

APPENDIX

CONVENTION ON ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION*

"Minutes of the Convention"

Following upon a previous call, a meeting of those interested in the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life was held at Rochester, New York, on the sixth, seventh, and eighth of July, 1841, for the purpose of prayer and consultation in reference to this great subject. The Convention was opened by a sermon from President Mahan on the text, "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honorable," (Isaiah 42:21). After a season of prayer, the Convention was organized by the appointment of Rev. A. Sedgwick President, and Rev. H. Lyman, Rev. J. W. Fox, and Rev. L. P. Judson, Secretaries, and a business committee.

The committee made a report which was amended to the following resolution: "That entire sanctification in this life is attainable, in such a sense as to be an object of pursuit with a rational expectation of attaining it." This resolution was fully discussed, and unanimously adopted on the third day of the Convention.

The business committee reported further, and recommended the appointment of a committee to draft a "Declaration of Sentiments," and also a committee to draft a "Circular" to the friends of Zion. After a recess, the committee on the "Declaration of Sentiments" reported. The report was accepted, and the "Declaration," on examination at length, was adopted on the third day and may be found below.

*These "Minutes of the Convention" were written for *The Oberlin Evangelist* and published in the August 4, 1841, edition. Included and published with the "Minutes" were the "Postscript to the Minutes of the Convention, by a member," the "Declaration of Sentiments," and the "Circular." The "Declaration" is an excellent summary of the views Finney approved and presents in *Principles of Sanctification*.

In the afternoon of the same day, the committee on the "Circular" reported. Their report was adopted, and may also be found below.

The business committee made a further report recommending the formation of a Society, or the appointment of a committee, to prepare and circulate tracts on the subject of entire sanctification. After discussion, it was resolved to appoint a Committee to write, revise, publish, and circulate tracts in illustration and defense of the doctrine of the entire sanctification of believers in this life. Henry Cowles, C. G. Finney, John Morgan, J. J. Shipherd, and H. C. Taylor, were appointed as said committee.

A subscription was taken up to defray the expense of publishing the minutes of the convention and in aid of the tract cause. Brother Courtland Avery of Rochester, New York, was appointed an agent to receive funds for the tract cause.

A considerable portion of each sitting was spent in prayer, and these seasons were of the deepest interest. The following resolutions were separately offered, discussed, and unanimously adopted:

1. That we recommend to the friends of Zion, who sympathize with us in views on the subject of entire sanctification of believers in this life, to remember the cause in their closets, and constantly to pray for the baptism of the Spirit to rest upon all, *friends and opponents*.
2. That we recommend our friends to use all suitable means to secure the reading of publications on this subject.
3. That we also recommend to our friends to hold meetings for mutual consultation and prayer, to secure the cultivation of holiness in their own hearts, and to disseminate the truth in the community.
4. That a standing committee be appointed to confer together on the general interests of the cause of Christian holiness, and that they be empowered to call conventions whenever and wherever the interests of the truth shall in their opinion demand it. The committee members are:

Prof. Upham, of Brunswick, Me.
 Alexander N. Dougherty, Newark, N.J.
 Fayette Shipherd, Troy, N.Y.
 A. Sedgwick, Ogden, N.Y.
 M. Tooker, Rochester, N.Y.
 J.J. Shipherd, Oberlin, Ohio

The thanks of the Convention were tendered to the Church (the First Methodist Church) whose house they had occupied, and to the citizens, whose hospitality they had enjoyed. The convention then engaged in a most soul subduing and heart melting season of prayer and adjourned.

A. Sedgwick, Pres.

H. Lyman,
 J.W. Fox,
 L.P. Judson, Secretaries

Postscript to the Minutes of the Convention

by a Member

1. The members of the Convention were mostly from the counties of Western New York.
2. Nearly a hundred enrolled their names, and from two to three hundred were usually in attendance.
3. The meetings were all characterized by the spirit of kindness and brotherly love.
4. The votes were all understood to be unanimous.
- * 5. Antinomian perfectionists, finding in the progress of the discussions that they were not of the Convention, withdrew.
6. Strong prejudices gave place to gratuitous acknowledgments that God was in the Convention of a truth.
7. Frequent seasons of prayer, praise, and conference, which intervened the business sessions, were of a sweetly hallowing character.
8. Sermons by Prof. Finney and Pres. Mahan on the Sabbath preceding and the one succeeding the Convention, and during the intervening week, appeared to be greatly profitable to many of the multitudes who heard them.
9. The closing scene was one of humble, hearty, solemn, joyous consecration to God, rarely witnessed on earth. It was indeed good to be there; for all present who knew God could not but feel, "Surely, God is in this place."
10. The little ones of the Lord returned to their places, comforted and baptized anew for His holy work, and the city left seemed to be a measure in which the leaven of truth was deposited so as to leaven the whole lump.

To God be all the praise!

Declaration of Sentiments

On the subject of entire sanctification or consecration to God.

Adopted by the Convention of ministers and others recently held at Rochester.

I. What we understand to be points of agreement between the ministers and members of a great portion of the Christian Church.

1. We agree that entire obedience to the moral law constitutes entire sanctification or obedience to God.

2. We agree that all moral agents are able to render this obedience.

3. We agree that because all moral agents are able to render this obedience, therefore they are bound to do so.

4. We agree therefore that a state of entire sanctification is attainable in this life.

* A BELIEVER IN THE DOCTRINE THAT FAITH ALONE,
NOT OBEDIENCE TO THE MORAL LAW, IS NECESSARY
FOR SALVATION (WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD DICTIONARY)

- a. On the ground of ability.
- b. On the ground of the provisions and proffered grace of the Gospel.
- c. That sufficient grace for the actual attainment of this state is abundantly promised in the gospel, and that nothing prevents any Christian from making this attainment in this life but a neglect to avail himself of the proffered grace of Christ.

5. We agree that all are bound to aim at, and pray for, this attainment in this life, and that aiming at this state is indispensable to Christian character.

II. In what we differ.

1. The advocates of this doctrine affirm that obedience to the moral law or a state of entire consecration to God in this life is in such a sense attainable as to be an object of rational pursuit with the *expectation of attaining it*.

2. The opposers of this doctrine affirm,

- a. That this state *may* be attained in this life.
- b. That therefore it ought to be attained.
- c. That we are bound to aim at, and pray for, this attainment in this life.

d. That this state is not attainable in this life in such a sense as to make its attainment an object of rational pursuit, *with the expectation of attaining it*.

e. That it is fatal not to aim at, and pray for, this attainment in this life.

f. But that it is a dangerous error to believe or expect that we shall make this attainment.

III. What the believers in the doctrine of entire consecration to God in this life do not believe.

1. We do not believe that the moral law is or ever can be repealed, or so modified in its claims as to demand any thing less of any moral agent than the entire, universal and constant devotion of his whole being to God.

2. We do not believe that any such state is attainable in this or any other life as to preclude the possibility and necessity of constant growth in holiness.

3. Nor do we believe that any state is attainable in this life that will put the soul beyond a state of warfare with temptation.

4. We do not believe that any such state is attainable in this life as will preclude the necessity of constant dependence upon the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the agency and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

5. We do not believe that any such state is attainable in this life as to preclude the necessity of much watchfulness and prayer, together with the diligent use of the ordinances of God's house, and of all the appointed means of grace, to perpetuate holiness of heart.

6. We do not believe in any system of quietism [religious mysticism], Antinomianism, or inaction in religion.

7. We do not regard the true question at issue between us to be, whether a state of entire sanctification has ever been attained in this life; but the true question is that which has been stated above, that is: *is this state attainable in such a sense as to render its pursuit, with the expectation of attaining it, rational.*

8. Those of us who have affirmed that this state has been attained, have ever regarded the fact of its attainment only in the light of an argument in proof of its attainability *in the sense above explained.*

9. We have never regarded the proof of actual attainment, either as the great question at issue, or as an argument at all indispensable to the support of the proposition in question.

a. We consider the Bible proof as conclusive in support of the doctrine, without touching the question of actual attainment.

b. If it should be admitted that such a state has never been attained, still we believe the Bible warrants and demands the belief that the Church is destined to make vastly higher attainments on earth than have ever yet been made.

c. If the fact (should it be admitted) that no one has ever attained this state proves that no one ever will attain it; the fact that the world has never been converted, proves equally that it never will be converted.

10. We therefore waive an expression of opinion on the question whether this state has been hitherto attained, lest it should afford an occasion, as it has hitherto done, to divert attention from the great and only fundamental point in debate.

Circular

To all who love our Lord . . . especially to those who are looking to Jesus for present salvation from sin, and the complete redemption of Zion.

We are now constrained by the love of Christ to address you. Having "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," we speak to you not in behalf of any sect, but in the name of that Head, "whose body the Church is, and of whom we all are members in particular." The truth has made us happily free from desire to proselyte you to any party, and filled us with holy longings to win you entirely and forever to Him, that He may be glorified, the Church blessed, and the world saved through your full redemption.

As sinners saved by grace, we invite you to meet us at the feet of our Divine Teacher (Bible in hand and heart), and hear us about the "great salvation."

That this salvation is great, as the way of escape from the curse of

the law, all Christians admit. That salvation from the *penalty* cannot be secured without salvation from the *transgression* of the law is a truth so palpable that it is admitted even by those who preach that all men will be saved. *Present* salvation from sin, the true Church of God has desired most ardently; but not regarding it as attainable, has sunk down desponding, beneath the weeping willows, along the streams of her captivity, instead of uttering the "new song" which deliverance would inspire. But the Bridegroom says, "Daughter of Zion, awake from thy sadness. The Comforter is revealing to His begotten ones the secret of redemption." What this gospel is, as we hold it, you may see in the above *Declaration of Sentiments* of this convention; the substance of which is briefly this:

"Obedience to the moral law, or a state of entire consecration to God in this life, is in such a sense attainable as to be an object of rational pursuit, with the *expectation of attaining it*."

To argue this proposition does not come within the scope or design of this short epistle. We can only present it as a part of divine revelation to be embraced by simple faith. But, brethren, "if you will do His will, you shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Therefore, in the simplicity of faith, take a few specimens of these glad tidings to us sinners: "He shall save His people *from* their sins." "Who gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world." "Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." "He is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him." "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it"; that is, will "*sanctify you wholly*, in body, soul, and spirit, and *preserve you blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*."

Do you ask, "If Jesus came to bring present salvation from sin, why are not the promises fulfilled in the Church?" We answer, "When the Son of Man has come, He has not found faith on the earth. He has not done many *mighty works* in us, because of our unbelief." We have not attained this great salvation, because "we have sought it by works of the law, and not by faith" (see Romans 9:30-33). In view of such murderous unbelief, we are deeply humbled, grieved, and broken-hearted; and greatly marvel that we should so long have "stumbled at that stumblingstone."

And now, beloved, let us, in much tenderness and strength of love to you as fellow members in our precious Savior, ask you these questions. Why have you departed from Him through an evil heart of unbelief? Why have you "gone astray like lost sheep?" Why have you left the "green pastures and still waters" and "wandered from mountain to hill forgetting your resting place?" Why do you say, "We are delivered to do all these abominations" of unbelief? Jesus "gave himself to

deliver you from *this present evil world*"; and we know that He does deliver. "You have forsaken the Lord and He has forsaken you; but if you seek Him He will be found of you." "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord." "Look to Jesus," and He will "heal you of your backslidings, and love you freely." "Though you be dead, if you believe in Him you shall live; and if you believe in Him while you live you shall never die." Christ is the true and living way, of present, permanent, perfect righteousness and peace. Look to Him in faith, and He will lead you therein. We are exceedingly grieved at our former unbelief; but now, through grace, we have great and permanent peace in believing. Dear blood-bought ones, allow us, in kind fidelity to say, we are exceedingly grieved with your unbelief; and were there opportunity, we would fill our mouths with gospel arguments, and urge them with our tears upon your wandering hearts: but we must close our expostulations, beseeching you, by all that is pure and precious in your interests and Zion's, and in those of a perishing world; and in the glory of God our Savior, that you will now heed His soul-subduing entreaty, "Turn, O backsliding children, for I am *married* unto you!"

To you, beloved, who are looking to Jesus for present and permanent sanctification from all sin, we say the following. Settle down at once upon the "exceeding great and precious promises," resting assured that "by these you shall become partakers of the divine nature." Wander not in the wilderness of sin, provoking God by your unbelief, but come straight up to the promised land by simple faith. The substance of this promise is expressed in many other "exceeding great and precious promises." See especially Ezekiel 36:25-37 and Jeremiah 31:31-34 in this context. But references need not be multiplied here. Only receive one of these, "nothing doubting," and you shall be made whole. Do you still feel that you are too weak and simple to fulfill all righteousness? Believe Romans 8:1-4; here it is plain that God in His wondrous grace has made full provision for our weakness and the fulfillment of the righteousness of the law in us; and the context shows that this grace in Christ Jesus is for us even while in the weakness of our bodily state. And forget not that as you obtain righteousness unto justification, not by "works of the law," but by *simple faith*, so are you to obtain righteousness unto sanctification by faith only: that faith which always *works* to the fulfillment of the law. This faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is connected with the deepest repentance toward God. Christ cannot be thus put on, unless *self* be utterly put off.

Another momentous thought is this: "Yet a *little while* the light is with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." That is, unhesitatingly pursue the way of this "great salvation," as fast as it is made known to you by the Holy Spirit.

Having thus obtained your freedom, by faith in Jesus Christ—by faith maintain it. "As ye have received Christ, so walk ye in Him."

"The life which you now live in the flesh, live by the faith of the Son of God." "*Abide* in Him, and you will not sin." That you may be always, and more and more like Him—look to Him *constantly*. View Him *much* in the glass of His *Word*. *Meditate* much upon His character and life. Draw near to Him in *ceaseless prayer*. Study Him in the memoirs of His saints, as given in the Bible, and the biographies of the holy, connected with different denominations: especially such as Payson near the close of his life, James Brainerd Taylor, Carvosso, Bramwell, Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers, and Mrs. President Jonathan Edwards. Ponder well the living testimonies of those who declare what God has done for their souls. Associate with the spiritual of all classes for the study of the "glorious gospel," conversation and prayer. "Watch unto prayer" always remembering that however "willing the spirit, the flesh is weak." And finally, "wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart. Wait, we say, upon the Lord." Wait *constantly* on the Lord, and you shall *renew* your strength—yea, you "shall mount up on wings as eagles."

Having the witness of the Spirit and the truth that your fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, declare these things to others that they may have fellowship with us; and meekly, charitably, zealously labor to make all men know what is the fellowship of the mystery of free, full, present, and permanent salvation by Jesus Christ, according to His "glorious gospel." Beware that you do not proclaim *your own* goodness, or indulge a thought of it, or even seem to do it. God dwelleth only with the humble and contrite in heart. "Speak evil of no man." If you sympathize with Christ, you cannot but "sigh and cry for the abominations" of unbelief which prevail even in the Church. But avoid a censorious and denunciatory spirit more than you would avoid death. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly . . . is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Leave not the communion of our Lord's Table, nor in any way make light of the ordinances of His house. Give the right hand of fellowship to all who love our Lord, whatever be their church relations or circumstances. We say not—fellowship error; but fellowship Christianity in whomsoever you find it. Ask none to come over to your church or society, but ask all to meet you in Jesus, and by faith sink with you by baptism into His death, that we all may be one according to His prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John. As a final caution, let us say: beware that you do not "hold the truth in *unrighteousness*." We ask you not to profess this faith, unless by grace you practice it. God calls not for witnesses in word, unless they are themselves "living epistles, known and read of all men."

Finally, beloved, we pray "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of

whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Notice

The following notice of the convention at Rochester is from the *American Citizen*, an excellent miscellaneous and anti-slavery paper published in that city. It is valuable testimony from a man who cannot be accused of prejudice. It is worthy of remark that none of the editors of the religious periodicals, so far as we know, have informed their readers that such a convention was held. Indeed this notice is the only one we have seen in any paper.

"THE RECENT CONVENTION.—A *Declaration of Sentiments* from this body will be seen in another place. With theological squabbles, our columns intermeddle not. Facts and occurrences the public, however, wish to be fully apprised of. We were occasionally in the convention, as far as our engagements would permit. There seemed to be the most delightful spirit pervading all its movements. A very full and frank explanation and comparison of views took place. We make no doubt, strong prejudices were vanquished, and that great good was done.

"Two evenings during the session of the convention, Mr. Finney preached in the large Methodist house to large audiences; and again last Sabbath he preached at the same place, morning and evening, to not less than two thousand people. What an admirable God-furnished man, he is! Each discourse contains within itself the germ of an entire system of practical, gospel morality. Commonsense gives a ready assent to each successive proposition. Conscience responds a willing verdict to every appeal. God's revealed truth sustains and enforces the whole. Time fails us: enough for the present."—*Citizen*.