you would have expected me to say that anyway. “His Spirit answers to the blood And tells me I am born of God.”

Often it is implied that absence of assurance is to do with absence of salvation. I don't accept that. I don't accept that because you may not *feel* terribly saved that you are *unsaved*. But I do believe that absence of real Biblical assurance is often to do with absence of surrender. Assurance is not an experience that we can create within ourselves: it is God's gift of grace. You might say it is an experience that needs to be prayed down. Many modern Christians want to drift along in a quiet acquiescence with sin – or, worse still, as I described it the other day, “flirting with” or “courting” sin from Mondays to Saturdays. The scenario that I'm painting is of living a life where we court sin and flirt with it from Monday to Saturday, yet on Sunday hoping to receive a massive seven-days'-worth dose of assurance that will allow us to carry on courting sin and flirting with it in the week that lies ahead - only to come intact next Sunday for another weekly dose of assurance. I'm sorry, but it doesn't work like that.

We are often looking for the approval of the world and the world will never applaud godliness. You'd better be worried when the world starts applauding you, because whatever it's applauding it certainly won't be godliness! If we look only for God's approval then assurance will surely follow.

ALL NEED TO BE SAVED

ALL CAN BE SAVED

ALL CAN KNOW THEY ARE SAVED

ALL CAN BE SAVED TO THE UTTERMOST

The writer to the Hebrews says:

“Therefore he (Jesus) is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”

This and similar verses form the basis for the fourth statement:

IV. ALL CAN BE SAVED TO THE UTTERMOST

Wesley maintained that it was insufficient to proclaim the bare message of salvation alone. We have to say that in our Methodist Churches, Sunday by Sunday, we are doing cartwheels down the aisle when, in our opinion, the bare message of salvation is preached at all! Wesley maintained that it was necessary to stress the life of holiness that would result from salvation. Clearly, there is a link between what Christ has done for men and women on the cross and what he does in their lives through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is necessary to be born (more precisely, 'begotten') of the Spirit to be saved. Sometimes we call that spiritual regeneration. The Holy Spirit working in the believer gives new life.

Paul describes how the new life (what he calls the 'life of the Spirit') and the sinful human nature (what is called in the Authorised Version, and successive versions to that, the 'life of the flesh') co-exist within the believer. He tells the Galatians (5:16-17):

“Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other.”

Wesley taught that repentance must be followed by growth in grace and holiness. If you have what we now call the ‘Old’ Methodist Hymn Book (the one that dates from 1933) you’ll notice that in the structure of the hymn book (the way that it’s set out) that the Christian experience is followed. First are the Holy Scriptures, then the Gospel call, then repentance and forgiveness, faith and regeneration and then come other sections, including ‘growth in grace and holiness’. You can use that as “a little body of practical and experimental divinity”, if you want to follow this through in your own devotions. I hope you use your Methodist Hymn Book or your Hymns & Psalms in your own prayers at home. Don’t worry about the hymns that weren’t written by Charles Wesley - just read his and that will be alright! That’ll save you wondering where to begin.

To be holy is to show the nature and love of God in our lives. It is the family characteristic, to show the nature and love of God in our lives, to be holy. Holiness and entire sanctification sound a bit clinical - it sounds “a bit hospital” to me, the “entire sanctification room.” It sounds abstract, and that is why Wesley often preferred the term ‘perfect love’ because he said “that’s more experiential” (though he was inconsistent, he said he often preferred this term and then used other terms as well!). Perfect love is to do with experience rather than theory. Holiness and sanctification have the feel of ‘theory’ about them. As someone has said, (and I think I half buy into this) “it doesn’t really matter whether there is a second Christian experience of holiness or not, provided you keep on seeking it.” I think it probably does matter, but I know what he’s saying: just head for it, and if you get there ‘Hallelujah’, and if you don’t you’re on the right road.

What is perfect love all about? Contrary to what some think, Wesley never believed that sinless or absolute, infallible perfection was possible. He *did* believe that it was possible to be saved from all known sin, to be free from sin (that is to be able to overcome temptation to known sin) and to love God with an undivided heart. It is those three things which he meant by salvation to the uttermost.

To be saved from all known sin

To be free from sin in the sense that it was possible to overcome temptation to known sin

To love God with an undivided heart

In effect, this is two-stage salvation

(a) Justification and Partial Sanctification

(b) Entire Sanctification - Perfect Love

This caused Sangster to write in his "Path to Perfection"

"There is an experience of God the Holy Spirit available for all who will seek it with importunity, which imparts spiritual power far above the level enjoyed by the average Christian, which inspires a caring God-like love different in kind and degree from the affections of normal nature, which communicates to the eager soul the penetrating power of holiness."

It is commonly held (I think by our friends in other Christian denominations, and probably by Methodists who are unaware of these things) that victory over sin comes when a believer dies, but Wesley would never accept that physical death was necessary for the sinless life. If so, he said, death has become a partial Saviour, rather than our Lord Jesus alone. If we need to die in order to cease from sin, what was insufficient about the work of Jesus on the cross? That is Wesley's theory in "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection". He asks the question, "Were not faith and obedience sufficient?" Faith and obedience to appropriate all the merits of what Christ has done for us, of course - not just by trying hard. Perfect love for God and neighbour (fellow-man in the old language) and victory over conscious sin can be known in this life. In fact, Wesley felt that it was not so much a matter of being cleansed from sin but filled with love. In other words, it is like having something in a bucket that is less dense than what you are pouring in. As you pour in love, so that which is less dense is displaced. You're pouring love in, so sin is forced out. Again, in the words of Sangster:

"It is indwelling love, banishing all conscious sin, received by faith in an instant, and maintained from moment to moment by humble dependence on God. It is aware of itself, attainable in this life, and yet ascetically detached from the normal life of men."

Holiness and love are the essence of the nature of God. I don't think that will fall out with me when I say that. God commands us to be both holy and loving. Modern thought is inclined to separate the two. We must not allow that. You cannot have love of the nature of God (call it divine-like love, or divine love or godly love) and holiness separately. You cannot be holy without being loving. You cannot be loving without being holy.

Holiness and love are not negatives. Holiness is not a long list of things that we don't do. That might be 'holy Joe' but it isn't holiness. Holiness and love are positives. Their working in our lives is the family nature of God enabling us to live like Jesus and we don't achieve it by trying hard. In fact, in a sense we don't achieve it at all. We receive - rather than achieve - holiness and love, just as we received justification. Justification (being made right with God) is a gift of God's grace received by faith. Perfect love (holiness) is the gift of God's grace received by faith. I want to say that a gradual work of grace precedes both. We became Christians and received God's grace in an instant - but there was a lot of the working of God's grace that preceded that instant. I think one is made perfect in love in an instant, but that doesn't deny that there is a lot of the working of God's grace before that instant. Whether we know the moment or not is not important. What is important is to live in the experience and blessing of it, moment by moment. I don't know the exact moment (though I have a guess) of the time that I became a Christian, that I was justified, that I was born anew from above by the power of the Holy Spirit. Some of you are even vaguer about your experience than I am about mine, and that doesn't matter, because you're living in the sense of that moment by moment. If you have lost your birth

certificate and do not know the day on which you were born (and certainly not the time), or if you were born in the Amazonian jungle and you never knew at all, it doesn't matter - because you're very much alive now. I think that's how it is in the Christian experience: don't worry about whether you know when you were born, but be alive now! I think perfect love is the same - a gradual work of grace preceding it, yet it is ours in an instant.

In justification, the righteousness of Christ is imputed. That is, the righteousness of Jesus is counted as ours. If you are in doubt and a Methodist: don't quote the Bible, quote a hymn! (It's a bad habit really - but at least Wesley's hymns are very Scriptural!) "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness / My beauty are, my glorious dress;"

In justification, the robes of Jesus are counted ours. We are dressed in his robes; he is dressed in our filthy rags. In perfect love the righteousness of Christ is imparted: that is, we are transformed and renewed to be like him. In this we put no limits on the grace of God.

Only the grace of God perfect love: It is not achieved outwardly by abstention and it is not achieved outwardly by segregation. We know Christian people who practise segregation. On the one hand, there are people who imply that the only way to be holy is to live a monastic life, be on permanent retreat or be a hermit - to lock yourself away in a cell (padded or otherwise!) and pray. On the other hand, the exclusive wing of the Plymouth Brethren and those of similar views, teach that (for example) having your lunch with someone who is not a Christian taints you. That's segregation. We don't believe that perfect love is achieved by abstention or segregation because we see perfect love and holiness practised in Jesus: it was the Pharisees who said disparagingly of him, "you're going to lunch with sinners are you?" If you want a good dose of Pharisaism you know where to find it, but I hope we don't find it in Methodism.

We find perfect love inwardly by the gravitational pull of Christ's love. The closer you get to the source of gravity, the stronger the pull of the gravitational force is upon you. It seems to me, therefore, that the closer we get to Jesus, the more strongly he is pulling us towards him. Arguments have centred around three theories of sanctification

- (i) Eradication (extinction) - rooting out the evil principle
- (ii) Suppression (suspension) - crucifying the old nature
- (iii) Counteraction - rendering the old nature helpless

To which of these did John Wesley subscribe? In a vague kind of way, to all three, but I think generally to the first - eradication. "Thou wilt the root remove, And perfect me in love."

"Jesus, the first and last" is the hymn from which that comes.

"Thou wilt the root remove, and perfect me in love" is eradication. The problem is that it views sin like a rotten tooth: just pull it out and all is well. But life doesn't always seem to be like that. Whatever the theoretical problems, we must not let them extinguish the practical desire. That is,

if you are struggling now between eradication, suppression and counteraction, don't let that hinder you from heading on the path to holiness.

What steps must we take? Let's learn something from the pattern of justification (being made right with God), which is something like this: response to the grace of God in repentance; faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for remission of sin; expressing the new life in baptism of water or reaffirming what had been hoped for when we were baptised; knowing the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I think that the pattern consists of those four, and normally in that order.

The pattern of sanctification therefore begins with response to the grace of God in repentance. You say, 'I did that before'. Yes, you did, but you never prayed - "Show me as my soul can bear the depth of inbred sin." You didn't pray it because you didn't want to pray it, or to know about praying it - and you don't pray it now because you still don't want to. "Show me as my soul can bear the depth of inbred sin" - in other words it is response to the grace of God in repentance, a new and fuller surrender.

Secondly, there comes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for freedom from sin. You say again, 'I did that before'. Yes, but you didn't pray: "O that I now, from sin released, Thy word may to the utmost prove, Enter into the promised rest, The Canaan of thy perfect love!"

Clearly we are not praying that we are going to die. We are praying that we go to the Promised Land in the here and now: what someone has rendered 'not pie in the sky when you die, but steak on the plate while you wait'.

The third stage in my pattern of justification was the baptism of water, or reaffirming what had been hoped for when we were baptised. The third stage here is similar. The baptism of fire. "Come, and baptise me now with fire, Nor let thy former gifts be vain:"

John the Baptist said:

"I baptise you with water. But one more powerful than I will come ... He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

This "baptism of fire" may perhaps be distinguished from what is popularly called baptism of the Holy Spirit. I don't wish to be negative about any spiritual experience. For what people call 'baptism in the Spirit', I would prefer to use some other word, perhaps 'the blessing' of the Holy Spirit. I don't want to be misunderstood - I'm not knocking anybody's charismatic or Pentecostal experience, providing that they don't call it 'the baptism in fire'. It is a matter of knowing the presence of the Holy Spirit, not as a visitor with limited access, not as a house-guest who is received but restricted - but as owner.

We have all kinds of different people in our home. We have some who are visitors: we show them into the lounge, and if they come out of the lounge we think them rude. We have people as house guests who pretty well get the run of the house, and even the visitors' bedroom, but not our bedroom or the children's bedrooms. But when you are the owner, you get the run of the whole house. Nobody's going to turn around in my house and say "You shouldn't be in here" -

that's not the way it works. It is knowing the presence of the Holy Spirit - not as a visitor, or as a house-guest, but as someone who has taken up permanent residence as the owner.

Some people are making holiness a self-centred experience or desire, looking in on themselves. Holiness is 'what God is going to do for me in my Christian experience and how God is going to bless me'. Personal holiness must not exclude social holiness: watching over one another in love. Faith expresses itself in love.

The supreme example of love is the cross. If we are to be the body of Christ in the world, we must be faithful to what he did. We take the incarnation seriously. We take 'being there in person' seriously. We take sharing the sufferings of those who are loved seriously. It is very easy to salve our consciences by raising and giving money (and there is worth in that) - but the people we recognise as holy and loving people in the history of the Church have not been content with raising money. They have insisted on but being there in person. Being the body of Christ means being there in person, experiencing everything not from afar but first-hand, open to pain, vulnerability, and the injustice of the world. In other words, I don't want you to see holiness as a self-centred, closeted, religious experience that doesn't break out into the world.

In Jesus we see holiness and perfect love in action. In his ministry, we Jesus proclaiming the Kingdom of God in word and deed; preaching and teaching; feeding the hungry; healing the sick; touching the untouchable; befriending the friendless; confronting sin and obeying, acknowledging and honouring God the Father - even when it meant betrayal, suffering, rejection, the cross. Jesus did it all. We must avoid being mere do-gooders - people who talk about holiness in a pious way on a Sunday but are not involved with people in their needs and wants and situations on a Monday. Christian faith is about glorifying God - not improving our social standing or reputation. It is whole salvation, not soul salvation. Some will say, 'I'm for evangelism' and others will say, 'I'm for practical caring' - but faith that fails to acknowledge the wholeness of the individual is not right. Holiness and perfect love spill out. They work out in daily life. People start to take notice when they see something different about us. We need to be people whose lives demand an explanation, where people continually come up to us and say: "Excuse me, but what is different about you? You know, I've been watching you for a day (a week, a year) and I just need to know: what is it? Please tell me. Sangster concludes:

"Many Christians live at a sub-Christian level. There is not enough difference between the people inside the Church and those outside to be impressive. In the Church's multitude of needs the need for holiness out-tops all the rest."

In the modern Church, many members lack any sense of goal. Membership of the body of Christ is just membership. They do not say with bated breath:

'He wills that I should holy be'

Wesley did not care to describe the gift of perfect love as 'reception of the Holy Spirit' because he believed that the Holy Spirit was given when a man first believed, and entire sanctification he regarded as a subsequent blessing."

With that Sangster concludes - and with this I conclude: Are we not missing the lovely lives of compelling Christ-likeness? In other words, what the world and the Church needs are not more high powered salesmen of the Gospel but more free samples. Is it a coincidence that we are so short of the Christ-like Christian in an age where we have neglected teaching about it? When the teaching of holiness and perfect love is restored, the magnetism of Christ is the hallmark of the Church. Don't worry too much about what I call the niceties of the theology of holiness. God is not a bureaucrat - you do not have to get the paperwork right before he blesses you.

To sum up the "Four Alls" in just a few paragraphs: Unbelief, disobedience and sin have entered the world. Men and women are caught in the vortex of evil, sin and guilt, the ensnaring power of sin and death, and deserve only condemnation in the righteous judgment of God. ALL NEED TO BE SAVED.

Christ, in obedience and faithfulness to God the Father, has entered the world, has broken the web of evil, has defeated and overcome the power of sin, has triumphed over death and is able to present his people before the Father so that they may be forgiven through their faith and trust in him. ALL CAN BE SAVED.

The believer receives a new life. It begins with spiritual regeneration. The believer is born anew, from above, by the Spirit of God. A new life confirmed by the testimony of the Bible, by the inward witness of the Spirit by a new love for God and a new love for our neighbour giving the believer assurance of salvation. ALL CAN KNOW THEY ARE SAVED.

There is no limit to what God can do. The believer is not called to be saved only in the sense of being justified (counted as right before God). The believer is called to be holy (a "partaker of the divine nature"). This is not something abstract, but something practical: to love God and our neighbour with undivided hearts; to love as Christ loved in the world, to face suffering and rejection that he suffered, so that in the practical outworking of Christian faith it may be an earthly sign of the heavenly possibility. ALL CAN BE SAVED TO THE UTTERMOST.

Now the very last sentence: We should not now fall back into quietism, or to the error which says: "Let go and let God" (the great mistake of some holiness teaching), or any other misleading spirituality that may be the fashion of the day. What we must do with regard to these four statements is this: TRUST GOD AND GET GOING!

At the end of these addresses we sang the following hymn, and I encourage all of you to learn the tune "Bickley" and include it in your public worship and private devotions (HP 291/MHB 280).

"I want the Spirit of power within
Of love, and of a healthful mind:
Of power, to conquer inbred sin;
Of love, to thee and all mankind;
Of health, that pain and death defies,
Most vigorous when the body dies.

When shall I hear the inward voice

Which only faithful souls can hear?
Pardon, and peace, and heavenly joys
Attend the promised Comforter:
O come, and righteousness divine,
And Christ, and all with Christ, are mine!

O that the Comforter would come,
Nor visit as a transient guest,
But fix in me his constant home,
And take possession of my breast,
And fix in me his loved abode,
The temple of indwelling God!

Come, Holy Ghost, my heart inspire,
Attest that I am born again!
Come, and baptize me now with fire,
Nor let thy former gifts be vain;
I cannot rest in sins forgiven
Where is the earnest of my heaven?

Where the indubitable seal
That ascertains the kingdom mine,
The powerful stamp I long to feel,
The signature of love divine?
O shed it in my heart abroad
Fullness of love, of heaven, of God!"