

IN QUEST OF A HOLINESS ETHIC

A HISTORY OF ETHICS IN THE
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
THE FIRST 75 YEARS

BY

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Foreword

It has been said that the publishers' version of a doctoral dissertation is "the transfer of bones from one graveyard to another." Hence it is a rare event when such a document is published. Another pundit has noted that a Ph.D. student should choose a subject for his or her dissertation to which he\she is passionately committed since when the project is finished; it will be hated with a passion.

My own dissertation research had exactly the opposite result. It was a penultimate culmination of a career long interest in Christian ethics. I was fortunate in the fact that my academic advisors at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, specifically Dr. James Laney, suggested that I choose a topic that might make a contribution to my own theological tradition and church rather than some esoteric theological topic that would have little relation to the practical life of the community of faith. The outcome was exactly the opposite of the somewhat jaundiced view expressed above. Rather than having a negative reaction to the intensive research project involved, at its completion I was even more excited about it. When I retired from active teaching in 1995 I did some further research to at least sketchily bring the work up to date and submitted it for potential publication to my denominational publishing agency. I had only recently been retired from the committee that made judgments about such proposals, so I felt free to do so. The committee decided it would be best not to publish it for the reason that it contained information about the denomination they did not want the church to know about itself. The readers can make their own judgment about this.

While several years have passed since the work was completed (1969), as noted I have attempted to include developments since that time to conform to the proposed subtitle. Although that passage of time might indicate the material to be dated, it is a history. It is a history that will provide the church with a self-understanding by knowing from whence it came. That history still exercises a fascinating influence on my work. I believe the early struggles of our holiness forebears are still instructive, and knowing their struggles to identify a holiness lifestyle and particularly a rationale for it (ethics) consistent with their doctrinal emphasis, remains a fascinating study.

INTRODUCTION

The Church of the Nazarene came into existence near the end of the nineteenth century for the purpose of conserving and spreading the doctrine and experience of "scriptural holiness." Along with several other smaller "holiness" denominations, it arose out of a wide-spread spiritual movement that flourished during the post-Civil War era. Since this revival was similar to the Wesleyan revival of the previous century, and the doctrinal emphasis had affinities with that of John Wesley, the Church felt that it was the heir of the Wesleyan heritage, even though many of its people were not originally members of the Methodist Church.¹

Since the official literature of the Church claims that its doctrinal position is true to primitive Wesleyanism, it becomes a relevant issue to raise the question as to whether or not this claim is justified. Consequently, a subsidiary purpose of this study is to demonstrate to what extent the denominational teaching either concurs with or deviates from Wesley's own position. This aim will be pursued, however, only within the context of the main question: that concerning ethics.

The basic formation of the Nazarene denomination was effected during the years 1895-1915. The main parent body was organized in 1895 in Los Angeles, California as the First Church of the Nazarene under the leadership of Phineas F. Bresee, and soon Churches of the Nazarene were scattered throughout the western United States. In the east, a loose relationship was formed between several congregations of like faith, which called itself the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America. These eastern and western groups united in 1907 at Chicago, Illinois, taking the name Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene.² The following year, the Holiness Church of Christ from

¹*Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* (1949), 13-21, hereinafter cited as *Manual*.

²The word "Pentecostal" was dropped in 1919 because it tended to associate the Church with similar groups that emphasized speaking in tongues. It has never had this connotation among members of the Nazarene denomination. Its widespread use came about because the American holiness movement, unlike Wesley, equated entire sanctification with the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and Pentecost was the epitome of this Baptism for them. Dropping the term from the

the south and southwest came into the new organization during the second General Assembly at Pilot Point, Texas. Thus 1908 was adopted as the official birthday of the Church. One other substantial group, the Pentecostal Mission centering in Nashville, Tennessee, came into the denomination in 1915. There were other small groups that united later but these four major organizations formed the main body of the Church.¹

These various bodies manifested in general four distinctive characteristics: First and foremost was a doctrinal and experiential emphasis upon entire sanctification as a second crisis experience available to the born-again believer through faith. It is this that has occupied the bulk of the Church's theological endeavors through the years, much of this work being apologetic in character. Second is a concern for the evangelism of the masses, particularly the poor. Third was a self-conscious freedom from formalism in worship although there was a consistent resistance to fanaticism, fear of the latter being one of the prominent reasons for ecclesiastical organization.² Fourth was an evident moral seriousness consequent upon the experience of entire sanctification, which these people professed to have received.

No claim is made for either historical or logical priorities in the above listing; rather they seem to be organically interrelated. However, it is the fourth item, which is the focus of this study. In the light of the denominational claims, noted above, the question now becomes: does the ethical understanding of the Nazarenes agree with that of the teacher whom they claim for their forefather in the faith?

It is quite difficult to arrive at any official statement of the Church's ethical understanding, and that for several reasons. Particularly on this point, the Church of the Nazarene is a heterogeneous group manifesting different views in different sections of the nation, and even from church to church in specific areas. The various groups that united to form it were quite diverse in character and despite a

name of the Church in no way reflected a change in doctrinal position. The officially stated reason, however, simply insisted that the name was too long.

¹Timothy L. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1969). This is the official history of the first 25 years of the denomination.

²*Ibid.*, 53, 126.

persistent drive toward centralization of authority; this diversity has not been entirely erased. Furthermore, the Church is more an experiential rather than a theological church and consequently has not been intensely concerned with formulating a theological rationale for its moral standards. Actually, it has been so preoccupied with advocating its central doctrine of entire sanctification as a realizable experience and insisting that its people lay claim to this experience, that minimal attention has been given to the Christian life. Even the traditional media for Christian nurture, for example the Sunday school, was largely considered a means of evangelism until more recent times. Another limitation is the strict understanding of the idea of "official statement." The only body that can make an official pronouncement for the whole Church is the quadrennial General Assembly¹ and the only document claiming official status is the *Manual*.² Thus, the *Manual* contains the only "official" ethical statement,³ and its statements merely specify certain modes of behavior. Consequently, it is most important in this study to keep in mind the distinction commonly made between "ethics" and "morals," such as is made in the following statement:

Morality now has to do with day-to-day actual conduct, human activity as it is guided and gauged by the most direct working rules of proper behavior When our living situations change, we may need a new morality, one that translates our old responsibility into fresh rules of thumb. Yet morality, because it has to do with practical matters of application and is so closely tied to accepted

¹*Manual* (1964), 4: ". . . the General Assembly, which meets every four years, is the one law-making body of the church."

²*Ibid.*, 3: "The . . . *Manual* is both a historic document and a handbook for ready reference in all matters pertaining to the church's life and service. It contains a brief history of our church, a summary of doctrine, standards of practical ethics, the outlines of our basic church policy, and detailed procedures of church government."

³*Ibid.*: "The ethical standards of our church are well expressed in the General and Special Rules. They should be followed carefully and conscientiously as guides and helps to holy living. Those who violate the conscience of the church do so at their own peril and to the hurt of the witness and fellowship of the church."

patterns of conduct, is of little use at the task of standing off and appraising the need for revision. Morality is adapted to holding us to a given course of conduct, to going on with offering concrete guidelines, the same ones that worked before. *Ethics*, on the other hand, is a more systematic and comprehensive study of human actions, their significance, and our changing situation. It is a careful, reflective effort at knowledge which asks the meaning of human conduct in its setting and measures our conduct by some fundamental criterion of excellence or of ultimate value—its relation to our *duty* (or responsibility), or its place in leading us to happiness (or blessedness), to take the two most familiar criteria . . .¹

In general, in the light of these distinctions, it may be said that the Church of the Nazarene has followed a self-conscious morality, but not a self-conscious ethic.² Therefore, the method forced upon us is to analyze the few official statements and the pronouncements of prominent leaders along with the denominational publications and extrapolate the general understanding of the Church, i.e. study its morals to attempt to construct its ethics. In the process, an attempt will be made to show the development of Nazarene ethical thinking both as it flows from the Church's doctrinal views³ and as it has evolved over the years.

A perusal of the literature reveals a rather clear-cut historical development in three stages. The first is the era prior to 1928, a period

¹James Sellers, *Theological Ethics* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1966), 4.

²This is not to say that there have not been Nazarene theologians who have written on ethics, but even here, there has been little self-conscious awareness of a theological base for ethics. The term "self-conscious" is employed because at times a clear ethical theory is utilized; but at the official level, at least, there is little awareness of a systematic rationale being applied to derive the particular injunctions.

³This part of the project grows out of the same presupposition expressed by James Sellers: "Christian ethics must contend as a primary challenge with the question of its theological ground and competence, *its origin in some expectation for the life and conduct of man under God distinctive in the Judaeo-Christian tradition*. It is the task of the systematic Christian ethicist, soon or late, to ferret out this expectation, to specify as a theological benchmark just what kind of critical standard of excellence the Christian faith furnishes for men." *Theological Ethics*, 32.

that may be called the formative days and ethically characterized as a period of law versus liberty. The second period extends from 1928 to 1948 and may be characterized as a period dominated by scriptural principles; and subsequent to 1948, there seems to be a sort of ethical inversion, perhaps a return legally to the pioneer morality without the accompanying reinforcements and rationale. The morals are here supported by a covert appeal to ecclesiastical authority. From 1976, apparently as a result of the denomination's attempt to self-consciously become an international church, a significant transition occurred in its attitude toward legislating "morals," a change that implicitly reflected a more self-conscious ethical view much like that of John Wesley.

CHAPTER 1

THE DOCTRINAL SOURCE OF NAZARENE ETHICS

Although the Church of the Nazarene professes to be perpetuating the Wesleyan heritage, its Wesleyanism was mediated to it through various American formulations. This doctrinal milieu had already been crystallized into certain specific dogmatic forms by the time the parent bodies of the Church came into being. This was particularly true with regard to the doctrine of sanctification, which was considered to be the significant doctrinal uniqueness of the Nazarene movement. That Wesley's own views had undergone some major modifications in the American situation has been abundantly demonstrated.¹

Wesley's Ethical Emphasis

John Wesley's doctrine of sanctification was through and through ethical. In fact, all his doctrinal work was primarily practical. Consequently, many of his interpreters argue that his greatest contribution was in the area of practical religion. They insist, as Frank John McNulty says, that "moral reformation was the essence of the Wesleyan crusade."² However, recent studies have shown great appreciation for his contribution to theology but even in discussing his theology, it is nevertheless widely acknowledged that "his single, sufficient motive in theologizing was to reinforce the spiritual and ethical concerns of his societies in particular and the Church in general."³

Wesley himself bears witness to this passion when, in a response to accusations by the Bishop of London, he appeals in defense to the ethical results of his labors, which no man should disparage:

¹John L. Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1956). Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1957), 114-115.

²Frank John McNulty, "The Moral Teaching of John Wesley" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1961), 53.

³Albert C. Outler, *John Wesley* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1964), 27.

What have been the consequences . . . of the doctrines I have preached for nine years last past? By the fruits shall ye know those of whom I speak; even the cloud of witnesses, who at this hour experience the gospel which I preach to be the power of God unto salvation. The habitual drunkard that was, is now temperate in all things; the whoremonger now flees fornication; he that stole, steals no more, but works with his hands; he that curses or swore perhaps at every sentence, has now learned to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with reverence; these formerly enslaved to various habits of sin are now brought to uniform habits of holiness.¹

Allen Lamar Cooper's statement that "the Wesleyan system of Christian ethics rests securely on the foundation of the theology of John Wesley" not only calls attention to the essentially practical concern of Wesley, but also points out the necessity to examine the theological basis of his ethical understanding.²

As the distinctively Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection was being formed in Wesley's mind, his consistent concern was to maintain ethical integrity. It was this concern that led him in the early years to his break with the Moravians whose quietism repelled him.³ Later on, this same aversion to antinomianism caused him to separate from the Calvinistic Methodists. In John Peters' words, "For Wesley,

¹John Wesley, *Works*, 14 vols. (K.C.: Nazarene Publishing House, photographic reproduction of the authorized edition of 1872), 8:494-495, hereinafter cited as *Works*.

²Allen Lamar Cooper, "John Wesley: A Study in Theological and Social Ethics," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1962), 28.

³The accounts of this disagreement are found in Wesley's *Journal* between Nov. 1, 1739 and Sept. 3, 1741. In stating the results of the Moravian *stillness*, i.e., ceasing from outward works until one had received perfect faith, he says: "Many who were beginning to build holiness and good works on the true foundation of faith in Jesus, being now wholly unsettled and lost in vain reasonings and doubtful disputations And many being grounded on a faith which is without works, so that they who were right before are wrong now . . ." (*The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, ed. by Nehemiah Curnock (London: Epworth Press, 1938), 2:331, hereinafter cited as *Journal*). Albert Outler says "at the heart of the conflict lay Wesley's genuine abhorrence . . . of any notion of Christian ethics that allows in the believer a passive attitude toward either the means of grace or the demand of the gospel for *actual righteousness*." *John Wesley*, 347.

Christian Perfection had been from the very first a concept intensely ethical in its stress."¹

Cooper is correct in seeing that for Wesley, "Christian perfection . . . was conceived as an inherent ethical change in man and the Christian life represented as a progressive development towards it."² It was on this particular point that Wesley saw himself as supplementing the Protestant Reformers, especially Martin Luther, going beyond their understanding to complete the work that they had only begun.

After having read Luther's Commentary on Galatians, Wesley reacted with strong feeling:

. . . he is quite shallow in his remarks on many passages, and muddy and confused almost, on all; . . . he is deeply tainted with mysticism throughout, and hence often dangerously (1st ed., "fundamentally") wrong . . . how blasphemously does he speak of good works and of the law of God--coupling the law with sin, death, hell, or the devil; and teaching that Christ delivers us from them all alike Here (I apprehend) is the real spring of the grand error of the Moravians. They follow Luther, for better, for worse.³

It was Luther's lack of stress upon sanctification that caused Wesley's great distress even though it was Luther whose writings had been influential in bringing Wesley to justification by faith both in experience and doctrine. In his sermon "On God's Vineyard", he comments:

Many who have spoken and written admirably well concerning justification, had no clear conception, nay, were totally ignorant, of the doctrine of sanctification. Who has wrote [sic] more ably than Martin Luther on justification by faith alone? And who was more ignorant of the doctrine of sanctification, or more confused in his conceptions of it⁴

¹Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 38.

²Cooper, *John Wesley*, 48.

³*Journal*, 2:467.

⁴*Works*, 7:204. This is a strong statement and recent studies have argued that it is a perversion of Luther. Cf. John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, *Protestant Christianity*

In his "Remarks on the Life and Character of John Wesley" appended to the 1847 edition of Southey's *Life of Wesley*, Alexander Knox, one of Wesley's contemporaries, bears clear testimony to the ethical aims of everything the first "Methodist" did. Although there may be some anomalies in Wesley's mind, "the ultimate object is uniformly pure and excellent; be the prescribed means of advancement what they may, the point aimed at is consummate virtue, in every temper and in every action." It is this character that sets his doctrines above those of Whitefield. "In fact," says Knox, "Mr. Wesley's practical principles had ever been such as to insure perfect moral consistency. From his first years of serious reflections, his standard of Christian virtue was pure and exalted." Knox further reinforces the view here proposed about Wesley's relation to the Protestant Reformers by pointing out that in adopting the doctrine of justification by faith from the Reformed tradition through Peter Bohler, Wesley cast it in his own mold, the formative concept being moral. "It will, in fact, be seen in all Mr. Wesley's statements on the subject, that it was the moral liberation on which he relied as the true criterion of the justified state."¹

Certain formulae may be used to illustrate the development from Catholicism through Luther to Wesley as adjustment is made between faith and love. For Roman Catholic theology, following Thomas Aquinas, the order of the Christian life may be characterized as "faith formed by love." Luther rejected this because it made sanctification (love) precede justification and replaced it with the formula, "faith formed by Christ." Wesley, however, with his ethical concerns took for his motto, "faith working through love" from Galatians 5:6.

This formula held together, he thought, his stress upon faith as the foundation of the Christian life and his strong insistence that love is the result of that life. Thus, as Albert Outler says:

It was of set purpose that he held the Revival to his own compounded premise of "salvation, faith and good works." This put

(N.Y.: Charles Scribners Sons, 1954), 35-42 and J.S. Whale, *The Protestant Tradition* (Cambridge: University Press, 1960), 92-102. But reading the sections of Luther's writings read by Wesley lends considerable credence to Wesley's accusation.

¹"Remarks on the Life and Character of John Wesley" by the late Alexander Knox, Esq. in Robert Southey, *The Life of Wesley* (N.Y.: Harper & Bros., 1847), 2:345.

him into tension with other viewpoints in which as it seemed to him, the essential integrity between evangelical faith and Christian ethics was split, one way or the other. Against all such disjunctions he asserted the reciprocal unity of belief and behavior.¹

Wesley's View of Sanctification

Because of this ethical interest, the doctrines of sanctification and Christian perfection stood at the center of Wesley's theological thought.² But his treatment of these concepts involved considerable ambiguity because, like the New Testament, he used the terms to refer to various aspects of the Christian life and experience. Lindstrom recognizes this variegated use of the terminology:

Sanctification itself is rarely presented in its full range. The conception is normally restricted. Sometimes it connotes Christian perfection only, no regard being had to the gradual development of sanctification, from its commencement in the New Birth. Sometimes, it is true, the latter is included, but then entire sanctification is minimized. In neither alternative, moreover, has the significance, for Wesley's total view of salvation, of the principle of entire sanctification, been clearly expounded.³

Wesley himself had been able to maintain a stable synthesis in his own thought between the various aspects of sanctification, particularly with regard to the gradual and instantaneous dimensions even though his emphasis varies from time to time.⁴ However, due partly to the

¹Outler, *John Wesley*, 27.

²Lindström, *et.al.* espouses this view. Robert Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism: 1790-1935* (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1965), 27 thinks that "it is not obvious that the essence of Methodism is caught up in these doctrines," but Harald Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification* is far more correct when he says, "When we turn to Wesley's definitions . . . of a Methodist . . . we shall find sanctification the dominant concept," 102

³Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 15.

⁴Timothy Smith says in *The History of American Methodism*, ed. by Emory S. Bucke (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1964), 2:609: "Recent studies . . . have demonstrated conclusively that Wesley did teach that sanctification was an instantaneous experience

ambiguity of terms, this synthesis was easily dissolved in the hands of theologians of less acumen than Wesley, or else with a more rigid cast of mind.

Wesley used the term, "sanctification," in at least two clearly distinguishable senses, although it is not always completely clear in which sense it is employed in some particular contexts. His broadest definition would be "to be renewed in the image of God, 'in righteousness and true holiness'."¹ This same definition can be employed in a limited way in defining other terms. For instance regeneration is interpreted as "restoring man to the image of God,"² and entire sanctification in the same way.³ These apparent contradictions may be explained by allowing that these limited uses of the broad definition refer to stages in the total process and not to the culmination of the process. The ultimate *telos* is the complete image of God perfectly reflected in man's character, but this is not within man's grasp, it always eludes him. Rather it becomes the dynamic force that makes the Christian life a constantly enlarging enterprise.

True religion, says Wesley, in expounding the Sermon on the Mount, is characterized by "hungering and thirsting after righteousness." He defines righteousness as the image of God. (The meaning of the "image of God" is not exhausted by this term). Therefore the hunger and thirst in the soul is "after the image of God" and is "the strongest of all our spiritual appetites, when it is once awakened in the heart; yea, it swallows up all the rest in that one great desire--to be renewed after the likeness of Him that created us."⁴

which believers might hope to receive 'now and by simple faith.' But he never ruled out completely the possibility of its realization through growth, so long as entire consecration and faith in the atonement played their part at some point in the process." Cf. Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*; George Allen Turner, *The Vision Which Transforms* (K.C.: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1964), 191-291; John L. Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 27-66, 201-215.

¹From "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," *Works*, 11:387.

²John Wesley, *Standard Sermons*, ed. by E.H. Sugden (London: The Epworth Press, 1921), 1:299-300. Hereinafter cited as *StS*.

³*Works*, 11:402.

⁴*StS*, 1:342-343.

The more comprehensive definition of the image of God, as Wesley defined it, is love. From this perspective one can clearly see his understanding of the Christian life as a process of developing love that moves along in part by way of decisive stages. Love is instilled in the heart in regeneration. From then on, there is a gradual development that knows no *finis*, not even death. Wesley insisted that there is no "perfection of degrees, as it is termed, none which does not admit of continual increase."¹ Nevertheless there is a stage in the process that may be called perfect love or entire sanctification, but perfect only in the sense of being unmingled.

Wesley most pointedly makes the distinction between the new birth and entire sanctification in his sermon *On Patience* (1788). Entire sanctification, he says,

does not imply any new *kind* of holiness: Let no man imagine this. From the moment we are justified, till we give up our spirits to God, love is the fulfilling of the law. ... Love is the sum of Christian sanctification; it is the one *kind* of holiness, which is found, only in various *degrees*, in the believers who are distinguished by St. John into "little children, young men, and fathers." The difference between one and the other properly lies in the degree of love.²

In the second crisis of entire sanctification, all sin is taken away and the heart is purified: 'Til this universal change was wrought in his soul, all his holiness was mingled His whole soul is now consistent with itself There is no mixture of any contrary affections: All is peace and harmony after."³ But after this instantaneous change, "he still grows in grace, in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and *image of God*: and will do so, not only till death, but to all eternity."⁴

So it may be concluded, in Lindstrom's words, that in "the process of salvation this idea of gradual development is combined with an instantaneous element." It is an order of salvation that is aimed at

¹*StS*, 2:156.

²*Works*, 6:488.

³*Ibid.*, 488-489.

⁴"Plain Account," *Works*, 11:402.

the perfection of human persons. "With this teleological aim his conception of salvation must obviously be determined principally by the idea of sanctification."¹

The use of sanctification in the wide sense to refer to the whole process of restoring the image of God is its most proper use, says Lindstrom and is explicitly recognized in this way by Wesley in his sermon on the *New Birth* (1760). In this sermon he is distinguishing between the New Birth and Sanctification, denying that the former is a *progressive* work.

This is undeniably true of sanctification; but of regeneration, the new birth, it is not true. This is a part of sanctification, not the whole; it is the gate to it, the entrance into it. When we are born again, then our sanctification, our inward and outward holiness begins; and thenceforth we are gradually to 'grow up in Him who is our head'. ... A child is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment. But it is by slow degrees that he afterward grows up to the measure of the full stature of Christ. The same relation, therefore, which there is between our natural birth and our growth, there is also between our new birth and our sanctification.²

This understanding of "sanctification" is in perfect accord with the definition by E. C. Blackman in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*: sanctification is "the realization or progressive attainment of likeness to God or God's intention for men."³

John Peters insists that Wesley, also, at times, implies a distinction between entire sanctification as an event and Christian perfection as a continuing process of which that event is a part, "a distinction which he generally fails to maintain."⁴ If this be the case, Christian perfection in its wider connotation partakes of the same teleological character as does sanctification in its wider usage.⁵

¹Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 120-122.

²*StS*, 2:240.

³E.C. Blackman, "Sanctification," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 1952.

⁴Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 52.

⁵It is significant that in their *Compend of Wesley's Theology*, Burtner and Chiles

It appears, then, to be sanctification (or perfection in its wider connotation partakes of the same teleological character Christian perfection) seen in this broader perspective that bears the ethical burden and provides the dynamic of the Christian life. If this dimension were obscured or lost, the ethical drive would be severely vitiated, or at best the ethical understanding would take a different form. Speaking to this same point, William R. Cannon says: "Salvation, therefore, can never be isolated from ethics, or the works of moral endeavor. Forgiveness is incomplete; it must be matched by holiness and Christian perfection."¹

With this understanding of Wesley's own doctrinal basis for ethics, we may now turn to the historical development of Wesleyanism as it transitioned to the new world as a background for the theological underpinning of Nazarene ethics.

Wesleyanism in America

When Methodism was transplanted to the New World, its doctrine of sanctification had only spotted success. Although it remained alive in some urban areas, such as New York City, it was generally neglected on the frontier. The doctrine came out of the doldrums, however, under the impetus of the revivals of the pre-Civil War period. After a period of declining emphasis during the war years, the ideal revived in the post-war era, but by the year 1880 the holiness movement had largely fallen out into two separate camps, one emphasizing the gradual, the other the instantaneous aspect and this is what precipitated the holiness controversies out of the which the Church of the Nazarene eventually emerged.²

Obviously there were theological elements involved in this division of the Wesleyan followers into two camps, but one should not

categorize sanctification under soteriology and Christian Perfection under, "The Moral Ideal."

¹William R. Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley* (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1946), 119.

²Smith, *Revivalism*, 103-147; Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 90-180. The most authoritative and up-to-date history of the holiness revivals in American is Melvin Dieter, *The Nineteenth Century Holiness Revival* (K.C.: Beacon Hill Press, 1998).

overlook the possibility of other factors, such as the thought currents of the times. Kenneth Cain Kinghorn, in an address before the 1967 convention of the National Holiness Association had this to say:

Toward the end of the nineteenth century the prevailing philosophy in American Christianity came to be one of optimism, emphasis upon God's immanence, and the inevitable progress of the church. Hegel and Darwin had a great influence on the churches. The doctrine of evolution was taken into the church, and process and ultimate improvement were widely embraced. The result was the rise of the social gospel with its optimism that at times was so visionary as to predict that the twentieth century would be a "Christian century." In reaction to this development many holiness people withdrew from the larger churches and tended to deny the possibility of gradual improvement, either in the Christian life, or in culture. Crisis was stressed, and at times any process of development was either neglected or ignored. . . . Christians of a more conservative stamp emphasized Christian perfection as a "second definite work of grace."¹

One might also infer that the view of "nature" that informed the theological understanding of the "second blessing" adherents was also influenced by this reaction against Darwinianism. Wesley's own teleologically oriented theology would have been congenial to the view of "nature" as dynamic process, but the late nineteenth century holiness advocates and their successors reflect a view of "nature" as static form and they appear to interpret Christian experience from this model.

Undoubtedly, one of the most significant theological factors in crystallizing the views of the "second blessing" perfectionists was the influence of Adam Clarke, one of Methodism's first theologians. There were three aspects of the doctrine where Clark deviated from Wesley:

First, he emphasized almost exclusively the instantaneous phase of sanctification and virtually denied any developmental aspect. In the chapter on Entire Sanctification in his *Christian Theology* he says:

In no part of the scriptures are we directed to seek holiness gradatim. We are to come to God as well for an instantaneous and complete purification from all sin, as for an instantaneous pardon.

¹Distributed in mimeographed form.

Neither the gradatim pardon nor the seriatim purification exists in the Bible.¹

Second, Clarke seems to overstep the bounds of prudence in his claims for the results of perfection when he sets forth what it is supposed to accomplish: "This perfection is the restoration of man to the state of holiness from which he fell, by creating him anew in Jesus Christ, and restoring to him that image and likeness of God which he has lost."²

The tone of this passage within its context seems to imply that the total image is restored now. While Wesley's central concept of the goal of salvation is the restoration of the image of God, he would never agree that the effects of sin are so removed as to restore the original image to its untarnished glory. This would return human persons to the pre-fall state.

Thirdly, Clarke places the claims of the second blessing in terms of a demand rather than of an ideal. He laments that so few are emphasizing the gospel standard in relation to church members, so as to determine "whether their stature be such as qualifies them for the ranks of the church militant." Casting the meaning of sanctification in terms of "salvation from sin," rather than perfection in love, he proposes two powerful incentives for its realization in experience:

Our Christian name, our baptismal covenant, our profession of

¹Adam Clarke, *Christian Theology* (N.Y.: Lane & Tippett, 1846), 207-208. That the tenor of this is unWesleyan is seen from the statement of Wesley: "Christian perfection, therefore, does not imply . . . an exemption either from ignorance, or mistake Indeed it is only another term for holiness Thus everyone that is holy is, in the Scripture sense, perfect. Yet . . . neither in this respect is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no *perfection of degrees*, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase." *StS*, 2:156. Or as he says succinctly in his *Brief Thoughts on Christian Perfection* in 1767: "I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul by a simple act of faith; consequently, in an instant. But I believe a gradual work, both preceding and following that instant." *Works*, 11:446. A similar evaluation of Clarke's deviation from pristine Wesleyan thought is found in William M. Greathouse and Paul M. Bassett, *Exploring Christian Holiness: The Historical Development* (K.C.: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1985).

²Clarke, *Theology*, 182.

faith in Christ, and avowed belief in his word, all call us to this: can it be said that we have any louder calls than they? Our self-interest, as it respects the happiness of a godly life, and the glories of eternal blessedness; the pains and wretchedness of a life of sin, leading to the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched; second, most powerfully, the above calls.¹

Aside from the obvious anachronism of making "self-interest" a motive for seeking perfect love, this particular emphasis follows as a systematic consequence of laying dominant stress upon perfection or sanctification as purification to the virtual exclusion of its meaning as maturity, which Wesley never neglected.²

On the question of theological methodology, Clarke's emphasis led the holiness movement around a significant corner. In Wesley's development of the doctrine, it was only after he had carefully examined many witnesses who professed to have received the experience of entire sanctification instantaneously by faith during the London revival of 1760 that he laid special stress upon this character of his teaching.³ Thus in Wesley, the move had been from experience to doctrine, utilizing with great care one of his major sources of theology, testing it at every point by the ethical criterion. In the case of Clarke, experience is secondary and actually makes no contribution at all to the "truth" of the doctrine. It is this way of deducing the doctrine that gives to it its dogmatic character lacking in Wesley:

The truth is, no doctrine of God stands upon the knowledge, experience, faithfulness, or unfaithfulness of man; it stands on the veracity of God who gave it And suppose not one could be

¹Ibid., 193-194. This reflects the mentality expressed in the aphorism, "holiness (meaning the second blessing) or hell."

²Wesley's approach to proclaiming perfection was quite different as reflected in his answer in "The Plain Account of Christian Perfection:" "Q: In what manner should we preach sanctification? A: Scarce at all to those who are not pressing forward: To those who are, always by way of promise; always drawing, rather than driving." *Works*, 11:387.

³Cf. Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875), 2:416); and Outler, *John Wesley*, 22.

found in all the churches of Christ whose heart was purified from all unrighteousness, and who loved God and man with all his regenerated powers, yet the doctrine of Christian perfection would still be true; for Christ was manifested that he might destroy the work of the devil; and his blood cleanseth from all unrighteousness. And suppose every man be a liar, God is true.

It is not the profession of a doctrine that establishes its truth; it is the truth of God, from which it has proceeded. Man's experience may illustrate it; but it is God's truth that confirms it.¹

In John Peters' judgment, "Adam Clarke had few peers in the influence he wielded upon the grass roots of early Methodism."² Clarke's chapter on "Entire Sanctification" out of his *Christian Theology* was published separately and its sale promoted in the pages of the official Nazarene publications for a number of years. It certainly must have been widely read in the Church.

It is significant to note that until it was able to produce its own commentary,³ the Nazarene Publishing House would place its complete stamp of approval only on Clarke's *Commentary on the Old and New Testament*.⁴

Another principle factor in molding the American understanding of sanctification was the influence of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer, the wife of a New York City physician, who, with her husband, traveled widely during summer months as a lay evangelist, and became a very prominent leader in holiness circles, particularly among women's groups. It actually appears that her influence may be one of the most definitive forces in moving the doctrine off its ethical foundation. With the beginning of her leadership of the "Tuesday Meeting for the

¹Clarke, *Theology*, 191-192.

²Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 103.

³*Beacon Bible Commentary*, 1967.

⁴Numerous early Nazarene writers and "holiness classics" quoted with approval Clarke's statement on no *gradatim* purification. Cf. for example, J.A. Wood, *Perfect Love* (Chicago: Christian Witness Co., 1880), 88; C.W. Ruth, *Entire Sanctification* (K.C.: Beacon Hill Press, 1944), 17; H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* (K.C.: Beacon Hill Press, 1940), 2:483; A.M. Hills, *Holiness and Power* (Cincinnati: Revivalist Office, 1897), 277.

Promotion of Holiness," her success in leading people to the "experience" was phenomenal and widespread until her death in 1874.¹

In her book, *Entire Devotion to God*, she undertakes to define "Gospel Holiness or Sanctification." In a move to simplify terms she indicates that "holiness, sanctification and perfect love are synonymous" and reveals no flexibility in usage as marked that of Wesley. It is her description of "Gospel holiness" as a "state of the soul which is attained by the believer" which appears the most stultifying for ethics. This repeated emphasis seems to counter the dynamic character of sanctification with a static condition, a "state" rather than a growing relationship.²

Her unique contribution, however, to the American holiness perspective was her renowned "altar phraseology." In a letter dated Nov. 15, 1849, she explains how she arrived at this position for which her biographer claims originality in these words:

Her illustrations of the processes--human and divine--that are involved in the entire sanctification of the Christian disciple, drawn from the Israelitish altar of burnt offering, and the rites and customs thereunto appertaining, are hers by right, if not of discovery, yet of distinct application, in the present century.³

Mrs. Palmer explains that she was seeking for scriptural support for her belief that it is one's *duty* to believe after having met the conditions of consecration unto sanctification.⁴ Her attention was drawn to Hebrews 12:10 which she felt gave her the basis for claiming that it

¹Recent Wesleyan scholarship has given extensive attention to Mrs. Palmer, examining her influence in women's movements as well as in the transformation of holiness doctrine. Charles W. White, Ph.D. Dissertation; Harald Raser, Ph.D. Dissertation. see WTS Journals.

²Richard Wheatley, *The Life and Letters of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer* (N.Y.: Palmer & Hughes, 1884), 526-629.

³*Ibid.*, 532.

⁴Wesley himself never talked about consecration as a prerequisite for sanctification, but always of repentance, mortification, and faith thus focusing upon the problem of sin remaining in believers.

was a "duty to believe that the offering was *sanctified*, when laid upon the altar."

The particular objection that this view raised had to do with the witness of the Spirit. Her argument that to claim the witness before one could be certain God accepts the sacrifice is to make it "a matter of knowledge, and of course would not require faith," is rather soundly based, yet the position runs the risk of professing on the basis of presumption rather than on the basis of real faith. Furthermore it does not take a Wesleyan view of faith since Wesley took Hebrews 12:1 as the source of his fundamental understanding of faith. In the "Plain Account," Wesley gives his own understanding of how one may judge himself to have attained perfect love:

When, after having been fully convinced of inbred sin, by a far deeper and clearer conviction than that he experienced before justification, and after having experienced a gradual mortification of it, he experiences a total death to sin, and an entire renewal in the love and image of God, so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. Not that 'to feel all love and no sin' is a sufficient proof. Several have experienced this for a time, before their souls were fully renewed. None therefore ought to believe that the work is done, till there is added the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing his entire sanctification, as clearly as his justification.¹

This methodology became a tool in the hands of Mrs. Palmer and her followers to shorten the time span between regeneration and entire sanctification and with it she guided many people into professing entire sanctification soon after their conversion. The way into the "experience" now reduces itself to two simple steps. First, meet the conditions, which are in sum "presenting myself a living sacrifice to God, through Christ--laying all, whether known or unknown, upon that altar which sanctifieth the gift;" and second, faith--faith that God would fulfill His promise.²

Wheatley sums up her activities using this method:

In evangelistic expeditions to different places, Mrs. Palmer

¹*Works*, 11:401-402.

²Wheatley, *Life and Letters*, 536-537.

repeatedly witnessed . . . souls awakened, justified, and wholly sanctified within the compass of a few days or hours. In one of her works, she narrates the experience of one who was justified, wholly sanctified, and called to preach the gospel in three days.¹

Such staccato experiences were clearly strange to the views of John Wesley and tended to obscure the ethical development of the Christian life. It furthermore tended to compress the *whole* work of sanctification into a momentary crisis. This is not so much unWesleyan as it is one-sided Wesleyanism.²

Further factors contributed to the near exclusive stress upon the instantaneousness of sanctification. With the emergence of the opposition to holiness in some of the churches, and the development of theological statements emphasizing the developmental aspect exclusively, "second blessing" writers took to polemics, which almost inevitably leads to one-sidedness.³

One more point deserves brief consideration. Sanctification was considered almost exclusively as an "experience" in the form of a subjective transformation of nature. Consequently the ethical dimension gradually dropped out of sight as an integral aspect of the doctrine. This is reflected by the consistent usage of the rubric: "doctrine and experience."

Although these developments were taking place in the latter half of the nineteenth century, they had become the warp and woof of "second blessing" holiness thinking by the end of the century and consequently ~~were the theological heritage~~ of the Church of the Nazarene. The

¹*Ibid.*, 531.

²William Burt Pope states more clearly the Wesleyan position: "the original teaching of Methodism was peculiar also in its remarkable blending of the divine and human elements in the process of sanctification. It invariably did justice to both the supreme divine efficiency and to the cooperation of man. The charge brought against it, sometimes malevolent, sometimes thoughtlessly, that it stimulates believers to expect this supreme and most sacred blessing at any time irrespective of their preparatory discipline, is contradicted by the whole tenor of the authoritative standards of this doctrine. Wesley's sermon on "The Scripture Way of Salvation," contains an elaborate discussion of this point; and it must be taken as a whole by those who would understand the subject." William B. Pope, *Compend of Christian Theology*, 3 vols. (N.Y.: Phillips & Hunt, n.d.), 3:97.

³Cf. Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 169-175.

question to be raised is, did the Nazarenes adopt these emphases? And if they did, it may be concluded that this would militate against the Church's ethical sensitivity at the point of theological statement and doctrinal underpinning.

Several works grew out of this nineteenth century milieu, some written by men who had been greatly influenced by Phoebe Palmer. These books have been referred to as "holiness classics." They appeared in popular abridgements about 1940-50 and continued for some years to be a part of the Ministers' Course of Study. This made them available to Nazarenes both lay and ministerial. The list includes: R. S. Foster, *Christian Purity* (1851); Jesse T. Peck, *The Central Idea of Christianity* (1856); J. A. Wood, *Perfect Love* (1880); Asbury Lowrey, *Possibilities of Grace* (1884); and an earlier one by T. C. Upham who was a student of mysticism and incorporated this strand of Christianity into his popular work on *The Interior Life* (ca. 1840).

Foster's introduction to the Revised Edition (1897) of his work on *Christian Purity* reflects the theological issues of this period, issues that undoubtedly affected the theological emphases of the holiness writers. There were four points to the debate: (1) the distinction between regeneration and sanctification including the problem of sin in believers, (2) the method of attainment of sanctification, whether gradual or instantaneous, (3) the need for testimony to the experience of holiness and (4) the necessity of entire sanctification for final salvation.

These "holiness classics" reflect two characteristics: first, a strong desire and purpose to follow the teachings of Wesley. This is evidenced by constant appeal to his authority and by repeated quotations. An index of authors cited in Wood's *Perfect Love* shows 45 references to Wesley, while the next closest is Bishop R. S. Foster with 20. Second, there is a relatively high degree of ambiguity resulting from combining Wesleyan with non-Wesleyan concepts.

Illustrative of the latter point is the retaining of the Wesleyan view of regeneration as initial sanctification but including with it, in differentiating between regeneration and entire sanctification, ideas that systematically contradict the Wesleyan understanding. As mentioned earlier, the influence of views that identify regeneration and sanctification without remainder no doubt caused the "second blessing" apologists to over-correct while still attempting to remain true to Wesley's terminology.

One of the most obvious expressions of this ambiguity is in R. S. Foster, who otherwise gives evidence of being a rather astute theologian retaining a more pristine Wesleyanism than many of the other authors under consideration. Foster differentiates between two positions, both of which see the attainability of entire sanctification in this life but with one laying stress upon maturation, ripening or process, holding that entire sanctification "is distinct only as a point in the process of regeneration;" and the other stressing that it is "an immediate or instantaneous work, and is almost always a distinct one; to be attained by the agency of the Holy Spirit, through faith . . .," and is different from what precedes it (regeneration) "in kind and degree."¹

While it is not crystal clear which of these two he is espousing, the order of the arguments and the manner of presentation indicates his affinity with the latter. If Foster is advocating the view that makes the "sanctified state" different in *kind* as well as degree from the merely regenerated state he later on contradicts himself in a thoroughly Wesleyan passage:

But is not a person regenerated a perfect child, and is sanctification anything more than development? When a soul is regenerated, all the elements of holiness are imparted to it, or the graces are implanted in it, in complete number, and the perfection of these graces is entire sanctification; and hence, we insist that entire sanctification does not take place in regeneration, for the graces are not then perfect. And again, though in regeneration all the elements of holiness are imparted, all the rudiments of inbred sin are not destroyed, and hence, again, the absence of complete sanctification, which when it occurs, expels all sin. Regeneration is incipient sanctification in this sense--it is of the same nature of sanctification, and, so far as it extends, is sanctification . . .²

The significance of this ambiguity in Foster is that there is here present a strand of thought that tends to obscure what James Sellers

¹Foster, *Christian Purity*, 56-57.

²Ibid. 109. This could well pass for a summary of Wesley's sermon "On Patience," sec. 10, *Works*, 6:488-489.

calls the classical view of sanctification advocated by Wesley as involving a time line of progressive development.¹ If this strand becomes dominant, the essentially ethical emphasis is devalued.

Furthermore, the stress upon the central significance of entire sanctification in the "classics" leads to a few careless statements that could be ethically stultifying if taken at face value. Illustrative of this is Wood's extreme statement that "in the nature of the case, the eradication of sin in principle from the human heart completes the Christian Character."² Similar remarks may also be found in Peck's *Central Idea*.³ If seriously adopted, this understanding of sanctification would result in a stagnant situation where the Christian life would lose all its dynamic character. The tendency in these works to talk about a "state" of sanctification further contributes to this result.⁴

As a consequence of these influences, a concept of sanctification emerges that militates against its functioning as a high ethical ideal. There is an emphasis on the achievement or obtainment of the "experience" very early in the Christian life and a tendency to look upon it as terminal so far as development is concerned. A further factor that contributes to this development is the tendency to talk about "mere" justification, or "mere" regeneration, which widens the gap and emphasizes the discontinuity between regeneration and entire sanctification.⁵ Foster actually uses the terms *terminus a quo* of "~~regeneration~~" and *terminus ad quem* of "sanctification."⁶ In addition,

¹James Sellers, *Theological Ethics*, 189. Sellers neglects, however, to mention that Wesley's view of sanctification is more complex than this particular delineation, including also an instantaneousness.

²Wood, *Perfect Love*, 34.

³Peck, *Central Idea*, 6-7.

⁴Wesley says, "Does not talking, without proper caution, of a justified or sanctified state, tend to mislead men; almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works; according to the whole of our present inward tempers and outward behavior." *Works*, 8:338.

⁵Wesley would move in the other direction of emphasizing the continuity. Cf. *Works*, 6:487-488.

⁶*Christian Purity*, 183.

an imbalanced emphasis upon the instantaneous aspect of sanctification lends itself to a loss of the teleological character that marks the whole Christian life in Wesley's thought. Consistent appeal is made to various "scriptural arguments" to support the momentary character.¹

One final point relates to the question of testifying to being sanctified. Witness is made a prerequisite to retaining the "blessing" by its American apologists of this period. Pressure to give the testimony, therefore, could possibly result in a loss of a "hungering and thirsting after righteousness" and a settling down in a professed attainment.²

Unquestionably the influence of revivalism at this point made a striking contribution to this whole transformation. Unlike Wesley who left his preached message with the congregation to work out their own salvation, the American holiness preacher came to utilize the distinctly American revivalistic invitation to the "mourner's bench" as a means to precipitate a crisis in the experience of the seeker after holiness. Thus to hold back would indicate an incomplete "first work" and to fail to profess would indicate either lack of faith or full consecration and a signal to keep returning to the public altar until the "blessing" was claimed. Psychologically this proved a compelling force to profess without the accompanying ethical criteria, at least the internal ones.

Perhaps the most pronounced heritage that these writers passed along to the American holiness tradition was a stereotyped form of presentation. Their terminology and emphases are adopted and copied *ad infinitum* by subsequent holiness works of a more popular nature. Although they retained, as previously noted, a strong affinity to Wesley, the more or less "scholastic" development of the dynamic Wesleyan message had in it the seeds of a truncated view of holiness

¹Interestingly enough, Wesley says, "Does he work it gradually . . . or in a moment? . . . the Scriptures are silent upon the subject *Works*, 6:490.

²In answer to the question, "Suppose one had attained to this, would you advise him to speak of it?", Wesley replied, "Not to them who know not God. It would only provoke them to contradict and blaspheme; Nor to any, without some particular reason, without some particular good in view. And then they should have an especial care to avoid all appearance of boasting." *Works*, 8:297. This advice may provide a clue as to why Wesley himself never gave written testimony to the experience of entire sanctification.

that doctrinally would be the "expectation for the life and conduct of man under God," its "critical standard of excellence."¹

A summary may now be made of those diverse tendencies that the holiness movement of the late nineteenth century represented by these "holiness classics" bequeathed to the holiness denominations that formed out of the revival, all tending to eliminate the teleological character of original Wesleyan perfectionism:

1) The use of a simplistic view of sanctification seen exclusively in a momentary sense as opposed to Wesley's more profound use of it as a gradual life-long ethical development.²

2) A stress upon sanctification as necessary for final salvation along with the requirement to testify about it and a presentation of it as a duty and thus in a manner which was "driving" rather than "drawing."³

3) An emphasis upon sanctification as an experience of subjective purification rather than an ethical transformation involving gradual maturing. As J. A. Wood expressed it, "Entire sanctification is something *experienced*, and not something *done*."⁴

4) A preoccupation with speeding up the time element by emphasizing consecration and faith which detracted from the concept of spiritual maturation.

For various reasons, most holiness teachers and preachers in the last half of the 20th century and beyond have attempted to return to a more balanced presentation of the doctrine, one that is more akin to Wesley's own understanding.

¹Sellers, *Theological Ethics*, 32.

²Cf. Wesley's words: "They have spoken of the work of sanctification, taking the word in its *full* sense, as if it were quite of another kind, as if it differed entirely from that which is wrought in justification." *Works*, 6:487-488. Emphasis added. The *full* sense covers the continuity of grace from the beginning of the Christian life to the end.

³Cf. Wesley, *Works*, 8:286, Q. 8. While Wesley would think of sanctification as a necessary prerequisite to final salvation, the latter being seen as the goal of the process of sanctification, this is quite different from saying that one who had not professed the "second blessing" was ineligible for heaven. (Cf. Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 198-204.

⁴*Christian Purity*, 80.

Before looking at some specifically Nazarene writings, however, there was another influence that was somewhat parallel in time to these others just discussed, but of a different character. The Keswick Movement was a development within the broader Wesleyan context against which the sector of the holiness movement that produced the Church of the Nazarene reacted quite sharply. The reaction has definite ethical overtones and helps to crystallize the view of sanctification as a terminal concept.

The Keswick Movement originated about 1875 in England for the "promotion of scriptural holiness." It took its name from the location where one of its earliest meetings was held and where it continued to meet annually. This early convention stated its purpose to be the promotion of practical holiness. Although basically a movement among the Evangelicals of the Church of England, its influence has spread widely with a significant following in America. Its Council chairman in 1964 still describes its message as one of "personal, practical and scriptural holiness."¹

Virtually all Nazarene theological statements take cognizance of the teaching of this movement for the express purpose of rejecting it as non-Wesleyan and thus not a true, scriptural account of sanctification. In the more popular presentations, it was usually done through a process of *reduction ad absurdum*, to show the undesirable consequences of its views. Quite often it is characterized as Calvinistic and antinomian, and its spokesmen questioned because of failure to adhere to certain external ethical criteria peculiar to the Nazarene emphasis.

The main theological point at issue in this debate concerns the results of sanctification. There are two aspects to the question. The first, put in the doctrinal terms of that period, is eradication versus suppression, or, as the latter was designated in Wesley's time, suspension. The second involves the distinction between imparted and imputed righteousness.

Although there is no official Keswick creed, there is an official history² and several collections of addresses given at the annual

¹A.T. Houghton, "Foreword" to J. C. Pollock, *The Keswick Story* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), 10.

convention purporting to represent the distinctive message of Keswick. Succinctly stated, the "message of the Convention is essentially that of victory in the personal life and power in Christian service through the Lordship of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in His fullness."¹

This "higher life," as it is often called, is thought by many Keswick spokesmen to be the same as Wesley's "second blessing."² Nevertheless, there is an explicit rejection of perfectionism as one of its most authoritative spokesmen insists:

... if any man thinks, because we speak of the blessed assumptions of faith as if they meant something akin to perfection--if any man thinks that therefore we are here to teach perfection in the flesh, I say he is absolutely mistaking the teaching of the Keswick platform. We know nothing of perfection in the flesh; and when I read such words as dear John Wesley's, "The evil root, the carnal mind is destroyed in me; sin subsists no longer," I only marvel that any human being, with the teaching of the Holy Ghost upon the Word of God, can thus deceive himself. It is, I think, a miracle of blindness that we can study God's Word and imagine that any man can be free from sin experimentally while he is here in the mortal body.³

While we cannot explore the divergences from Wesley on this point, it should be noticed in passing that such a position is based upon a substantive view of sin, which unfortunately Wesley oftentimes shares.

What, then, is the nature and source of the victorious life which is Keswick's heritage? First, it must be said that it roots in an *imputed* righteousness, which comes into experience, only as it is believed, the believing ~~being the only experience. It is the position of the believer~~

²Pollock, *The Keswick Story*.

¹Herbert F. Stevenson, ed., *Keswick's Triumphant Voice* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1963), 9.

²J. Elder Cumming, "What We Teach," in Stevenson, *Voice*, 19.

³W. H. Webb-Peploe, "Dead unto sin . . . Alive unto God," in Stevenson, *Voice*, 152.

that has been changed, and he experiences it only as the reckoning of faith. But, as Webb-Peploe says, "it is not perfection of experience--do not go away and imagine that; but it is experience founded upon a perfect fact."¹ This then is quite different from the Wesleyan view of sanctification as a real change in contrast to justification as a relative change.²

Secondly, there is a positive element in Keswick teaching that gives to it the attractive characteristic that it possesses. This is the way by which the believer gains power over the inbeing of sin, or freedom from sin's authority. Stevenson puts it as follows: "God's provision for all the needs of his children--including holiness of life and power for service--lies in the Person and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed and administered to us by the indwelling Holy Spirit."³ The secret of the victorious life, then, is the fullness of the Spirit, which establishes the Lordship of Christ in the heart. This *crisis* experience is preceded by confession of sin and succeeded by victory over sin. Dr. Charles Inwood describes the results in glowing terms:

And it is possible to be so full of the Spirit that all bondage, and all friction, and all the river of lust disappear; so full of the Spirit that selfishness in motive, in intention, in purpose, in endeavor disappears; so full of the Spirit that all conscious and willful resistance to God disappears; so full that God becomes present, predominant, supreme, throughout the length and breadth of one's whole being; so full that God becomes the supreme authority in the soul, and God becomes the supreme power in the soul; and as a result there is a complete subjection of the heart and life to the purpose and will of God.⁴

This fullness of the Spirit is an enduement for service and power for the suppression of inward sin. Such baptism or filling, however, is a repeatable phenomenon since it may ebb and flow with the believer's

¹*Ibid.*, 159.

²*StS*, 2:446.

³Stevenson, *Voice*, 319.

⁴"The Fullness of the Spirit," in Stevenson, *Voice*, 339.

attention to its maintenance. This is undoubtedly a good illustration of why John Wesley did not use the terms, "the baptism of (or with) the Spirit" and "the fullness of the Spirit," to indicate the experience of entire sanctification. Daniel Steele, Boston University professor and second blessing advocate, suggests that this is "probably because there is an emotional fullness of a temporary nature, not going down to the roots of the moral nature."¹

H. Orton Wiley denies that what the Keswickians describe is really a work of grace in the strict sense "for there is no cleansing from inbred sin." Furthermore, he argues, according to Keswick "the power of sin is merely broken, which Wesleyanism maintains takes place in conversion." Therefore, "it is in no sense entire sanctification as Wesleyanism defines this term."²

The significant factor of Keswickianism that seems to be obscured through these rejections of the teaching, and consequent formulation of its own position in opposition to Keswick, is the "moment by moment" sustained relationship which, says Keswickians, must be maintained.³ This has important implications for a sound ethical understanding.

No one entered the lists to oppose the Keswick position more strenuously than A. M. Hills.⁴ He focused the issue on the questions of 1) does the Baptism with the Holy Spirit include cleansing from sin, and 2) does the Atonement involve cleansing rather than mere counteraction, or in other words, does the work of Christ effect a *cure* for the inbeing of sin rather than simply palliating it. By logical

¹Daniel Steele, *Steele's Answers* (Chicago: The Christian Witness Co., 1912), 130.

²Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 2:463. Wiley is generally considered to be the most authoritative theologian in the Church of the Nazarene.

³Webb-Peploe, in Stevenson, *Voice*, 157.

⁴A. M. Hills, *Fundamental Christian Theology*, 2 vols. (Pasadena, CA: C. J. Kinne, 1931); *Holiness and Power* (Cincinnati: Revivalist Office, 1897); *Pentecost Rejected* (Cincinnati: Revivalist Office, 1902); *Scriptural Holiness and Keswick Teaching Compared* (unavailable to this writer). Hills was an Oberlin College graduate and in addition to other educational assignments taught at two holiness schools that later became Nazarene Colleges: Texas Holiness University eventually became a part of Bethany Nazarene College (now Southern Nazarene University), and Illinois Holiness University which became Olivet Nazarene College (now University); and also at Pasadena College which was founded under Nazarene auspices.

argument and intense scriptural exegesis he answers these questions in the affirmative, as do all early Nazarene theologians.

Hills attacks the Keswick teaching as being but "another way of stating the utterly unscriptural doctrine of necessary and continuous sin, and the existence of an indwelling corruption within every man from which the blood of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit is impotent to cleanse."¹ Rather the essence of sanctification is to be purged from carnality, to be cleansed by a process of elimination, not merely empowered for service.

What are the implications of this dispute for the Nazarene view of sanctification? To talk about the actual destruction of sin, while much more scripturally sound than the Keswick position, tended to create an attitude of finality which the Keswick emphasis on moment to moment dependence avoids. Consequently, this polemical situation added to the other tendencies already examined to remove the dynamic in favor of the static, and furthermore could lead to the belief that one's holiness was something possessed within himself rather than in relation. This is likewise a possible result of laying so much stress upon imparted righteousness that the great truth of imputed righteousness is obscured, perhaps in reaction to the Keswick stress upon the latter to the virtual exclusion of the former.²

In the final analysis, such a debate is, from the authentically Wesleyan point of view, merely a dispute over words. In commenting on the many who experienced the "perfecting of the saints" in 1763, Wesley said, "Now, whether we call this the destruction or suspension of sin, it is a glorious work of God--such a work as, considering both the depth and extent of it, we never saw in these kingdoms before."³

Practically, there is no difference between the two views if one holds to the Wesleyan insistence on constant trust in God for cleansing as expressed by Charles Wesley's hymn:

¹*Pentecost Rejected*, 32.

²Cf. *StS*, 2:430 where Wesley shows great appreciation for the importance of imputed righteousness. However, contemporary Biblical studies have shown that the proper meaning of righteousness in relation to justification invalidates the whole debate over imputed vs. imparted righteousness. See H. Ray Dunning, "A New Look at Justification," *The Preacher's Magazine*, September/October/November, 1993.

³*Journal*, 5:41. Cf. Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 58.

O, for a heart to praise my God
A heart from sin set free,
A heart that always feels thy blood
So freely shed for me!

Wesley denied that those who lived "without sin" no longer needed a Mediator. Rather they feel their dependence more keenly than others since "Christ does not give life to the soul separate from, but in and with, himself."¹ Since Wesley preferred to use such language as "love excluding (or expelling) sin," John Peters is correct in claiming that "expulsion" is a more appropriate term to describe his thought than "eradication."²

Therefore it may be concluded that this effort to maintain a distinctive doctrinal position, and sometimes debating issues that could be construed as merely verbal differences, has militated against adopting an understanding of the Christian life that has the potentiality of great ethical sensitivity, especially in the realm of personal and dispositional holiness. It furthermore contributes to the failure to hold to the teleological conception of sanctification that is essential to an authentic Wesleyan understanding that informed Wesley's own ethical views.

Nazarene Spokesmen on Sanctification

The position of the holiness movement of the 19th century is now quite plain. However, we are focusing on the understanding that informed Nazarene theology and ethics. If the Church of the Nazarene were merely a split from the Methodist Episcopal Church, there would be little need for investigation but a number of the original leaders came from other traditions. Although they held in common the heritage of perfectionism they were not under the influence of Methodist discipline and often were the ones who "took the initial steps toward organizing new denominations." Included among these leaders were William Howard Hoople, a Baptist; Edward F. Walker, a

¹*Works*, 11:395.

²Cf. *StS*, 2:448, 457.

Presbyterian; J. O. McClurkan, a Cumberland Presbyterian; A. M. Hills, a Congregationalist; E. P. Ellyson, a Friend and J. W. Goodwin, an Advent Christian. The latter church came into existence when Jonathan Cummings led a group out of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in 1861, chiefly over the question of the state of the dead.¹

Some attention has already been given to the views of A. M. Hills, but further study will be made later. William Howard Hoople, the leader of the Pentecostal Churches of America in the East, has left no book by which to evaluate his ideas but Ellyson, Walker and Goodwin, all of whom became General Superintendents, have each written a monograph on sanctification.²

These men reflected slight influence from their different backgrounds. For example, Walker, with his Presbyterian connections, self-consciously draws upon writers from the Calvinistic tradition. But it must be remembered that the holiness revival of the late nineteenth century cut across most denominational lines. Even though these nuances of emphasis are present, there is no significant divergence from the main stream of American holiness doctrine. Both Ellyson and Goodwin show evidence of being strongly influenced by the "holiness classics" previously discussed, particularly R. S. Foster.³ Goodwin draws more heavily on this source than does Ellyson whose great interest in Christian education colors his presentation.⁴

Although these men refer to John Wesley in support of their views, they *appear* quite oblivious of the fact that they are appealing to only one facet of his thought, but draw on this side rather profusely. In the main, they make a stereotyped presentation in the tradition of the

¹Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 21. Frank S. Mead, *Handbook on Denominations in the United States* (N.Y.: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951), 14-18.

²E. F. Walker, *Sanctify Them* (Philadelphia: Christian Standard Co., 1899); E. P. Ellyson, *Bible Holiness* (K.C.: Nazarene Publishing House, 1938); J. W. Goodwin, *The Living Flame* (K.C.: Nazarene Publishing House, n.d.).

³It is interesting that while these men stress "destruction" of sin, Foster taught a position that may be and has been interpreted as the suppression of sin—a good example of the way in which the second blessing advocates used their sources selectively. Cf. Foster, *Christian Purity*, 74.

⁴Ellyson was a key figure in the Sunday school work of the Church of the Nazarene. Cf. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 331ff.

"holiness classics," repeating the arguments, phrases, illustrations and exegetical patterns of the whole milieu of the nineteenth century holiness apologists.

One additional individual deserves special attention due to his role in both forming the holiness tradition and bringing the various groups together that formed the Church of the Nazarene. C. W. Ruth, a holiness evangelist, connected originally with the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness, served between the years 1903 and 1908 as a liaison among the three major holiness groups. He had joined the Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles in 1901 and was appointed by P. F. Bresee in 1903 as "assistant general superintendent" with the express assignment to bring these groups into union.¹

J. W. Goodwin refers to Ruth as "one of the outstanding advocates of sanctification or 'the second blessing'."² Dr. J. B. Chapman, while editor of the official Nazarene publication, *The Herald of Holiness*, said in his introduction to Ruth's book on *Temptations Peculiar to the Sanctified*: "For forty years the name of C. W. Ruth has been a synonym for soundness in the teaching of the doctrine of holiness, after the Wesleyan interpretation."³ This recommendation indicates the wide acceptability that the preaching of Ruth enjoyed in the early Nazarene understanding of the doctrine as well as the wide identification of the holiness movement with the Wesleyan heritage..

Undoubtedly Ruth's work as a revivalist influenced the manner in which he presented the message. His auditors, whom he would be intending to bring to an immediate decision, could best understand what they were supposed to "seek" if the lines were clearly drawn so that they were not diverted by subtle turns of thought. This character does in fact mark his writings. G. A. McLaughlin, in the introduction to Ruth's book, *The Second Crisis in Christian Experience*, lauds the author for speaking "emphatically, explicitly and definitely on the subject of Christian holiness." Ruth expresses his own concern for sharpening the issues by expressing preference for the term "Second

¹M. E. Redford, *The Rise of the Church of the Nazarene* (K.C.: Nazarene Publishing House, 1948), 151-152.

²Goodwin, *Flame*, 25.

³C. W. Ruth, *Temptations Peculiar to the Sanctified* (K.C.: Nazarene Publishing House, 1928).

Work of Grace" rather than Wesley's use of the term "Second Blessing," because "it seems more significant and expressive of the fact, and leaves less room for quibbling on the part of those who do not agree with this Wesleyan teaching."¹

Consequently, as would be expected, Ruth lays much stress upon the secondness of sanctification, and so emphasizes the discrete character of both justification and sanctification as to virtually make them totally different in kind, thus losing the continuity that marked John Wesley's own views. This feeling is intensified by his prolific use of aphoristic forms of distinguishing between them, such as "Justification gives us a right to heaven; sanctification gives us the fitness for heaven."²

A high degree of dogmatism emerges which is quite unWesleyan in temper. He moves to force experience into the mold of pre-set doctrinal interpretation and explanation rather than allowing the "freedom of the Spirit" in experience to be formative of doctrine as Wesley did. For instance, after arguing that, scripturally, Christians are not sanctified wholly when they are converted, he concludes:

We mean to say that the foregoing is a fixed rule designated as "the law of the Spirit of life," and that all who truly obtain the experience of entire sanctification obtain it according to this law; and, therefore, conclude that every other claim or teaching is erroneous. That they who claim they were sanctified at the time of their conversion, or expect to attain it by growth or by death, or whatever the theory, are wholly unscriptural, and out of harmony with "the law of the Spirit of life."³

Thus Ruth's process of simplification works toward a schematization of the teaching of holiness that operates within the framework of the concepts made popular by Phoebe Palmer rather than John Wesley and bears the distinctive stamp of the American holiness views. In this process there is a consistent erosion of the concept of

¹Ruth, *Second Crisis*, 13.

²Ruth, *Entire Sanctification*, 18-19. Ruth would be unaware that this is pristine Roman Catholic theology rather than Wesleyan.

³Ruth, *Second Crisis*, 33.

"initial" sanctification and its gradual increase. With explicit reference to Wesley's distinction between sanctification and *entire* sanctification, he synthesizes Adam Clarke and Webster's Dictionary to produce an interpretation which bears little resemblance to Wesley's own understanding.

Sanctification, according to Clarke and the Dictionary, has two meanings: consecration or separation, and making holy or pure. The former meaning refers to the human aspect of sanctification and the second to the divine work. These two meanings explain "how there is a difference in being sanctified in part, and being sanctified entirely or wholly." By way of a total substitution of this first meaning of sanctification in place of Wesley's view of sanctification as a real change in human nature, he thus completes his transformation of initial sanctification:

And in this connection it is well to note that this human side of sanctification--which is but the approach to, and the condition of *entire* sanctification--may be gradual. That is, the individual may be some time in entirely completing this "separation," "dedication" and devotement" of his all to God. But the moment this human side of sanctification is completed, and every condition met, faith in reality touching the promise, the divine side of sanctification, which is to "make holy or pure; and to make free from sin, to cleanse from moral corruption and pollution, to purify," is instantaneously and divinely inwrought by the application of the virtue of the atonement through the power of the Holy Ghost.¹

Here the process that began with the "holiness classics" is brought to culmination. There is the almost total elimination of the notion of gradual sanctification. One cannot ascertain with absolute certainty the extent of Ruth's influence on the formation of Nazarene thinking but his schematization is an exact pattern of the theological position which Nazarene preachers have institutionalized.²

¹Ruth, *Entire Sanctification*, 16-17.

²This cannot be footnoted by documents, but the statement is made on the basis of the writer's experience of many years of listening to Nazarene preaching. Cf. the same format in H. E. Jessop, *Foundations of Doctrine* (Chicago: Chicago Evangelistic Institute, 1938), often used as a college text in courses on the doctrine of holiness into the 1950's.

Perhaps the closest one can come to an official theological statement is the approved textbooks for the advanced ministerial course of study in systematic theology as published in the minister's course of study. In the early days, these were Methodist publications. The first *Manual* of the fully formed denomination (1908) listed *Christian Theology* by Samuel Wakefield. The next issue however (1911) replaced this work with John Miley's *Systematic Theology* which remained in the list until 1932 when the first Nazarene theology became available: *Fundamental Christian Theology* by A. M. Hills. Hills' work was replaced in 1940 by what most Nazarenes felt for years to be the apex of the Church's theological expression, H. Orton Wiley's 3 volume *Christian Theology*. Wiley continued to be held in high respect through the first 75 years of the 20th century by many people in the Church who are interested in theology.

The question now to be raised and answered rather summarily is, do these theological works reflect the same views of sanctification as the more popular writings already examined. All the while, however, it must be borne in mind that it is the popular writings rather than the technical theological treatises that influence the rank and file of the Church.

Wakefield claims that his work is based on an abridgement of Watson's *Theological Institutes*, a work that "has no equal among evangelical theologies." Therefore, in his rather brief statement on "entire sanctification," there is a verbatim reproduction of much that Watson had to say but with some subtle omissions. In commenting on Watson's relation to original Wesleyanism, John Peter's says:

Although Watson grants in the *Institutes* the logical and scriptural grounds for the instantaneous aspect of Christian perfection, he expresses himself with more self-consistency and assurance when in his other works he presents the gradual phase of the doctrine. Here, even more than in Wesley or Fletcher, Christian perfection is viewed as a spiritual maturity to which time and experience much contribute.¹

In his abridgment, Wakefield retains Watson's high view of regeneration as being of the same essence as Entire Sanctification, and also the recognition that it is both instantaneous and progressive, yet it

¹Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 108.

is the instantaneous that receives the emphasis. The developmental aspect to which Peters refers is all but completely eliminated.¹

It is somewhat of an anomaly that Miley's theology should supersede Wakefield and especially that it should remain in the curriculum for so long. His treatment of sanctification is quite different from most of the Nazarene writings just examined, being best described as meliorating. He overtly rejects all extreme expressions of the doctrine, allowing that no particular mode can be insisted upon.

While Miley is appreciative of both the "second blessing" view and the view that identifies regeneration with sanctification he leans toward the position that the regenerated life universally has an element of incompleteness. All in all, he seems to be closer to Wesley's own position than most of the other writings we have surveyed.

Aaron M. Hills' treatment of the doctrine in his *Christian Theology* is completely in accord with the summary statement made by him that was adopted by the General Holiness Assembly of 1885:

We are now prepared to give a formal definition of sanctification or Scriptural holiness, which would probably be accepted by the three hundred teachers and preachers in the National Holiness Association of America. . . ; Entire Sanctification is a second definite work of grace wrought by the Baptism with the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer subsequent to regeneration, received instantaneously by faith by which the heart is cleansed from all corruption and filled with the perfect love of God.²

That Miley may be a completely unrepresentative chapter of Nazarene theology could be inferred from Wiley's single reference to his treatment of sanctification. After quoting Miley's statement that "the doctrine of an incompleteness of the work of regeneration underlies entire sanctification, particularly in its Wesleyan form," he comments: "there is a sense in which this is true, but the form of the statement is unfortunate." Wiley then proceeds to modify this in the

¹Samuel Wakefield, *Christian Theology* (N.Y.: Nelson & Phillips, 1869), 446-454.

²A. M. Hills, *Scriptural Holiness and Keswick Teaching Compared*, 29, as quoted in Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 162. Cf. George E. Failing, "Developments in Holiness Theology After Wesley," *Insights into Holiness*, ed. by Kenneth Geiger (K.C.: Beacon Hill Press, 1962), 23.

direction of sharpening the distinction between regeneration and sanctification and thus breaking down the continuity between them.¹

Although Wiley's section on "Christian Perfection or Entire Sanctification" is more guarded and his affirmations more carefully stated than many of the popular works, thus avoiding many extreme statements, nevertheless he expresses in general the formulations of Wesleyan doctrine as it is expressed by other Nazarene writers. His stress is upon the instantaneousness of the "second work of grace," the gradual element being practically restricted to an approach to the crisis.²

His consistent reference to the *state* of holiness which is effected by the *act* of sanctification points in the direction of putting an end to any process of real development as is reflected in the following quotation:

Regeneration as we have seen, is the impartation of a life that is holy in its nature; and concomitant with it, is an initial holiness or cleansing from guilt and acquired depravity. Now this holiness already begun is to be perfected by the cleansing at a single stroke from inbred sin, and brings the soul to a *constantly existing state of perfect holiness*.³

This passage further points up the results of the long process of change whereby the Wesleyan concept of "regeneration" has been transformed in such a way that it issues in obscuring the continuity that inheres in Wesley's own understanding.

Regeneration is here presented as "life." Granted that life is holy in its nature, it is not the same but only "concomitant" with "an initial holiness or cleansing from guilt and acquired depravity." Wiley insists that "regeneration is not to be identified with either justification or *initial sanctification*"⁴ and prefers his own simple definition of

¹Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3:475-476. Wiley is correct in noting the unfortunate nature of Miley's statement. Wesley would never speak of regeneration as incomplete but would recognize that the "real change" that occurs in regeneration is continued in the process of sanctification and reaches a critical moment in "entire sanctification."

²Ibid. 479.

³Ibid. 446.

regeneration as "the communication of life by the Spirit, to a soul dead in trespasses and sins," to several others *including* Wesley's.¹

This trend began back with the "holiness classics." In the case of Foster, as previously noted, the views presented in his *Christian Purity* are more nearly akin to Wesley's own position and this is particularly true in the case of "regeneration."² But following the same pattern observed in other matters, the other members of this group of writings have a degree of ambiguity, with Wood showing the clearest departure from Wesley, he defines regeneration as

the impartation of spiritual life to the human soul, in which God imparts, organizes and calls into being the capabilities, attributes, and functions of the new nature. It is a change from death to life, from the domination of sin to the reign of grace, and restores the spiritual life that was lost by the fall.³

Although Lowrey sees regeneration as "holiness begun," he wishes to differentiate this from holiness *per se* and therefore qualifies it so as to have regeneration mean a "process of quickening which implants a new element in the soul--an element of life." This differs from justification in that justification "relieves from guilt" while regeneration "begins a new being, starts a new life."⁴

Quotations may be found in Peck's *Christian Perfection* that square with Wesley's understanding of regeneration as holiness begun or sanctification initiated, but Wiley incorporates a quote in his own text from Peck's later work, *The Central Idea of Christianity*, that separates "life" and "holiness:" "Just as natural life and the condition of the living being are distinct, spiritual life and the moral condition of the spiritually alive are distinct." Peck then identifies regeneration with the

⁴Ibid, 413.

¹Ibid. 407.

²Cf. Foster, *Christian Purity*, 106-109 and Wesley, *Works*, 6:488ff.

³Wood, *Perfect Love*, 17.

⁴Lowrey, *Possibilities of Grace*, 184-185.

former and sanctification with the latter. The logical question to be raised is, how can one separate life from the quality of life in Christian experience? Although Peck speaks of these two things as "totally distinct from each other, as much so as a fact and a quality of a fact, a thing and an accident of a thing," this distinction cannot legitimately be made in a Wesleyan context which talks only in terms of different degrees of the same quality of experience.¹

Wiley refuses to identify regeneration with "initial sanctification," being willing to grant only that the latter is a concomitant of the former.² This is in perfect accord with much that he maintains but contradictory to some of his earlier statements to the effect that the life bestowed in regeneration is a holy life.³

Initial sanctification is limited to "the work of cleansing from the pollution of guilt and acquired depravity."⁴ This hesitation to be truly Wesleyan grows out of a fear of undercutting the instantaneous aspect of entire sanctification. It is in connection with this point that he rejects Miley's statement of the incompleteness of regeneration.⁵ Wiley, like many of the others surveyed, must maintain the completeness of the work of regeneration in order to make room, he thinks, for the second crisis.

Wesley, it seems, would be unwilling to speak of initial sanctification as "concomitant" with regeneration, although regeneration itself is a concomitant of justification. This term means "accompanying; attending," possibly not essential to the nature of a thing. Rather, for Wesley, regeneration *is* holiness but in a low degree.⁶

There are two causes for the confusion here. Apparently such a position as Wiley's could not be held apart from some lingering conception of sin as a substance; and second, there is a restriction of

¹Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3:471.

²Ibid., 413.

³Ibid., 432.

⁴Ibid., 423.

⁵Ibid., 474.

⁶*Works*, 6:488.

the term sanctification to the second crisis, with other uses recognized only in some rather odd relation to this narrow meaning. Wesley, on the other hand, always defines sanctification as a real change in human nature and regeneration as the beginning of this change. Or as Cannon clearly puts it:

At the very moment of the new birth, what God does *for* man, the objective deed which God performs when he forgives man of his sins and pardons him from guilt and punishment and accepts him as a son, is united with what God does *in* man; and the process of sanctification is actually begun in man's life. (Sermon V, p. 11, sec. 1)¹

Conclusion

While it is impossible to arrive at any uniform statement of Nazarene theology, one may infer a rather general understanding on the point of the "cardinal" doctrine of the Church during the formative period of the denomination's history. It seems clear that the prevailing view of the American holiness movement understood sanctification in a rather limited sense, having to do only with a second crisis experience and being only "concomitantly" related to other aspects of the Christian life. "Holiness" is widely used in such a manner as to have reference only to the results of the "second blessing."

In conceiving its relation to Wesley, Nazarene literature sees him as the proponent of "the second blessing, properly so-called."² The statement of Wesley to which the Nazarene perspective appeals consistently speaks only of the instantaneous: "Sanctification in a proper sense is an instantaneous deliverance from all sin, and included power therewith given to cleave always to God."³ And yet in the same context, Wesley speaks of "degrees" of this same sanctification. But ~~research has found no place~~ where 19th century holiness literature

¹Cannon, *Theology of John Wesley*, 123.

²Ruth, *Entire Sanctification*, 24; quoted from Wesley, *Letters*, 8:45.

³From *Letters*, 4:188. Quoted in Goodwin, *Flame*, 29; Walker, *Sanctification*, 45, 104; Ruth, *Entire Sanctification*, 8; Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3:467-468.

recognized that Wesley used the term in its full sense as a life-long teleological process of realizing more and more the image of God.¹

The way in which sanctification is thus conceived tends to create an attitude that, for all practical purposes, sees the Christian life plateauing with the attainment of the "second blessing." That this was eventually recognized by the Church is evidenced by the addition in 1976 of a section to the Article of Faith on *Entire Sanctification* emphasizing that the moment of entire sanctification does not complete the process of growing in grace. The criticism made by Chester Tulga, a Conservative Baptist, is relevant to the practical result of such a truncated view of sanctification:

Holiness people, forgetting their own convictions that both salvation and sanctification can be lost by disobedience to God have come to rest in a "sanctified state"--the holiness equivalent of the Calvinistic doctrine of security. One meets sanctified people who claim to have been sanctified for many years, who know little of the Word of God, who show few signs of growth in grace, whose prayer life is feeble, whose zeal has grown cold--but still "saved and sanctified."²

Jack Ford, a Nazarene leader in Great Britain, in commenting on the Nazarene *Manual's* requirement that all local church officers be "clearly in the experience of entire sanctification," says, "This may be criticized as turning rare ventures by the spiritual elite to the Himalayas of Holiness into excursions for all and sundry to the foothills of an everyday experience within the reach of all."

Although Ford does not agree that this is a completely valid criticism, he does recognize the situation as it has been described in this chapter and concludes "the danger is formality, the changing of a rare and rapturous experience into a matter of course."³

Colin Williams, in a finely balanced criticism, insists that "the doctrine of perfection and the emphasis on receiving it as an ~~instantaneous gift can easily~~ lead to a measure of moral blindness."

¹Cf. *Works*, 11:402 and *Notes on the New Testament* on 2 Cor. 3:18.

²Chester E. Tulga, *The Doctrine of Holiness in These Times* (Chicago: Conservative Baptist Fellowship, 1952), 62.

³Jack Ford, *In the Steps of John Wesley* (K.C.: Nazarene Publishing House, 1968), 231.

However, his reason for this incisive observation is that there is a "tendency to remove the definition of sin in terms of conscious awareness from its necessary tension with the deeper definition of continuing moral deviation from the perfect will of God."¹ Wesley himself would fully agree with this emphasis as his statement in a letter to Samuel Furly indicates: "These very persons feel more than ever their own ignorance, littleness of grace, coming short of the full mind that was in Christ"²

Beginning with Adam Clarke, and reinforced by appeals to the Dictionary definition of the term, the American holiness movement in the 19th century developed a stereotyped understanding of sanctification in a two-fold scheme: It means 1) a separation or setting apart, and 2) purity or cleansing from sin. This provided a scheme whereby many questions were "easily" solved. For example, the first is restricted to the human aspect while the second is reserved for divine action thereby solving the problem of the divine-human elements involved. The gradual aspect has been reserved for the first meaning while the latter has no other than an instantaneous character.

What then is the ethical understanding that issues from this view of sanctification? In the case of Wesley, his broad views form a clear pattern for a teleological ethic, an ethic of self-realization. But with the truncated view that sees sanctification only in terms of crisis, virtually eliminating the progressiveness of real sanctification in the Christian life, ethics would necessarily take a different form.

At this point an attempt will be made to answer this question by an analysis of only those treatments that give a systematic, or semi-systematic ethical statement to see if the ethical position actually follows logically from the theological stance and precisely what that position is. The historical question will be avoided since that is the subject of the next chapter.

The basic principle that appears to underlie earlier Nazarene ethical thinking may be stated as follows: Act follows from Being, or the outward life is the outflow of an inner condition. On this basis the necessity for inner holiness is stressed so that all ethical discussions

¹Colin Williams, *John Wesley's Theology Today* (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1960), 185-186.

²*Letters*, 4:189.

take the form of "the life of holiness" or "the ethics of holiness," the rationale being that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." Since holiness is a "pure heart," this state of grace is essential to a holy life. As Wiley states it, "it must be evident that the outward or ethical life of the Christian takes its character from the quality of the inner or spiritual life."¹ C. W. Ruth also insists that "a holy heart is the condition for and secret of living a holy life. To undertake to live a holy life with an unholy heart is to undertake the impossible."²

So far as outward holiness is concerned, no difference is seen between the life of the "merely" regenerated and the entirely sanctified person. This accounts for the difficulty in living the Christian life short of the second crisis that is portrayed by much of early holiness literature. The heart is impure, having "something within which was antagonistic to the spiritual life implanted."³

As Dr. Orval J. Nease, former General Superintendent said,

Complete inner harmony is not realized in regeneration. The Bible and experience agree that the unsanctified heart is a divided heart--a double heart. Outward defeat is occasioned by inward disharmony. Sanctification rids the soul of the inner foe, and aligns the forces of the moral nature against the outer enemy.⁴

C. W. Ruth states very succinctly why ethical interest is restricted to the life of holiness: "The beauty of sanctification is that it removes from the heart everything that is antagonistic to a holy life, and puts His Spirit within you, which will 'cause' you to walk in His statutes and keep His judgments and do them (Eze. 36:27)."⁵

This principle appears to be expressed in two different directions, one rather provincial, the other having the character of a full-orbed ethical theory.

¹Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3:8. Cf. also 2:492-493.

²Ruth, *Entire Sanctification*, 49.

³*Ibid.*, 26.

⁴Quoted in Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3:8.

⁵Ruth, *Entire Sanctification*, 50.

In the stereotyped delineation of the meaning of sanctification, early holiness writers laid stress on "separation" as one of its essential ingredients. It is logical and almost unavoidable that this meaning should be transferred to the life of holiness as well. Therefore C. W. Ruth is found saying: "The importance of separation from the world can scarcely be exaggerated--especially so in view of the worldliness that has crept into the church."¹

This indicates one of the dominant characteristics of holiness ethical thinking. The life of holiness was often conceived exclusively in terms of unworldliness, or separateness. Later on in this study, the implications of this ethical attitude will be examined in its application to the moral life.

The nearest thing to a developed ethical theory operates in another direction. It seems to take its cue from the nature of the work of sanctification. This work of grace "eradicates the carnal nature," the most common (and biblical) term for the sin remaining in believers. R. S. Foster gives a definition of the carnal nature that adequately represents the early holiness position:

It is that derangement of man's moral nature, induced by his transgression, whereby the harmonious acting of all the attributes of his soul has become warped and perverted; so that they no longer cheerfully and implicitly obey the divine requirements, but rise up in opposition to that which is holy, and just and good.²

Very clearly expressed here is the concept of an inner principle, the essence of which is to rebel against law. Wiley's statement bears out this understanding both as to the nature of sin that remains and the results of its removal: "Sanctification as an instantaneous act, cleanses from all sin, and brings the believer to a place of obedience, internally and externally."³

¹Ibid., 31.

²Foster, *Christian Purity*, 124. Cf. also 127-128.

³Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 2:485.

If the nature of inner sin is incipient disobedience, and its removal introduces the spirit of obedience, the logical result is an ethic of duty or adherence to law freely observed. Consonant with this systematic relation, Wiley defines ethics as the science of Duty,¹ which seeks to answer the question, "What ought we to do?"²

Therefore the subject matter of ethics is law, since this is what regulates the conduct of the Christian. This law takes two forms: 1) the natural law which is native to every man and 2) the positive law which is the expression of God's "free will" and therefore discoverable only as it is revealed. These two are not in conflict, but in fact may be identical at points. The highest expression of Christian ethics is the life of Jesus Christ but the specific directives are found in the Scriptures that provide "the ground for the general system of Christian ethics" as well as "specific Christian duties."³

Due to the nature of the holy heart, duty is not foreign to the sanctified believer but "the true spring of obedience is found in divine love."⁴ Love, however, is seen from one point of view as the motive and strength for doing one's duty,⁵ and from another point of view as "the substance of all obligation--whether to God or man."⁶

The close correlation between ethics as duty or obedience and the sanctified nature is seen in the following statement:

While the law is written upon the heart, it is still a law, and therefore, necessitates the dignity of an external standard also, in conformity with the inner law of life, by which man is delivered from outward compulsion, and given the freedom to develop according to the new law of his nature. Thus he keeps the law, by the unfolding of his inner nature which is now in harmony with that law. The keynote of this new nature is love, and thus love is the fulfilling of the law.⁷

¹Ibid., 3:9.

²Ibid., 7.

³Ibid., 9-11.

⁴Ibid., 12.

⁵Ibid., 25-26.

⁶Ibid., 30.

Practically applied, these principles are seen in terms of duties that focus in three directions: toward God, toward self and toward others. The last is the area of social ethics.

All these duties revolve around the central concern for personal holiness. In regard to the first, "Christian character is unfolded only in loyal relation to the divine;" as regards duties to oneself, they are "essential to the formation of Christian character;" and lastly, other-obligation has "its source in, and flows from the character of the individual."¹

A holiness state produces a life in according with its own nature and through duty or obedience and moral discipline the Christian character is developed. "It is the duty of each individual, therefore, to cultivate the highest standards of ethical life and to conscientiously observe every rule of moral obligation."²

In the understanding of the early holiness groups, these moral obligations or duties that the sanctified individual will observe take definite form. What they are and from whence they are derived will be the next topic of inquiry.

¹Ibid., 29.

¹Ibid., 36.

²Ibid., 58-59.

WHENCE CAME THESE RULES?

Since it is the official understanding of the Church of the Nazarene that its ethical standards are "well expressed in the General and Special Rules," it is the purpose of this chapter to trace the historical roots of these particular formulations as they appeared in the *Manual* up to the mid 1970's,¹ with only minor changes. There were several changes that took place prior to this time with both additions and deletions as the Church emerged into a full-fledged denomination. Most of these changes occurred before 1911, but the content of the rules was more or less finalized in 1928. The history of these developments will be analyzed in the next chapter. Here, reference shall primarily be made to the source of the particular subjects addressed by the rules for behavior with an attempt to show where they originated as well as the way they were modified in the Nazarene context. This involves analyzing documentary sources, but also includes a study of historical and sociological factors that may have influenced the conscience of the Church as it sought to delineate itself from the "world," and keep itself pure.

The Methodist Heritage

Since the Church of the Nazarene came into being largely under the influence of Methodist teaching,² it was natural that the traditional Methodistic lifestyle as laid down in the Methodist *Discipline* of that time would reappear among the "children" of Methodism. While briefer, and more simply stated, the general outline of the ethical ~~requirements for membership~~ was, in the earlier decades, quite similar.

¹At this time, a major change occurred that marked a turning point in the Church's official ethical consciousness. The distinctive features of Nazarene morality did not disappear but a significant shift in understanding the nature of ethical legislation took place.

²This is not to suggest that the Church of the Nazarene was a split from the Methodist Church. The original denomination involved persons from several theological traditions. However, most of the leading figures and many of the original participants had been nurtured in Methodist discipline.

More remotely, both formulations stem from John Wesley's rules for his Societies. Since the early Methodist *Discipline* simply reproduced the Society rules, and the *Manual* statements derive their specifications from Wesley via the *Discipline*, both the near and remote documentary sources of the Nazarene rules will be examined.¹

Both denominational forms of the "General Rules" were divided into three major divisions although these divisions were not exactly parallel. The first division is negative in character in both forms. The second section of the Nazarene version telescoped the basic elements of the second and third sections of the Methodist form and in its own third section sets forth a requirement of conformity to church "doctrines and usages." A similar admonition was found in paragraph 33 of the *Discipline* which was also a part of the full statement concerning the United Societies. The reason for this restructuring is that the Methodist form was originally set up for a "Society" while a denomination is in the picture for the Nazarenes.

Neither statement, as Nolen B. Harmon said of the Methodist form, was "intended to be a complete system of Christian ethics." They rather presuppose common Christian morality and consequently "emphasize and pinpoint Christian morality at stressful places."² But this obviously means that they give attention to certain unique points that were evidently felt to have some particular relevance to the special purposes of the life of the Church.

The rule having to do with profane use of the Divine name was identical in both cases but a significant addition of two restrictions was made in the Nazarene edition of the one having to do with the observance of the "Lord's Day." In addition to prohibiting unnecessary labor or business on this day, the two additional items concern "patronizing or reading of secular papers" and "holiday diversions." Both reflect an attempt to speak to new problems that had emerged since Wesley's day.³

¹This comparison makes use of the 1908 *Discipline* of the Methodist Episcopal Church since this is the year the Church of the Nazarene was officially constituted. There is some development in Wesley's rules and where relevant, note will be taken of this fact.

²Nolen B. Harmon, *Understanding the Methodist Church* (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1955), 80. Cf. McNulty, "John Wesley," 61.

Although there were news sheets circulated in 18th century England, it remained for American developments to bring this phenomenon into focus as having sufficiently widespread appeal to require attention in church pronouncements. It was only in the mid-nineteenth century that the newspaper developed into a media available to the general public. Prior to the so-called "penny-revolution" in 1833-35 which "depended upon technological improvements of presses and papermaking, and which achieved large circulations by emphasis on sensation and human interest," the cost was prohibitive for any but the well-to-do.¹

The heyday of the modern newspaper probably could be dated from 1882 when Joseph Pulitzer began a new style of journalism marked by "crusading, variety, improved format and a *Sunday edition*."² Undoubtedly, this Sunday enlargement, along with the character of journalism known as "yellow journalism" and the "comic strips" which arose in the circulation war between the Pulitzer and Hearst chains created a new situation to which the church felt it should speak if holiness was to pervade all of life.³

The *Discipline* simply condemns "Drunkenness" which may be interpreted as a genuinely "temperance" reference.⁴ Wesley, himself, may have allowed even wider latitude as he made a distinction between "spirituous" liquors and presumably those that had been brewed. While he recognized a possible valid use of the former as medicine he found it chiefly used as a beverage and as such

³The emergence of the "Continental Sabbath" in America with the consequent breakdown of the Puritan Sabbath will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

¹Irving Dillard, "Newspaper," *American People's Encyclopedia*, 1966 edition, 13:424-429. "The first English Dailey was the London *Daily Courant*, founded in 1702 by Elizabeth Mallett."

²*Ibid.*, emphasis added.

³*Ibid.*

⁴A paragraph in the Special Advices distinguishes between temperance in regard to neutral matters and those positively evil. In connection with the latter it advocates total abstinence in such matters as alcoholic beverages. It appears specifically designed to avoid a "loose" interpretation of the general rule.

condemned it with great severity.¹ However he did not necessarily condemn the use of wine and similar beverages produced by natural fermentation, but Harmon (in 1955) in interpreting the Methodist *Discipline* states that the modern follower of Wesley "decisively rejects any distinction of this sort."²

The *Manual* is much more decisive on this point, taking an unequivocal prohibitionist stand that includes not only total abstinence from use of intoxicants but also from "trafficking therein." In addition a church member is pledged to voting against any attempt to provide a liquor outlet.

The early Nazarenes were extremely active in the prohibitionist movement. Dr. P.F. Bresee participated vigorously in the movement in California and helped establish Pasadena as the first "dry" city in the state. In fact, he was so prominent in the contest that the opponents of prohibition "burned him in effigy, and attacked him in the most vituperative manner in the public press of the city."³

At least on one occasion Bresee declared that prohibition stood with holiness as the Church's two leading tenets. On occasion, he turned his Sunday evening service into a prohibition rally, with a heavily advertised speaker. At the close of the meetings, in place of the altar call, the pastor would give a rousing exhortation and ask every man present to stand to his feet and take the pledge to fight the liquor traffic to the death.⁴

To the prohibition of intoxicating liquors, is added a new feature in the Nazarene rules: the decree against using and trafficking in tobacco. While this issue was not agreed upon unanimously by the earliest groups forming the denomination, it finally became an integral

¹Wesley, *Works*, 6:128-129; 11:55; *Letters*, 5:134; 6:129.

²Harmon, *Understanding*, 83. Wesley spoke of wine as "one of the noblest cordials in nature" (*Works*, 3:443) and thought that if it was a good kind, agreeable to one's constitution and used sparingly, "full as wholesome as any liquor in the world except water." (*Works*, 14:266). In a letter to the Bishop of London he makes it clear that he drank wine and could see no wrong in it (*Works*, 8:490).6.22

³E. A. Girvin, *A Prince in Israel* (K.C.: Pentecostal Nazarene Publishing House, 1916). 88.

⁴Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 125.

part of its moral code. Neither the *Discipline* nor Wesley's General Rules made any reference to the use of this product, however Wesley does include it in his more narrow directions to his Bands under the heading of "needless self-indulgences."

In a letter to one of his preachers, Wesley points out a distinction, which should be made in preaching, between "weightier matters of the law" and "several (comparatively) little things." These latter should be mentioned in the sermon from time to time and includes among them "curing oneself from lice and itch" and using tobacco. Since it is an enslaving habit and unclean, it should be avoided "unless prescribed by a Physician."¹

Three of Wesley's rules never appeared in the *Manual* due to the passage of time and historical changes. These deal with slave-holding, buying and selling uncustomed goods, and usury. The former was a burning moral issue in Wesley's day both in England and America.² Because of this issue, the two major sectors of American Methodism divided, with the Southern Church dropping the rule from its *Discipline*.³ But by the time the Church of the Nazarene came into existence the issue had been "settled" by way of the Civil War and there was therefore no need to include it.

Dr. Bresee, during his Methodist ministry was a strong anti-slavery preacher. One of his appointments was at Grinnell, Iowa where the Methodist Church was composed largely of Southern people. As Bresee himself put it:

They were very strong in their feeling of sympathy with the Rebellion, and I was very strong in my loyalty and anti-slavery conviction. Hence I did not feel that it was best for the church on that charge for me to go back. I had already more or less grieved these people by my preaching of what they regarded as Abolition doctrine,

¹*Works*, 12:248.

²Gerald O. McCulloh, "The Theology and Practices of Methodism, 1876-1919," *The History of American Methodism* ed. by Emory S. Bucke (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1964), 2:638.

³Cf. Wesley's essay, "Thoughts upon Slavery" (1774), *Works*, 11:59ff.

and I saw that it would be very difficult for me to get along with them. So I told the Presiding Elder that I did not want to go back.¹

Wesley had strong words to say about the evils of avoiding paying duty. Such levy was something relatively new and the English people "bitterly resented the idea that the government should tax any of their possession which they brought into the country."²

The rightness of this had come to be generally accepted by the late nineteenth century, therefore there was no need to make mention of it in a church rule, although the Methodists retained it, but only as a matter of "historic interest."

Likewise, the emergence of capitalism had all but completely obliterated the traditional Hebrew-Christian opposition to charging interest on money loaned. Any word spoken here would be in terms of condemning unjust practices in lending and borrowing. Wesley himself intended this meaning since he explained usury as "unlawful interest."³

The meaning of this rule is no doubt encompassed in the Nazarene statement concerning "taking advantage in buying and selling." But there is not nearly the attempt to direct the personal financial affairs of the church members as was the case with Wesley who further included in his rules the prohibition against "borrowing without a probability of paying, or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them."⁴

The *Discipline*, under the heading of things to be avoided for "the glory of God," summarizes very succinctly those matters generally grouped under the rubric of worldliness. While this same motif is

¹Quoted in Girvin, *Prince in Israel*, 40.

²Harmon, *Understanding*, 83. Cf. Wesley's "Address to a Smuggler," *Works*, 11:174-178.

³Edition of 1764. Cf. *Notes on the New Testament* on Luke 19:23.

⁴Wesley preached often upon the dangers of riches and the true use of money, manifesting a tremendous fear of the influence of an inordinate desire for wealth on his Methodists. Cf. *Works*, 7:1ff; 214ff; 355ff; 6:124ff. This rule was incorporated in the *Manual* of legalistic groups which separated from the Church of the Nazarene in the last half of the twentieth century.

retained in relation to similar items, the *Manual* enlarges the specifications into two extensively stated rules (more space than any other), one having to do chiefly with dress, the other with "songs, literature and entertainments."

With regard to dress, the literal statement of all three editions is quite similar, but the rationale for the behavior varies. Wesley's main concern seems to be that buying costly raiment is poor stewardship of possessions, although he does indicate other problems. Even among those who could "afford" it--and most Methodists evidently could not--it was forbidden. "It is stark, staring nonsense," he says, to claim that one can afford expensive adornment. "No man living can *afford* to waste any part of what God has committed to his trust." Money spent in this way should be used to feed the hungry.¹

In his directions to the Bands, dated Dec. 25, 1744, he includes more particular instructions including the abstaining from "needless ornaments, such as rings, ear-rings, necklaces, lace, ruffles." Several reasons are advanced for avoiding such adornment, but basically they all root in the idea that it is conducive of worldly mindedness and militates against heavenly mindedness.²

He does acknowledge that it is perfectly in order for people whose position requires them to dress in finery, to do so. But the Methodists belonged to the common people and therefore it was out of character to dress in the finery of the court. To do so was pretense and hypocrisy since they would be "aping the gentlemen" and ladies.³

Harmon argued that modern Methodists call attention to the disappearance of this class stratification and conclude therewith that this matter need not be taken seriously.⁴ Although Wesley's disciples apparently never followed him explicitly at this point in any consistent manner, the trend toward aping "fashion" in dress took on major proportions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵

¹*Works*, 7:19ff.

²*Works*, 7:270; 19-22; 11:468-470.

³*Works*, 11:477-478.

⁴Harmon, *Understanding*, 89.

The *Manual* attempted to root its restrictions in Scripture, evidently to bypass the possibility of such a provincial interpretation. But it was also a reaction to the landslide of "worldliness" that permeated the nineteenth century "old-line" churches.

Although the *Discipline* rules do not enlarge upon their mention of "diversions," the *Manual* becomes quite specific including in its scope "the theatre, the ballroom, the circus and like places," also lotteries and games of chance and membership in oathbound secret orders such as the Masons although no group is specifically mentioned.¹

In the earliest days, the theatre as referred to in the *Manual* was understood to mean the stage. It was objected to because, as B.F. Haynes put it, "it is diametrically opposed to everything for which the church stands, and stands for that which the church has always opposed."² However with the emergence of the moving picture industry and its transforming effect upon American manners in dress and social decorum and its contribution to the "decline of the Cult of Respectability with its humdrum of good provider and its plugging wife and mother,"³ the Church of the Nazarene transferred its opposition to this medium of entertainment.⁴

Since, in these early days, the evangelistic labors of the Church

⁵Cf. L.W. Munhall, *Breakers! Methodism Adrift* (N.Y.: Charles C. Cook, 1913), 173-178, and McCulloh's statement that "in the period from 1876 to 1919 the administration of discipline in Methodism was greatly relaxed," *Methodism*, 638. See Wesley's pathetic note in *Works*, 7:24.

¹Paragraph V of the Special Advices in the *Discipline* does enlarge upon the matter of amusements, and specifically mentions "theatre-going, dancing, and such games of chance as are frequently associated with gambling." However there is no prohibition, but a strong warning that "careful thought and frequent prayer" be given to where one finds his diversions.

²"The Case against the Stage," *Herald of Holiness*, July 13, 1913, 4; cf. also the same edition, an article entitled, "Evil of the Theatre," 2.

³Leland D. Baldwin, *The Stream of American History* (N.Y.: American Book Co., 1957), 2:561.

⁴Cf. B.F. Haynes, "Immoral Tendencies," *Herald of Holiness*, August 13, 1913, 1; "Censorship Needed," *Herald of Holiness*, Aug. 7, 1912, 3.

were directed chiefly towards the poorer classes, they would naturally be concerned with anything that would militate against the spiritual well-being of these people. Thus the fact that the movie theaters were "originally concentrated in poor districts" and were considered not too respectable would give strong basis for taking this stand.¹

John Wesley himself had a strict attitude toward amusements, but McNulty insists that it was not as rigid as those views held by some of his contemporaries. He points out that Wesley felt such diversions as dancing and attendance at the theatre tended to divert one from pursuing the Christian life with singleness of heart, but he did not condemn them *en toto*. Gambling was a little less neutral and would inevitably produce covetousness.² Monk's conclusions bear this out: "Wesley's selections from the Puritans in The Library of Christian Classics and otherwise seem to concentrate on the spiritual nature and vitality of the Christian life, on the purity of its holiness rather than instruction in such things as dress, plays and the arts."³

In a letter to the Mayor and Corporation of Bristol, Wesley voices his objection to their efforts to build a new play-house in the city. Although he avers that "most of the present stage entertainment saps the foundation of all religion as they naturally tend to efface all traces of piety and seriousness out of the minds of men," his major objection is based on his opinion that they

are peculiarly hurtful to a trading city, giving a wrong turn to youth especially, gay, trifling, and directly opposite to the spirit of industry and close application to business; and as drinking and debauchery of every kind are close attendants on these entertainments, with indolence, effeminacy, and idleness, which affect trade in a high degree.⁴

John Wesley's Sources

¹Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence* (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), 335.

²McNulty, "Moral Teaching," 68-75.

³Robert C. Monk, *John Wesley, his Puritan Heritage* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 230.

⁴*Works*, 12:128.

The question may now be asked concerning the source of Wesley's rules and in answering this question, a further one will be illuminated, namely, what purpose did Wesley envision for these standards to accomplish. This is primarily the problem of the rationale for the rules, a question which must also be put to the Nazarene form.

To begin with, it should be observed that Wesley was formulating directions for his Societies, composed of Methodists who were endeavoring to actualize in their own lives the ideals and spiritual goals which their spiritual mentor had sought in his own experience, specifically Christian perfection. The idea of a Society with such a specific aim was not new, a number of them being in existence for special purposes during Wesley's own day.

Specifically "religious societies" began to be formed about 1678 and "it is certain that Wesley was aware of the existence of these societies, and was familiar with their organization."¹ From the "Orders" of these earlier Societies, it may be learned that their sole design was "to promote real holiness of heart and life." One of the men who influenced them, a Dr. Anthony Horneck, taught a broad concept of holiness which anticipated the doctrines that were made prominent by Wesley in the eighteenth century. Dr. Horneck's view was "thoroughly 'evangelical' . . . with a steady hand he points to the path of perfect love as the way to Christian perfection."²

By Wesley's day these groups had lost their vitality and had been replaced by new Religious Societies that differed somewhat from the earlier ones. One chief difference was that in the newer ones, no emphasis was laid upon the society members' attendance upon the Sacraments of the Church (of England).

Among these newer groups was the Society at Fetterlane that was organized under Moravian influence with John Wesley as president. Even though relation with the Church of England was not a membership requirement, nor attendance at the means of grace, Wesley no doubt used his influence to insist upon the members

¹John S. Simon, *John Wesley and the Religious Societies* (London: The Epworth Press, 1955), 10-15.

²Ibid., 19-20.

availing themselves of such opportunities. However, in time his influence waned and this aspect was affected. This is revealed by his exhortation to them in 1739 after an absence from London for some time. He urged them "to keep close to the church and to all the ordinances of God, and to aim only at living a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."¹

Concurrently with his disappointment with the Fetterlane Society, other events were occurring that eventuated in the organization of a new Society bearing the name, "Methodist." This took place in late 1739 and early 1740. John S. Simon, in a significant paragraph, points out the differences between this Society and its' counterparts:

It was formed on lines differing essentially from those on which the Religious Societies were based. There is no evidence that Wesley, at the time of its foundation, drew up "Orders" for its government; but it is significant that there was only one condition previously required in persons who sought admission into it. It was imperative that they should possess "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins." If a Churchman or Dissenter, an Arminian or a Calvinist, was moved by that desire, and sought admission, he was welcomed. When the Society in London increased in numbers, and similar Societies were formed elsewhere, it became necessary to regulate them more definitely, but it was not until 1743 that John Wesley drew up specific "Rules" for their guidance. The absence of elaborate organization was a sign that the new Society was not a "Religious Society." Consciously or unconsciously Wesley had entered on a new path which diverged from the way in which he had walked with old companions, and led him towards the extraordinary successes of his work as an evangelist.²

What Simon says in his later book about these Societies and Wesley's relation to them, may with equal truth be said in relation to the Moravian societies: "He was undoubtedly influenced by them but their 'atmosphere' differs altogether from that of the 'rules'." But Peters is no doubt correct when he concludes among Wesley's debts to the Moravians the idea of "the disciplinary nurture of the bands."³

¹Ibid., 200, 323.

²Ibid., 329-30.

Wesley's personal religious quest had been greatly stimulated by way of acquaintance with three writers: William Law, Jeremy Taylor and Thomas a' Kempis. The significance of a prescribed regimen for developing the Christian life is emphasized by all of them. William Law is quoted by Umphrey Lee as saying: "Either Reason and Religion prescribe rules and ends to all the ordinary actions of our life, or they do not: If they do, then it is necessary to govern all our actions by these rules, as it is necessary to worship God."¹ In this statement is included a dual emphasis, both of which influenced Wesley--namely a means and an end, thus giving his whole system under Law's tutelage, a teleological character.²

While Jeremy Taylor's major contribution to Wesley's theological thought was the idea of "purity of intention" which he took over as essential to his understanding of Christian perfection it is difficult to avoid concluding that Taylor's *Rules for Holy Living and Holy Dying* must have made an impact upon the mind of this young seeker after perfection so far as the importance of "Rules" is concerned.³ Wesley, himself, said concerning this source:

It was in pursuance of an advice given by Bishop Taylor, in the *Rules for Holy Living and Dying*, that about fifteen years ago [about 1725], I began to take a more exact account than I had done before of the manner wherein I spent my time, writing down how I had employed every hour.⁴

Relevant in relation to the third writer is Lee's description of the *Imitation of Christ* as "a book for ordered lives, setting out rules and

³Simon, *Methodist Societies*, 105; Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 62. Cf. also Tyerman, *Life*, 1:187.

¹Umphrey Lee, *John Wesley and Modern Religion* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1936), 214, cited from Law, *Works*, 4:10.

²Charles Randall Wilson, "The Correlation of Love and Law in the Theology of John Wesley," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1959), 24.

³*Works*, 11:366.

⁴*Journal*, 1:83.

methods for a self-denying, sometimes ascetic, way of living."¹

Not to be overlooked in this regard was the influence of Susanna Wesley, whose control of her household took the form of what has been characterized as a "barracks-like discipline." No man with any natural disposition toward a regular way of life "could have escaped a bent toward some form of methodism as a result of Susannah Wesley's training and teaching."² At least her rigor helped create a compulsive personality in her son John. Thus his whole life was organized against waste and for the purposes of accomplishing the goals which he set for himself.

All of this still leaves unanswered the question concerning the source of the particular formulations which Wesley set before the Methodists for their direction. John S. Simon has conclusively shown that Wesley was materially dependent upon a book which he himself had abridged in 1753, *Primitive Christianity* by William Cave. Simon says:

When he was writing the "rules" in Newcastle, it seems probable that the book was actually before him. If not, the memory of its contents was quick in his mind and guided his hand. In many of their particulars Cave's book and Wesley's "rules" coincide; and we find it impossible to believe that the coincidences were undesigned.³

Cave's book was a study of the morals of the church of the first centuries. The second and third parts of the work deal with "the religion of the primitive Christians as to those virtues that respect themselves," and "their religion as respecting other men." This two-fold division, as had been pointed out, informed Wesley's rules. Attention is further called to their unworldliness in abstinence from amusements and in plainness of dress, and their refusal to indulge themselves in undisciplined living, all evils which are mentioned by Wesley.⁴

¹Lee, *Wesley*, 214.

²*Ibid.*, 213.

³Simon, *Methodist Societies*, 105.

⁴William Cave, *Primitive Christianity; or the Religion of the Ancient Christians in the first Ages of the Gospel* (London: J.G. for R. Chiswell, 1676).

When it is remembered that Wesley was an avid student of Patristic church history, feeling that here Christianity could be found in its pristine purity, it is not strange that he should have eagerly taken over the morals of this period for himself and his people. In this way one would be recovering the purity and power of the uncorrupted faith.

One other factor may be mentioned, namely, the influence of Puritan morality upon Wesley. Monk points out that "the resemblance between Wesley and the Puritan ethos has been commonly recognized, especially the similarity of their teachings concerning the outward manifestations of the Christian life."¹

While the term, "Puritan," had certain ecclesiastical connotations it came to be used as descriptive generally of any group emphasizing "disciplined, stringent and austere living of the Christian life." This was the natural result of the Puritan mentality since "more than Luther, Calvin found in the Bible a law which regulates the Christian life."²

It was on this basis that many of Wesley's contemporaries as well as later students of his work saw him to be reviving the spirit and practice of Puritanism.³ However, this was part of a general tendency during Wesley's day. The Puritan commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell had created a sweeping reaction against Puritanism because of its severe demands upon the people.⁴ But by Wesley's lifetime the "people were beginning to sicken of the immoralities of the Restoration era," and a new Puritanism appeared.⁵

There are a number of affinities between the Wesleyan revival and the new Puritanism, since its representatives stood for a general simplification of religion. They initiated an earnest search for personal piety through the organization of small societies, placed an emphasis

¹Monk, *John Wesley*, 15.

²George M. Stephenson, *The Puritan Heritage* (N.Y.: The MacMillan Co., 1952), 14.

³Monk, *John Wesley*, 16.

⁴Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason* (Bristol, England: Penguin Books, 1960), 53-54

⁵Merrill E. Gaddis, "Christian Perfectionism in America," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1929), 119.

on self-discipline and on close oversight of society members, and evidenced a hostility for all things worldly.¹

Gaddis completes his observation of the similarity between the two by noting that

with the growing ascendancy of Methodism and the adoption by Wesley of distinctively Arminian and perfectionistic principles and techniques for the new organization, the semi-ascetic or "reform" side of Puritanism was transferred more and more to Methodist auspices. Methodism, therefore arose as an Arminianized Puritanism--so far as its English ancestry is concerned--and it has not to this day lost its Puritan character.²

How the Rules Function

What was the purpose for Wesley's imposition of a disciplined life upon both himself and his followers? The answer may be learned by looking at Wesley's definition of religion as a "constant ruling habit of soul, a renewal of our minds in the image of God, a recovery of the divine likeness, a still increasing conformity of heart to the pattern of our most holy Redeemer."³

Here is expressed the ideal of maturity that gave vitality to the gradual element in Christian perfection. It recognizes a purity that admits of continual increase. It is this ideal that is, as Peters puts it, "the result of a discipline of life, energized initially by the grace of God and utilizing the instantaneous endowment in a more expeditious growth toward spiritual maturity."⁴

Thus it was that the rules and methods were prudential means that were ordained toward achieving this "ruling habit of mind," this complete "recovery of the divine likeness." It has already been observed that Wesley could speak meaningfully of means to holiness, therefore this is perfectly in accord with his theological understanding.

Wesley's attitude toward the nature of rules in general may be

¹Ibid., 119.

²Ibid.

³*Letters*, 1:152.

⁴Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 65.

indicated in a letter to a Society member. "General rules are easily laid down," he wrote, "but it is not possible to apply them accurately in particular cases, without the anointing of the Holy One."

Thus it is impossible to provide an exhaustive directory of rules, the essential element in correctly making use of general precepts or principles in particular circumstances being a spiritual one. This Wesley calls "the anointing," which doubtless reflects his acquaintance with 1 John 2:27 (from one of his favorite books) and stresses the fact that divine aid is indispensable in ethical behavior consonant with Christian perfection.

In the 1743 edition of the "Rules," Wesley affirms that all of them are taught in the written Word which is "the only rule and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice." Thus he expresses his firm belief that the rules were in harmony with the spirit and precepts of the Bible. There is furthermore a close similarity between the "Rules" and his essay on *The Character of a Methodist*, both of which explore the two areas of duty to God and duty to our fellowman based upon the two great commandments to love God and neighbor. Thus both are an expression particularly of his understanding of Christian perfection and its ethical implications.¹

With this understanding of John Wesley's own view of how the rules for his people should function, we may now turn to examine the rationale for the rules that have appeared in the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene. The documentary answer to the question is found in these words:

It is required of all who desire to unite with the Church of the Nazarene, and thus to walk in fellowship with us, that they shall show evidence of salvation from their sins by a godly walk and vital piety; that they shall be, or earnest desire to be, cleansed from all indwelling sin; and that they shall evidence this by . . .²

And then follows the General Rules. This is to be compared with the statement of Wesley that "There is only one condition previously required by those who desire admission into these Societies--'a desire

¹ John S. Simon, *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies* (London: Epworth Press, 1923), 104-105. Cf. "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," *Works*, 11:387.

² *Manual* (1964), par. 25.

to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins'," along with a statement that this desire "will be shown by its fruits." Those who expect to remain related to the Society "shall continue to evidence their desire of salvation" by observing the Rules.

There is little difference in the statements made, but upon comparing them with the diverse tendencies of the theological understanding as explained previously, considerable difference appears. If one takes the term "salvation" in Wesley's usage to refer to the whole work of God in restoring the Divine image, it may be equated with "sanctification" though with recognizable nuances of difference. Nevertheless, with this meaning, Wesley's rules could never be used as a criterion for one's judging himself to have arrived at the apex of the Christian life. Rather they are continuing prods toward evermore perfect realization of this likeness.

In the Nazarene statement, the rules are "evidence" that one either *is* or *is seeking to be* "cleansed from all indwelling sin."¹ The question must then be raised as to the function of the rules in the life of one who has attained this "state of grace." One must conclude that they serve as criteria for determining that one has arrived at the point of full cleansing from indwelling sin, a function entirely different from Wesley's due to the theological difference.

Another point, however, must be explained before this documentary study can be brought to a close. This has to do with the reshaping of the three major sections of the General Rules as noted earlier in this chapter. Umphrey Lee has stated the reason for Wesley's particular organization of them rather adequately when he observes that "if Wesley strove to preserve discipline and method in religion, he also sought to keep his followers *in the stream of church life*."²

Wesley's purpose in organizing his societies was never to establish a new church. He was too loyal an Anglican for that and too high-church to feel that one could satisfactorily live the Christian life apart from the means of grace provided by the Church. Rather his Societies were "voluntary associations for the promotion of holiness."³

¹ *Ibid.*

² Lee, *John Wesley*, 234, italics mine. Cf. *Letters*, 3:144-147.

³ Lee, *John Wesley*, 262.

Thus the reasons why Wesley insisted in the third section of his Rules that his Society members maintain their attendance at the established Church and her sacrament were to avoid the "stillness" of the Moravians and participate in the grace to be received in the ministrations of the Church.

In American Methodism, the situation was different since it did not function within the context of an established church, but was an independent denomination in its own right. Consonant with this new situation, Nolan Harmon speaks of this third section as pointing to "the churchliness of Methodism" thus making the rules more than personal pietism."¹

In its third section, the *Manual* substitutes a pledge of conformity to "doctrines and usages" of the church with no indication of its being different in character from the previous two parts. It can only be said that it is very curious to list denomination loyalty as an "evidence" that one is cleansed from indwelling sin.

Inheriting the "Puritan Ethic"

In a paper read before the National Holiness Association, Harold B. Kuhn, then Professor of Philosophy of Religion at Asbury Theological Seminary, addressed himself to the problem of ethics in the American Holiness movement. He acknowledged that it attempted to retain the practice of "primitive Wesleyanism" but that this stream was "enriched by such other sources as the perfectionism of seventeenth century Quakerism and continental Pietism." This constellation of emphases thus created an ethical milieu within which the holiness movement emerged. Consequently, says Kuhn, it "was never forced to erect a system of ethics *as such*; she found the general outlines of her ethical emphasis ready-made."²

From the paper, it is impossible to tell precisely what Kuhn understood this ready-made ethical theory to be as distinct from its practical application, but from the few brief remarks made, it appears that he intended simply the idea that the moral life is the

¹Harmon, *Understanding*, 26.

²Harold B. Kuhn, "Ethics and the Holiness Movement," *Insights into Holiness*, ed. By Kenneth Geiger (K.C.: Beacon Hill press, 1962), 241.

implementation of an inner experience. "The life which is pleasing to God," he says, "was held to issue solely from an inner spiritual state in which inner doubleness of purpose and inner chaos of motivation have been resolved and simplified." This implies that all of life is brought under the sway of this transformed personality.¹

Few ethicists would agree that this could constitute more than an ingredient in an ethical theory, certainly not a full orb ed scheme. The statement about the ethical heritage of the American holiness movement is correct, however, so far as it goes. The fact is, that aside from this core theological assertion, which the holiness movement in general and the Church of the Nazarene in particular did take over and stress, the ethical traditions mentioned by Kuhn *did* create a "moral matrix" that decidedly influenced the formulations of standards for such holiness denominations as the Church of the Nazarene.

In discussing the holiness revival at Oberlin about mid-nineteenth century, Timothy Smith noted that "a synthesis of the Quaker, Pietist, Methodist and Puritan traditions of personal holiness was at work in American religion" to create a temper of mind that was congenial to Charles G. Finney's perfectionist preaching.² As the century progressed, the tendency to "identify sanctification with an individualistic puritanism" intensified. This came to mean eventually that "strict adherence to a set of stringent and sacrosanct regulations" was the "proof of orthodoxy."³

Thus, Gaddis, after pointing out the affinity of Wesley's own Arminian perfectionism with the Puritan manner of life says that this union was particularly perpetuated in America by "Methodist and Methodist-derived holiness denominations." These groups have quite uniformly insisted on simplicity of worship and of external religious requirements; plainness of dress and avoidance of material display; abstinence from questionable amusements and debilitating habits.⁴

In his work on *Perfect Love* (1880), J.A. Wood takes an

¹Ibid., 241-242.

²Smith, *Revivalism*, 108.

³Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 130.

⁴Gaddis, "Christian Perfectionism," 119.

uncompromising stand on the issues of fashion and worldly amusements. The whole drift of fashion, he insists, is away from godliness and is a "withering curse" and "paralyzing influence" in the church. "It is impossible to follow the fashions of this world," he affirms, "and at the same time fully obey God." As to worldly amusements, the sanctified have the gift of the Comforter, and therefore "do not need amusements, such as dancing, games, theaters, and the like, which worldly people seek."¹

This equation was also apparently accepted in the Methodist Church since a paragraph, called by McCulloh the *index expurgatorius*, was adopted into the *Discipline* in 1872 laying stress upon such matters. The paragraph dealt with trial of members accused of imprudent and unchristian conduct such as indulging sinful tempers or words; the buying, selling, or using intoxicating liquors as a beverage, signing petitions in favor of granting license for the sale of intoxicating liquors, becoming bondsmen for persons engaged in such traffic or renting property as a place in or on which to manufacture or sell intoxicating liquors; dancing, playing at games of chance; attending theaters, horse races, circuses, dancing parties, or patronizing dancing schools, or taking such other amusements as are obviously of misleading or questionable moral tendency.

When this enactment later came under fire, one of its defenders wrote:

Holiness unto the Lord, and separation from the fashions, fads and frivolities of the world were, in the minds and consciences of the earlier Methodists, inseparable. Mr. Wesley's Rule, which forbade "Taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus," and which became a disciplinary rule, was, by all good Methodists, believed to forbid dancing, card-playing and theatre going.²

The aforementioned paragraph concerning diversions was not included in the *Discipline* of the Southern branch of the Methodist Church. This is significant in the light of the fact that much of

¹Wood, *Perfect Love*, 301-304.

²Munhall, *Breakers*, 166.

Methodism in the south did not take to the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification as did the northern branch, and as Smith points out, this made the history of the holiness movement in this area different from that in other sections of the country.¹ If holiness and puritanism were held together in the minds of the people of this period, the situation is obviously that with the neglect of one, neglect of the other logically follows.

The idea under consideration here is further illustrated in the history of the two schisms from American Methodism: the Wesleyan Methodist and the Free Methodist. Both were related to the doctrine of sanctification and both manifested a concern for individualistic puritanism.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church was organized in 1843 over the two issues of Episcopacy and Slavery. The question of entire sanctification had not at this time become a crucial issue, although the closing exhortation of the organizing convention issued a challenge to make "*holiness* your motto." The feeling that in adopting the whole of the doctrinal system of Methodism, they were including the doctrine of sanctification, probably contributed to the lack of attention given it here.²

The issue of secret orders did plague these first meetings, with two factions clearly present. It turned out that some of the leading organizers were members of the Masons, so the final statement of the original *Discipline* was quite weak, simply leaving the matter to the Annual Conferences and individual churches.³

At the first General Conference in 1744 the position of sanctification was strengthened by the adopting of an Article on Religion dealing with the subject. Also a decidedly negative statement about secret orders was adopted as follows:

We will on no account tolerate our ministers or members in joining or holding fellowship with secret societies, such as Free

¹Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 152.

²Ira Ford McLeister, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Wesleyan Methodist Publishing Association, 1934), 27, 32, 37-38.

³*Ibid.*, 36-37.

Masonry or Odd Fellowship, as in the judgment of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection it is inconsistent with our duties to God to hold such connections.¹

In the post-Civil War period the Church became more pronounced in its stand on sanctification, while at the same time eliminating all questions concerning its opposition to secret societies, adopting a statement opposing the use of tobacco, and stating that only unfermented wine should be used in the sacrament. The abstinence from tobacco as a test for membership was firmly formulated in the General Conference in 1824.²

This evidence supports the statement of John Peters that the Wesleyan Methodist Church was "relatively liberal at the outset" but "grew increasingly insistent upon the observance of rules as it became a more distinctively holiness church."³

The Free Methodist Church from its beginning in 1858 was a distinctively holiness denomination and likewise "puritan" in its membership requirements. In setting forth the origin and character of the Church, the *Discipline* stressed its views upon "practical godliness." It insisted that

those who profess to be the disciples of Christ should come out from unbelievers and be separate, abstaining from connection with all secret societies, renouncing all vain pomp and glory, adorning themselves with modest apparel, and not with gold, or pearls, or costly array.⁴

These restrictions were included in the General Rules and reinforced by special chapters on dress, marriage, secret societies and temperance. These rules were, according to a later Bishop, for the purpose of promoting and maintaining "the early Methodist emphasis

¹Ibid., 63.

²Ibid., 96-97.

³Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 130.

⁴*Doctrines and Discipline of the Free Methodist Church* (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1905), 3.

on simplicity and purity of life and conduct."¹

This identification of holiness with "puritanism" was undoubtedly fixed in the minds of those who formed the Church of the Nazarene, not only because it was the temper of the times, but also because of the course of events in the churches from which they were forced because of their witness. There seemed to be a direct correlation between the increasing worldliness of the old-line denominations, especially among the Methodists, and the decreasing emphasis on the second blessing.

One of the factors that contributed to the decline of piety and morality in the old line churches was the wave of immorality that swept the country at the close of the Civil War. The church was affected by a "general decline of vital piety and holiness of life." This was an occasion for the emergence of distinctively holiness groups.²

The Methodist attitude towards amusements and recreation underwent a thoroughgoing change after the War, with the economic recovery in both North and South. As McCulloh evaluated it, "the propriety of amusements suitable to the full enjoyment of life was recognized, as the distinction was drawn between innocent amusements and those which were still regarded as improper."³

Efforts were made, beginning in 1896, to strike out "paragraph 249" as it was called, the statement in the *Discipline* spelling out off-limit amusements. This move gained the support of the Bishops but the paragraph had sufficient conservative support so that it was retained until the General Conference in 1924. However, the situation in this period of transition may be seen from a paragraph of the Episcopal Address to the Northern General Conference of 1900:

The rigid and minute Church discipline of former years is relaxed: is this a sign of pastoral unfaithfulness, or is it a sign of growing respect for individual liberty and a better conception of the function of the Church? The plainness of the early Methodist congregations

¹Leslie R. Marston, *From Age to Age a Living Witness* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1960), 360.

²Elmer T. Clark, *The Small Sects in America* (N.Y.: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1937), 72.

³McCulloh, "Practices," 638-639.

has disappeared: is this simply vanity and worldliness, or is it, in part, the natural and justifiable development of the aesthetic faculty under more prosperous external conditions?¹

Therefore, with the drift away from "second blessing" preaching, there was a corresponding drift away from the ethical landmarks on the part of the Methodists. This would tend to cause the holiness people to see an inseparable relation between the two and thus identify the doctrine with a certain set of moral standards, and would, in turn give rise to a tenacious attachment to the old Wesleyan standards with their most "puritan" interpretation.²

Sociological Sources

The Church of the Nazarene was substantially a rural and low-income-bracket church in its formative days.³ Thus it may with some justification be classed among the "churches of the disinherited," as H. Richard Niebuhr termed them, and it did in fact manifest certain characteristics sociologically attributed to this type of religious group. As Niebuhr puts it, ". . . the religion of the poor is characterized by the exaltation of the virtues of the class . . . appreciation of . . . rigorous honesty in matters of debt, and the religious evaluation of simplicity in dress and manners."⁴

Richard Hofstadter has further observed that

The disinherited classes, especially when unlettered, have been more

¹Quoted in *Ibid.*, 640.

²Dorman P. Edwards, "Come Out," *Herald of Holiness*, April 21, 1915, 6; Editorial Notes on the Methodist General Conference, *Herald of Holiness*, May 22 through June 16, 1912. Subsequent references to this periodical will be cited as *Herald*.

³Cf. Kenneth S. Armstrong, *Face to Face with the Church of the Nazarene* (Boulder, Colorado: Johnson Publishing Co., 1958), 9. This was a statistical study in the 1950's of the growth patterns of the Church with observations on such factors noting, for example, that "nearly 60% of our members reside in town and country areas" and about 75% of the churches.

⁴H. Richard Niebuhr, *Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1957), 31.

moved by emotional religion; and emotional religion is at times animated by a revolt against the religious style, the liturgy, and the clergy of the upper class church, which is at the same time a revolt against aristocratic manners and morals.¹

This brings our discussion to the point of observing that because of these sociological patterns, one may better understand the ethical consciousness of the Church by taking account of the societal mores that constituted the age in which it emerged. It would more than likely be seen as adopting a generally negative attitude toward new patterns of behavior and thus entrenching itself against them to preserve its cherished ideals.

Harold B. Kuhn, in an honest evaluation of his own tradition, has described the reaction of the holiness movement during the period under investigation:

It is far from surprising that, as newer social currents impinged upon the lives of these men and women, they tended to react defensively as they saw their value-systems threatened. It is not unfair to say that in this defensive reaction, there was a strong temptation in the direction of the type of casuistry which . . . characterized the Pharisees.²

The formative period of the Church of the Nazarene should be considered as extending from the Civil War through the second decade of the twentieth century. This was a period of unprecedented change in which the whole complexion of American life took on a different look. Such designations as "America in Mid-Passage" give a clue to the historians' understanding of the age.³ Henry S. Commager affirms that "The decade of the nineties is the watershed of American history."⁴

¹Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* (N.Y.: Random House, Inc., 1963), 56.

²Kuhn, "Ethics," 248.

³Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *America in Mid-Passage*, vol. III: *The Rise of American Civilization* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953).

⁴Henry S. Commager, *The American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 41.

With the passing of slavery, the way was open for the emergence of modern industrialization which took the scepter of authority from an agrarian culture, and this in turn gave rise to an urbanization that created totally new problems for society and religion. Furthermore, as Vernon L. Parrington says:

The enthronement of the machine was only the outward and visible sign of the revolution in thought that came with the rise of science. As a new cosmos unfolded before the inquisitive eyes of scientists the old metaphysical speculations became as obsolete as the old household economy. A new spirit of realism was abroad, probing and questioning the material world, pushing the realm of exact knowledge into the earlier regions of faith. The conquest of nature was the great business of the day, and as that conquest went forward triumphantly the solid fruits of the new mastery were gathered by industrialism. Science and the machine were the twin instruments for creating a new civilization, of which the technologist and the industrialist were the high priests. The transcendental theologian was soon to be as extinct as the passenger pigeon.¹

The immediate years when the Church was coming into being--the last two decades of the nineteenth century--had its own color. Mark Twain gave it the flamboyant title of "The Gilded Age" to describe its gaudy exterior. It was characterized by the rising industrialism, the emergence of a new south and a rash of inventions.²

Its character created great crudity. Described as "heedless, irreverent, unlovely, . . . moving through pools of tobacco juice . . . a world of triumphant and unabashed vulgarity without it's like in our history," it was the expression of a released desire to acquire possessions and power, a "violent reaction from the poverty of frontier life and the narrow inhibitions of backwoods religion."³ From the

¹Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, 3 vols. (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930), 3:4.

²Philip L. White, "United States History," *The American People's Encyclopedia*, 1966, 8:407-408.

³Parrington, *Currents*, 9, 11.

sober restraints of aristocracy, the old inhibitions of Puritanism, the niggardliness of an exacting domestic economy, it swung far back in reaction, and with the discovery of limitless opportunities for the exploitation it allowed itself to get drunk.¹

One of the representative figures of this period was P.T. Barnum, the great showman, "growing rich on the profession of humbuggery, a vulgar greasy genius, pure brass without any gilding."² The nation was in a mood for entertainment so beginning in 1871 Barnum, with two associates, exploited the "suckers" as he called them, and they loved it.³ Here is clearly exposed one historical basis for the inclusion of the "circus" as taboo for many holiness people including the Nazarenes.

The basic appeal of these and other diversions was to the urban masses who lived in penury under the shadow of the mansions of the newly rich. As Charles and Mary Beard describe them: "Housed in the back streets and alleys behind the symbols of riches and power lived the urban masses who washed the linen, dug the trenches, served the wheels and watched the forges for Midas and Dives."⁴

In response to the "need" of this class, entertainment became highly commercialized as well as sordid:

Vaudeville shows, prize fights, circuses, dime museums and cheap theatres, like the spectacles of ancient Rome, kept countless millions happy in penury, not at public expense, as in Caesar's day, but at the expense of those who enjoyed them and to the advantage of those who owned them . . . The Paris "can-can" was imported in 1872 . . . Whole armies of scribblers were kept busy plotting hair-raising melodramas based on love, suicide, rum and murder. "Cheap and nasty" were the watchwords of the new festivity and nothing could break their spell.⁵

¹Ibid., 17.

²Ibid., 12.

³Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (N.Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1930), 2:398.

⁴Ibid., 393.

⁵Ibid., 379-398.

In addition to these characteristics of the more urban areas, it is crucial for an understanding of the formative years of the Church to be aware of the character of Southern society as diverse from the remainder of the nation. It will be seen that the groups from the South brought their own view of the Christian life to the denomination, and these views are, in part, reactions to their society.

In the seventeenth century, the Southern colonies were far more Puritanical in laws and mores than the Cavalier tradition represented them. Compulsory attendance at Church on Sundays was a rigidly enforced law, and profane swearing or Sabbath-breaking were severely punished by the magistrates. But in the eighteenth century, a more hedonistic atmosphere prevailed and greater laxity in religious performances occurred. The clergy had slight supervision over the people and some ministers were a disgrace to their profession. The Reverend Andrew Burnaby who traveled in Virginia in 1759-60 described the clergy, about sixty-five in number, as in general men of "sober and exemplary lives." On the other hand, Philip Fithian's journal (1773-74) portrays a certain Parson Giberne, one of the most popular and admired preachers in Virginia, who stayed up late three nights in succession drinking and playing cards, a bout which sent him reeling to bed. Fithian also noted that the minister in his parish preached about fifteen minutes as contrasted with the long two-hour sermons in New England. Indeed, Virginia had a reputation for having no "heart religion" but for being a land of tippling, gambling with cards or dice, dancing and swearing.¹

These religious conditions following the American Revolution alarmed those who cherished the traditions which had brought their forefathers to the colonial wilderness. Easterners were shocked by the religious indifference of the frontiersman. Sometimes he forgot the Bible or even hooted at agents of ecclesiastical authority. Profanity, shooting, drunkenness, Sabbath breaking, and lawlessness were natural to life on the frontier. Logan County, Kentucky, soon to become the center of a great religious revival, was known as Rogues' Harbor, a haven for counterfeiterers, robbers, and murderers.²

¹Clement Eaton, *A History of the Old South* (N.Y.: The MacMillan Co., 1949), 78-79

Among the more aristocratic, atheism, French deism, skepticism and freethinking were in vogue. Dr. Thomas Cooper, a renowned skeptic found refuge in the presidency of the College of South Carolina and there applied Higher Criticism to the Bible, "first of all places in America."¹

But a change was forthcoming in both sections of the nation. In the north there was a breaking down of the rigors of Puritanism and a rise of movements such as Unitarianism, which destroyed the hold of traditional Calvinistic philosophy on the minds of the people. In the fifties, the slow acceptance of the Darwinian theory precipitated a conflict between conservatives and modernists. In the South, on the other hand, the tendencies in religion were in the opposite direction. Instead of keeping pace with the advancing ecclesiastical liberalism which characterized the northern democracy, the South became a land of religious conservatism. Deists like Washington and Jefferson disappeared, their places being taken by those who would interpret the Word in support of the southern system.²

The conversion of the South from its deistic and skeptical ways was wrought in part by a succession of waves of evangelism, and in part by the negative influence of the French Revolution. Now, the South whose deistic liberalism had shocked conservative New Englanders at the time of the Revolution, was becoming the citadel of conservative theology. Its religious leaders, in turn, were shocked at the unorthodoxy of New England.³

In the main, the unritualistic and evangelistic churches held the great rural population of the South and most southern people lived in the rural areas. But in both urban and rural districts, among all the southern people, without regard to the church to which they were

²Francis B. Simpkins, *The South Old and New (1820-1949)* (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 74.

¹W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), 553-54.

²William B. Hesseltine, *The South in American History* (N.Y.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1943), 291.

³Charles S. Sydnor, *The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848*, Vol. 5 of *A History of the South* (New Orleans: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), 294-295.

attached, orthodoxy was in high esteem and heterodoxy was discounted. The Bible was accepted as the Word of God--the only sufficient rule of faith and practice, "so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary for salvation." Proclaiming this faith, the southern pulpit won a larger proportion of the southern people to the churches than the pulpit of any other section of the country has won of the people to whom its appeals have been made.¹

The groups that achieved the greatest success were the Methodists, the Baptists, and the Presbyterians. W. J. Cash points out the ethical consequences of this triumph of orthodoxy:

The triumph of the evangelical sects also naturally involved the establishment of the Puritan ideal. From the first great revivals onward, the official moral philosophy of the South moved steadily toward the position of that of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Adherence was demanded, and, with the exception of a handful of recalcitrant colonial aristocrats and stubborn sinners, willingly and even enthusiastically given, to a code that was increasingly Mosaic in its sternness.²

The increasing development in the north toward liberalism in the post-war years was countered by an intensification in the South in the other direction. The very hardships of the Reconstruction contributed to this development since the Southerner thought of himself as suffering because of "too much dancing and gaming, too much drinking and laughing, too much delight in the flesh under the amorous sun." He was being punished for his deviation from the laws of God. Therefore, "in these decades the power of the evangelical minister, waxing conclusively prescriptive for opinion, made the official code of the South ever more Puritanical and repressive."³

This same standard of morality, Cash argues, was maintained into

¹Warren A. Candler, "The Southern Ministry," *The South in the Building of the Nation* (Richmond, Va.: The Southern Historical Publication Society, 1909), 10:510-511.

²Cash, *Mind of the South*, 57.

³*Ibid.*, 130-133.

the twentieth century, during the "age of Progress." Not, to be sure, necessarily in practice but in lip-service which the southerner rendered to it. "In sum, the morality which reigned in the South in 1914 was at once exceedingly narrow and fantastic."¹

It is relevant to note one of Cash's main theses, namely that the southern mind manifests a sort of "social schizophrenia." There is present in his mental make-up two streams flowing side by side; the Puritanism which has been discussed, and a hedonism which manifests itself in practice. Cash insists that "in the long run, he succeeded in uniting the two incompatible tendencies in his single person without ever allowing them to come into open and decisive contention."²

Attention may now be given to an issue that took on significant proportions in the ethical thought of holiness groups in the nineteenth century, the question of secret orders or lodges. This concern probably took its root in a political phenomenon.

In 1826, a William Morgan of Batavia, New York suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. He was a Mason who had threatened to divulge the secrets of his lodge. Popular opinion consequently charged the Masons with foul play. From this event the belief became widespread that legislatures, judges and juries throughout the United States were under the influence of the Masonic order and that the lodge was a menace to democratic society.

As a result, in 1826 a short-lived Anti-Masonic political party was formed and in the national election of 1832 received the seven electoral votes of Vermont. It soon disappeared from the political scene.³

Although Anti-Masonry lost its potency as a political issue, it nevertheless remained a persistent attitude among many churches. There was the condemnation of secrecy, oaths, exclusiveness and false claims, but much of the opposition was rooted in the fear that the lodge would replace the church as the object of loyalty in people's lives. There was furthermore the argument that association with such people as united with the lodge would "plant the seeds of heresy in the minds

¹*Ibid.*, 226-230.

²*Ibid.*, 57-58.

³"Anti-Masonic Party," *American People's Encyclopedia*, 1966, 1:532-533.

of church members and expose them to such worldly amusements as card-playing, the theater, social drinking, and attendance at Sunday sports and entertainment."

The secret orders largely appealed to the upper-level of the middle classes and therefore were not really open to those who were economically deprived. Since the "churches with a pietistic background" were generally composed of such persons, they took the strongest stand against the secret organizations. Therefore, once again, class stratification may have played a role in determining moral conscience.¹

Finally, attention may be given to the Sabbath question. Stephenson quotes Robert Baird as writing in 1855 that there was no subject on which American Christians were more happily united than that of the proper observance of the Sabbath.²

One of the major factors that contributed to the breakdown of this situation was the tremendous influx of immigrants into the United States between 1830 and the opening of the first World War. Such a torrent of European peoples had a generally transforming effect on the morals of America. In 1873, the editor of a brewer's journal pointed out that the foreign-born citizens and their children were strong enough at that time to tilt the scales in favor of one or the other political parties. He claimed that in some states the German vote alone could do it, and urged the liberal people to unite to give the death blow to puritanical tyranny. "The future," he stated, "is ours. The enormous influx of immigration will in a few years overreach the puritanical element in every state in the Union."³

But one of the most obvious effects of immigration was the impact upon the puritan Sabbath, or as many liked to call it, the American Sabbath. It was inevitable that with the vast increase of the travel and sojourn of American Christians in other lands of Christendom along with the multitudinous immigration into America from other lands

¹Stephenson, *Puritan Heritage*, 136-137. Without much question, the Ku Klux Klan in the South created a strong adverse reaction among the holiness people there.

²Ibid., 181.

³William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (N.Y.: Harper Brothers, 1930), 479. The "wet" import of this statement is too plain to miss.

than Great Britain, that the tradition should come to be openly disputed within the church and should be disregarded even when not denied.¹

The Germans, both Lutheran and Catholic, brought with them the "continental Sabbath," and in many places used the day as one of general merry-making, which soon became a cause for alarm among the evangelical churches. Ministers throughout the seventies denounced the growing tendency to forsake the Puritan Sabbath and warned their people that the very foundations of the Republic were being undermined.²

In 1872 when the Germans of Chicago opened their Turner Hall they boldly announced that they were giving to Chicago "the honor and felicity of a European Sabbath," which a Baptist editor described as a "Berlin in the morning and a Paris in the afternoon."³ It is important to note that in most cases, the immigrants avoided the south where they would have been in competition with slave-labor in the earlier days. Most of them settled in the urban centers on the eastern seaboard where industrialism offered them the greatest opportunity.

But the standards of the Church of the Nazarene, while certainly influenced either directly or indirectly by all these factors, did not assume their present form at the very beginning of the Church's existence. In fact, they developed over a long period of time. Furthermore, the Nazarenes had their own rationale as distinct from the sources herein discussed. Both of these aspects of Nazarene ethics shall be examined in the course of the next two chapters.

¹Leonard Woolsey Bacon, *A History of American Christianity*, Vol. XIII: *The American Church History Series* (N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 371.

²Sweet, *Story of Religion in America*, 493.

³Ibid., 479.

THE FORMATIVE YEARS (1887-1928)

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century the burning issue among the holiness people was the "church question." The subject under discussion was whether or not to organize separate churches for the promotion of holiness or to remain in the old-line denominations and attempt to maintain a witness through "bands" and "associations." One of the factors that affected the thinking of many people on the question was their ethical outlook.

At least two distinguishable ethical traditions developed as the holiness revival moved into the South and mid-west. Timothy Smith described them as follows:

One, largely rural, was more emotionally demonstrative, emphasized rigid standards of dress and behavior, and often scorned ecclesiastical discipline. The other was urban, intellectual, and somewhat less zealous about outward standards of holiness. Its leaders were eager for alignment with all in the older churches who would share their central aims.¹

Among the former group were those who manifested a "hair-trigger" disposition to leave the established churches and thus were dubbed "come-outers." This created some embarrassment for the more conservative groups who preferred to avoid a divisive spirit. The loyalists felt that the issue was chiefly doctrinal while the more radical wing created crises by denouncing the "'easy, indulgent, accommodating, mammonized' kind of Wesleyan preaching which tolerated church parties, festivals, and dramatic presentations and 'erected gorgeous and costly temples, to gratify its pride'."²

These two traditions became organic to the Church of the Nazarene and Smith appreciatively observes:

Neither the origin or the subsequent history of the Church of the

¹Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 27.

²Ibid., 29.

Nazarene can be understood without a knowledge of the two holiness traditions, urban and rural. The founders came from both. Both had great gifts to offer the young denomination--the one a determined stand against worldliness and a healthy suspicion of ecclesiastical machinery, the other a national vision and a solid respect for learning and the Wesleyan tradition.¹

The ethical development of the Church may be quite clearly seen as a process of making adjustments between these two traditions as they attempted to achieve a harmony of conscience. This is particularly obvious during the years when the official statements were being finalized. Although the General Rules were fixed in the form that endured for a long period of time by 1915, the situation was in some degree of flux until 1928 which became a very pivotal year ethically.

As noted in the Introduction, the Church of the Nazarene was constituted by the merger of major groups from three sections of the United States: The Church of the Nazarene in the west (centering in California), The Association of Pentecostal Churches of America located in the northeast, and several groups in the South and southwest, chiefly the Holiness Church of Christ and the Pentecostal Mission. The "urban" ethical tradition was primarily represented by the eastern and western groups, while the southern region was the stronghold of the "rural" tradition. Obviously, one cannot draw completely exclusive lines along geographical boundaries but it is clear that the two traditions largely took sectional dimensions. The purpose now becomes to analyze the ethical position of each group and then study the compromises that were effected in order to arrive at the mature position of the Church.

The earliest groups to come into independent existence were those in New England. Many of the ministers in this connection were from Baptist and Congregationalist churches. Many of the laymen had been forced out of their local churches by high-handed Methodist pastors.² Therefore it is not surprising that holiness was wed to a congregational type church government in this area.

A group of churches in the northeast formed associations that eventuated in the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America on November 12, 1896. A Constitution was formed at that time which

¹Ibid. 28.

was accepted at the second annual meeting on April 13, 1897.¹ This Constitution had no statement concerning rules of conduct. However, it must be remembered that this was only an association and therefore would doubtless assume no prerogative in disciplining the members of the individual churches. It chiefly contains minimal doctrinal statements for agreement among those who were affiliated.²

Furthermore, an examination of the manuals of several of the leading member congregations of this Association reveals little in the area of rules for membership or ethical standards. The Covenants to be read at the reception of members make only general affirmations, chiefly positive and directed toward cultivating the spiritual life. The nearest to a negative statement is as follows: "We renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh."

The Confessions of Faith give statements calling for a religious observance of the Sabbath, and the Constitutions usually make provision for dropping members from the roll if they are guilty of "misconduct of life."

In the section on Rules and Bylaws, there are a few specifications with emphasis being laid upon using the building for worship and not for "fairs, festivals, or dramatic exercises, or so-called sociables." The nearest to a "puritan" statement involves advice against "attending any institution, association or place which would encourage the vicious and operate against the good name of the church."³

One may venture that the wide-spread opposition to the use of the church building for social activities, an attitude which characterized practically all the pre-Nazarene groups except Bresee's church in California, was in part a reaction to the institutional church which was emerging in this era as an expression of the Social Gospel.

It may be concluded that in general the eastern churches did not lay

¹J.C. Bearse, "History of the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America," *Nazarene Messenger*, July 4, 1907.

²Constitution of the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America 1897.

³*Manual of the Utica Avenue Pentecostal Church of Brooklyn, N.Y.*; *Manual of the People's Evangelical Church of Providence, R.I.* (1895); *Manual of the Pentecostal Church of _____* (1895), apparently a standard form for churches of the Association used by filling in their own distinguishing name.

major stress on external matters, but saw greater value in emphasizing life in the Spirit and doctrinal agreement. There is little indication that they attempted to regiment the lives of their members, perhaps in part a corollary of the congregational approach to church government. Their philosophy may be adequately summed up in the words of one of their leaders:

We . . . believe that the Holy Ghost is the Conservator of orthodoxy and that a soul baptized with the Holy Spirit will be so humble and leadable that the Spirit, either personally or through Spirit-filled leaders, will have no trouble in keeping that soul from fanaticism on the one side, or formalism on the other.¹

The Church of the Nazarene in the west, following P.F. Bresee, came into being almost exclusively from the Methodist Church. Therefore, the section of its *Manual* (1895) on Church Membership and General Rules is a simplified version of the Methodist Discipline of that day. The Methodist rules on paying duty, usury and slaveholding were omitted and the one addition forbade voting for licensing of liquor establishments.

There was a separate section on "Special Advices" which included such concerns as Temperance and Prohibition, and Tobacco, but these matters did not have legislative power, as requirements of church membership. Secret societies were not mentioned.

Dr. Bresee, himself, was noted for his charity in non-essentials. Although he was dogmatic in what he considered the fundamentals, he feared the fanaticism of imposing private opinion on others. His views are embodied in this editorial comment:

Of such truths as different theories can be held, and not interfere with being holy, there is to be individual liberty Of all truth of this kind there should be not only in form but in Spirit, the greatest liberty. With

¹ H. B. Hosley, "Doctrines of the Pentecostal Churches," *Nazarene Messenger*, July 4, 1907, 5. This statement may reflect the influence of Daniel Steele, professor at Boston University, and stout holiness advocate and theologian. He apparently coined the phrase, "the Holy Spirit, the Conservator of Orthodoxy" and was active and influential among the groups in New England under study. Steele never left the Methodist Church. Cf. his book, *The Gospel of the Comforter* (Apollo, Pa.: West Publishing Co., n.d.), 272-290.

unity of essentials and liberty in non-essentials, we begin to get a basis of unity.¹

Bresee did not preach on the issue of women's dress, a burning issue for some in those days. In an article in 1899 on "Holiness in Relation to Adornment," he pointed out the danger of pride but added, "we believe every Christian should settle this question of personal adornment in harmony with the Word of God, as the Holy Spirit directs . . . , with a willing heart, and dress only to please God, as you would be found of Him at His coming."²

In response to a question concerning 1 Timothy 2:9 and 1 Peter 3:3, he is unwilling to agree that they are commands "to be strictly obeyed." Rather these seem to be among the commands which cannot be obeyed to any purpose without a sanctified heart. This matter of outward adornment is likely to be the sign-board of the heart, and the sign may sometimes read more ways than one. Pride is the fruit of carnality, and as long as carnality is in the heart, pride in some way is likely to manifest itself. If pride is there, and the ordinary sign is taken down, it will begin to be proud of the fact that the sign is not out.³

In the Special Advice on "Christian Testimony" contained in the first *Nazarene Messenger* (1898) the rather ambiguous statement is made that "It is not wise to contrast the testimony of a Christian with his life." This appears to mean that it is felt unwise to determine the true Christian character and experience by applying certain external criteria.

His position, however, should not be construed as approval of "worldliness." Rather he believed strongly in separation from the world and insisted that it must be maintained. What he meant by it is perhaps best explained by a statement in the *Herald of Holiness* that "we [the Nazarenes] are to maintain and rejoice in our separation from the world, and unto the Lord, to be His own peculiar people--made peculiar by His manifest presence, and the holy fragrance of hearts and lives filled with his love."⁴

¹ P.F. Bresee, "Unity," *Nazarene Messenger*, Feb. 1, 1900, 2.

²Quoted in Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 116.

³*The Nazarene Messenger*, June 7, 1906, 6.

Separation here is a separation created by an experience of grace, not by lack of conformity to certain practices. It is an internal separation that cannot be unerringly demonstrated by certain modes of behavior.

Bresee's attitude toward Christian charity is further expressed in an article which he called "Broadness." He said in part:

Holiness looks out through eyes of faith and love, and is necessarily broad. Sectarianism, churchianity and fanaticism are likely to have shortness of vision, and to be governed largely by personal interests or prejudices; and at the same time regard others as wrong because they are not governed by the interests or notions, or prejudices by which they are actuated.¹

All this bears out the statement of Timothy Smith that Bresee believed in a discipline of the Spirit and that there was no real need to impose a list of regulations upon those who were really sanctified since they "would of their own accord follow a narrow path."²

Whether or not Bresee was aware of it, this view must have followed upon his own high estimate of human nature. While he nowhere deals systematically with the problem, he gave every evidence of sharing to a large extent the optimism that characterized the idealism of the nineteenth century. This is partially reflected in his eschatological views, he being doubtless a postmillennialist as over against the pessimism of many parts of the holiness movement indicated by their pre-millennialism. This is to say that many of the early Nazarenes, while rejecting theological liberalism, nevertheless imbibed of its temper, and expressed it in their own conservative eschatology.

As the eastern and western holiness movements came together, their ethical perspectives seemed to create no problem to union

⁴Quoted in Girvin, *Prince in Israel*, 438.

¹Quoted in Donald P. Brickley, *Man of the Morning* (K.C.: Nazarene Publishing House, 1960), 238.

²Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 115.

whatsoever. At the 1906 General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene, representatives from the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America were present to discuss the union of the two groups. A committee composed of officials of both bodies reported on the "matters which would be most essential to consider." No ethical issues were raised, except that they were declared agreed on the "basis of membership."

It was clearly stated that "the basis of our understanding of the unity existing in the two churches upon the above stated essential elements of our organization . . . has been the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene."¹

Therefore it may be concluded that the eastern churches accepted without hesitation the General Rules as embodied in the western group's constitution. The Basis of Union adopted by each official convention says nothing about this matter. The only issue to be settled, apparently, was congregationalism versus episcopacy and on this they arrived as a happy compromise.²

As one turns to the South, a different picture presents itself. There were several factors that contributed to a contrasting picture from the east and west. The holiness movement in the South was chiefly rural.³ Furthermore, the whole outlook of the South, because of its bitter experiences growing out of the Civil War and Reconstruction made it more susceptible to "law than to love" and a somewhat pessimistic attitude prevailed.⁴

Rather than having great visions of a nation-wide revival of scriptural holiness and "Christianizing the Christianity of America" as the other groups,⁵ the general approach was negative, apparently

¹Minutes of the Eleventh General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene, 1906.

²"Basis of Union," *Manual*, 1948, 18. Within this broader context, the specific point of debate was the prerogative of the individual churches in the east to remain independent. Cf. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 207-209.

³Maury English Redford, "History of the Church of the Nazarene in the South," unpublished M.A. Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1935, 192.

⁴Cf. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 151-152.

holding no hope for society. The result was a view of "separation" from the world for its own sake.

This attitude is vividly reflected in the statements of the *Yearbook* of the Holiness Association of Oklahoma and Indian Territory (1906-7). Under the heading "Modern Societies," it condemns "society" *per se*, and in strong language:

We do not hesitate in saying that those who enter its hateful and hurtful precincts, or sustain its questionable functions, jeopardize their experience, lose their relish for the Bible and for prayer, their hold upon God, and their usefulness in His cause. Its places of resort, its modes of dress, its clubs and entertainments and its theatres, dance halls and card parties, are all worldly, if not vicious and often hide (sic) behind the gilded trappings of societies' regime may be found the poison of a thousand vipers. If the devil has a sanctum sanctorium, it's here. The scarlet sins of society must be attacked and exposed.

In addition to this, divorce is deplored and secret societies are condemned.¹ Some of the affiliates of this association united with the Church of the Nazarene about 1909.

When one compares the accounts of revivals by Bresee and his associates with the following report, one recognizes that he is in a different world. George M. Teel is describing a revival conducted by himself and Dennis Rogers, one of the pioneer preachers in the southwest: "Mr. Howard, a notorious (sic) drunkard, was converted and sanctified. Tobacco chewers, lodge men, and backslidden church folks felt the sting of this rugged old-time preaching and great persecution broke out against these Holiness preachers."²

¹Report of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America (1907) by D. Rand Pierce. Printed in "The Beulah Christian," April 20, 1907.

²Holiness Association of Oklahoma and Indian Territory, *Year Book*, 1906-7 (Lindsay I.T.: Lindsay New Print).

³George M. Teel's Diary, taken from Timothy Smith's notes found in Nazarene Archives, Kansas City, Missouri.

The earliest of the main holiness bodies in the south which later became Nazarene was the New Testament Church of Christ at Milan, Tennessee under the leadership of R. L. Harris, a "cowboy preacher" from west Texas. Harris had separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South partly because of its "worldliness," specifically adornment, card playing, theatre-going, etc., and partly because of a legislation forbidding his free evangelizing among the churches.

Harris had only two weeks of formal education and this came after he had started to preach. He learned to read by spelling the words of the Bible and says "through the necessity of spelling the words, I had stored hundreds of verses of the Holy Scripture in my memory." His self-gained education, therefore, came chiefly through the Bible, spelling book and dictionary. However he seemed to manifest considerable acumen in his writings.¹

No doubt, the nature of his education, or lack of it, contributed to his understanding of the Bible which is the basis for a quite clear-cut ethical theory. He manifested a strong literalistic view of scripture, with proof-texting a favorite method of presenting his views. This is illustrated by a whole booklet given over to ingeniously explaining away apparent contradictions in the Bible.² His *forte* seemed to be debating with other literalists and the issue was always based upon Bible statements, not theological adequacy.

One of the followers of Harris, W. E. Fisher, epitomizes this same approach in a book entitled *Sound Doctrine* in which he proposes to show how each doctrine of the Church of the Nazarene is based upon an explicit scriptural statement.³

Before Harris' death in 1894, he wrote a pamphlet on *Government and Doctrines of the New Testament Churches* which set forth an explicit view of the Church of Christ that has striking affinities with the conservative branch of the Disciples movement. Based upon this approach, the New Testament Church of Christ "stood isolated not

¹R. L. Harris, *Experiences of the Cowboy Preacher* (no data), 3, 5.

²R. L. Harris, *The Infidel's Contradictions of the Bible Explained and Harmonized* (no data, 1890).

³William Edgar Fisher, *Sound Doctrine* (K.C.: Pentecostal Nazarene Publishing House, 1918).

only from the older Churches but from the organized holiness movement as well." Harris had in his last days, in fact, delivered a series of sermons "which alleged all sects and denominations to be unscriptural." Consequently, as Smith puts it, the laws and doctrines of this Church "were simply a new alloy, forged of Methodist piety and Disciples churchmanship."¹

The "Preface" to the *Government and Doctrines* significantly affirms that "This little book is not the law book, or discipline, for the Churches of Christ, but simply a declaration of the principal points of government and doctrine of the New Testament Churches--or Churches of Christ." Such a statement implies straightforwardly that there is no creed but the Bible and there can be no statement with any authority other than scriptural statements. Consequently this form of the document is merely an organization of scriptural passages since as the first item says, "We believe the Church of Christ is not a legislative but an executive body. She makes no laws, but accepts those which Christ and the Apostles have already given by which to be governed. Christ is her absolute law-giver."

Further, "we believe that man-made rules or doctrines added to what God has already given are sinful and condemned by the Bible." Each of the affirmations cited, are enforced by a vast collection of proof-texts which are used without consideration of context--historical or otherwise--and thus often without any real relation to the question at hand. There is, in addition, not the slightest breath of indication that Harris recognized his interpretative statements to be precisely what he had condemned: extensions of the "scriptural propositions."

With this approach applied to ethics, one is presented with a theory that may be called "scriptural casuistry." The "laws" given by Christ and the Apostles are binding irrevocably in their most literal and legalistic form. It is interesting to note, however, that Harris manages to get the ethical decrees of scripture to support the prohibitions that have been found preeminent among the southern holiness groups: secret societies, all worldly amusements, wearing of gold, pearls and costly or gaudy apparel; and opium, morphine, and tobacco.²

¹Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 153, 154.

²*Government and Doctrines of New Testament Churches* (Milan, TN: Printed at the Exchange Office, 1903).

If one may judge by his wife's account of his preaching in her autobiography, Harris apparently made the gist of his "holiness preaching" the denunciation of "the wearing of gold and feathers and flowers," and "the filthiness of tobacco and snuff." His wife, who later remarried a Mr. Cagle and became a preacher herself, evidently continued this tradition with vigor.¹

In order to follow adequately the further development toward a national holiness church in the south, it should be noted here that the approach of the New Testament Church of Christ created many limitations in the area of church government. Nothing could be done that was not in accord with a "scriptural decree." This meant that, as they understood it, the local congregation could have no binding relation beyond itself, which created further problems for obtaining pastors and particularly in uniting with a denomination.

However, in the course of time, the leadership of the southern holiness movement shifted from the women evangelists who operated under the influence of Harris' teaching to "a group of aggressive men." The rigid literalism was softened in the face of certain practical problems so that "the laws of the New Testament Church were no longer confined to specific scriptural decrees. They might thereafter be developed rationally, to meet unfolding needs, so long as their features were not contrary to the principles of the Bible."²

This made possible the union with other groups and consequently in 1904 the New Testament Church of Christ united with the Independent Holiness Church under the leadership of C. B. Jernigan to form the Holiness Church of Christ.

This new organization continued the emphasis on "puritan" standards of dress and behavior. Its *Manual* (1906) contained six rules, all of which were in strong terms of obligation. There was no atmosphere of an end to be achieved, the question is simply the obedience of a command. All of the rules save one are followed by a reinforcement of scripture passages revealing the concept of scriptural

¹Mary Lee Cagle, *Life and Work of Mary Lee Cagle* (K.C.: Nazarene Publishing House, n.d.), 17, 18, 19, 162-164.

²Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 156-159.

laws as the basis for the code of conduct.

Rule no. 1 forbade the use of opium, morphine, intoxicants and tobacco. The second spoke against secret societies, while the third forbade the wearing of gold and costly or gaudy apparel. Rule no. 4 is the only one that had no scripture references to back it up. It read: "All worldly amusements are prohibited, such as dances, theatres, circuses, horse-races, base-ball games and parties, and all places where gambling is indulged in."

Numbers 5 and 6 deal with financial support of the church and prayer and fasting, both duties. No positive duties are enjoined. As is usually the case, such casuistry led to questions about matters that were not clearly mentioned. For instance, the Minutes of the General Council of 1905 records a discussion over Rule no. 2. Members who worked in the coal regions were having part of their wages kept back by the Coal Miners Union, whether or not they were members. The question was, is this supporting secret societies?¹ Out of this discussion an addition was made to the rule which read: "The taking out of a part of a man's wages without his consent is not to be considered as being members of a secret order nor supporting the same."²

The Church Covenant, which was to be repeated when one had been favorably voted on by the congregation for membership, had no emphasis on doctrine but had as its main burden the observance of external standards. In contrast to this, the Ritual used for the Reception of Members in Bresee's Church of the Nazarene had nothing to say about conformity to rules but stressed belief in the doctrines that are essential to Christian experience.³

Thus two clearly defined ethical perspectives emerge. The next act in the drama of a developing church comes in the attempt to bring together these two emphases. The struggle for union was intense at times and could not have been effected at all had it not been for the tremendous tolerance of the Nazarene leaders.

¹*Yearbook and Minutes of the General Council of the Holiness Church of Christ* (November 7-12, 1905; Pilot Point, Texas).

²*Manual of the Holiness Church of Christ* (1906).

³*Manual, Church of the Nazarene* (1898).

The significant issues were, in fact, the ethical ones. The first overtures to the southern holiness group on the part of the newly-formed Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene were met by hesitancy on these matters as well as on certain doctrinal points.¹ C. B. Jernigan, who had become one of the dominant figures in the south asserted: "Post and pre-millennialists will not mix. Tobacco chewers and clean men would not unite. We cannot afford to get tangled up with godless secret societies in a holiness church." As Timothy Smith commented, "he thus highlighted the issues of law versus liberty which was to dominate efforts to unite North and South."²

Concessions to the southern conscience began, apparently, long before actual negotiations got underway. In 1905 the Church of the Nazarene had included among its "Special Advices" an article on secret societies, although it was quite nonauthoritarian and read: "We advise our people to abstain from membership in worldly, secret, oath-bound lodges and fraternities, inasmuch as the obligation of some and the spirit of others are contrary to the devotement and spiritual life of the salvation of Jesus Christ."³

A delegation from the Holiness Church of Christ was present as guest members of the 1907 General Assembly to investigate the possibility of uniting with this emerging denomination; and consequently, several moves were made to make the Church acceptable to the southern delegation. Two new doctrinal additions were made to the *Manual*, one on the second coming of Christ, and one on divine healing. Consonant with the ethical interest, the two "Advices" on secret societies and tobacco were strengthened. It is now "insisted" that people abstain, with the statement about secret societies reading, "the spirit and tendency of these societies are contrary to the principles of our holy religion."

However, even with these concessions, the year that intervened before the next General Assembly was filled with discussion over the proposed union. The Holiness Church of Christ was divided into two

¹Pre-millennialism and Divine Healing were two of the major ideas about which they were concerned.

²Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 214.

³*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene (1905), 33.

councils, the eastern and the western. The Eastern Council, centering in Arkansas, went along with no objections.¹ The Western Council was hesitant. They voted to "request that the articles pertaining to tobacco and divine healing in the discipline of the Holiness Church of Christ be substituted for those adopted at Chicago. It also approved a motion that the provision in the Nazarene ritual for the use of the ring in the marriage ceremony be stricken out."²

The uncertainty of the people in the Holiness Church of Christ had been aggravated by the report of the General Assembly secretary, Robert Pierce, that the new legislation still left the matters of tobacco and secret societies "for the individual conscience to settle under the light of the Word and the Holy Spirit." The leaders on both sides, however, worked to settle the differences.

At the height of the debate, Bresee published an article in the *Nazarene Messenger* by E. D. Hinchman entitled "Legalism Overdone." The article insisted that premature imposition of rigid restrictions have driven many new converts and young people away from the church. It stressed the fact that "sanctification is . . . a thing of the heart rather than of outward conformity." The concern was centrally to put the scandalon of the holiness message in the right place. The right procedure is essential to effectiveness:

Now which is the better way, think you, to castigate people with the law before they are sanctified, and thus drive many of them back into darkness, or to win them to holiness in love, and then bring these things to their "pure minds by way of remembrance" and find a ready acquiescence to all the will of God.³

When the 1908 General Assembly met at Pilot Point, Texas with the two groups represented by official delegations, the issues were still not settled. In a letter written by C.A. McConnell, a northern-born southern leader, the problems were clearly set forth: "The East had its own culture and way of life; the West its own distinction, and when

¹*Minutes and Yearbook*, Eastern Council Holiness Church of Christ (Nov. 12-17, 1907), 32-33.

²Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 216.

³*Nazarene Messenger*, March 19, 1908, 2.

the East and West came to Pilot Point they found still traces of the civilization of the not yet extinct ante-Bellum south."¹

There were, furthermore, quite visible marks of difference. For, as McConnell went on to say in his letter, C. B. Jernigan's followers did not wear gold, while the wives of the two General Superintendents (P. F. Bresee and H. F. Reynolds) had wedding rings. The southerners had given up their lodges, but one of the two General Superintendents was still a lodge member. In essence, said McConnell: "the South stood by its rules, the East and West recognized no need for them."

Had it not been for the broad tolerance of Dr. Bresee and his masterful chairmanship of the Assembly, the westerners would never have acceded to the insistence of the southern groups on multiplying rules. But the gap was closed and the groups united. However, the issue was not settled since "sectional holiness" regarding standards of dress and behavior remained for many years.

As indicated in the opening of this study, the Church does not seem to have a self-consciously stated "ethic," but its "morals" are clearly seen, and its unarticulated ethical backbone is often quite visible. Our task now is to attempt to summarize the precise ethical understanding of these two segments of the denomination that informed their attitudes and pronouncements.

The groups that formed the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene in 1907 evidently took seriously the principle noted several times in this study that the life of holiness is the outflow of an internal transformation. They manifested great faith in the operation of the Holy Spirit in the life of a person who was sanctified. Furthermore, primary emphasis was placed upon the spiritual state of the believer with a recognition that this could not be infallibly determined by outward manifestation.

Except in a few matters, there was probably not a great deal of difference in the conduct of life of the Eastern/Western and southern groups. The major difference was chiefly a question of whether or not external righteousness could or should be legislated. The Eastern/Western people thought it could not and insisted that the multiplicity of rules would make no material contribution to the cause

¹Handwritten letter on file in the Nazarene Archives in Kansas City, MO.

of holiness since "carnality" could show itself either with or without legislation.

Consequently it may be inferred that the earlier Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene had an ethic of love and self-fulfillment in the Spirit closely akin to that of John Wesley, while the southern group operated on an ethic of law that saw the moral life as being a dutiful obedience to obligation. It thought the obligations were drawn from scripture but in many cases they were southern and rural mores sanctified by proof-text support.

What changes were actually effected in the *Manual* statement of the General Rules when the two churches merged? To begin with, the preface to the Rules for membership shows a legalizing direction. The 1905 *Manual* read: "It is expected of all those who desire to unite with the Church of the Nazarene, and thus to walk in fellowship with us that they shall earnestly desire to be saved from all sin, and that they will evidence this . . ." ("this desire" in the 1898 *Manual*). The 1908 introduction was changed to read: "It is *required* of all . . . that they shall show evidence of salvation from their sins by a Godly walk and vital piety, that they shall earnestly desire to be cleansed from all inbred sin . . ."

The particular rules likewise undergo a "tightening:" "Patronage of Sunday newspapers" is added to the rule on Sabbath observance. To the statement against "the indulgence of pride in dress or behavior; the laying up for themselves of treasures on earth" is added "we urge our people to dress with the Christian simplicity that becometh holiness." The second phrase regarding "treasures" is dropped. To this rule also is added the full quotation of 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:3, clearly representative of the "scriptural decrees" concept stemming back to R. L. Harris, but implicit in all the southern groups.

The statements on tobacco and secret societies were strengthened also and left in the "Special Advices," but not for long as shall be shown in the succeeding paragraphs. In the twenty years to follow, the jockeying continued between these two ethical traditions and resulted in continual changing and adjusting the official ethical statements of the Church.

At the next General Assembly (1911) the two disputed points of tobacco and secret societies came up for review, were removed from the "Special Advices" and placed in the General Rules. There were at least two factors that caused this further spelling out of Nazarene

morals. First was a misunderstanding between the southern and northern groups concerning what had been done at the Pilot Point Assembly; second, there was some capitulation to proposed mergers with certain groups that did not, in fact, materialize at this Assembly. A possible third influence was the union of several smaller groups in the interim between assemblies which added strength to the legalistic tradition.

It had been the understanding of the delegates from the Holiness Church of Christ that in the reworking of the *Manual* in 1908, these two issues had been elevated to the position of a test for membership. They were understandably disturbed when they discovered that their coveted aims had been thwarted and the issues were merely retained as more or less optional.

Evidently they came to the Nashville assembly with their legislative swords unsheathed since E. A. Girvin reports that "much of the time and energy of the leading men of the assembly was taken up with the two closely connected subjects of tobacco and societies." They insisted that these matters be placed in the General Rules "thus making them obligatory, instead of advisory. Their delegates were successful in effecting these changes." They did, however, grant a compromise that gave local congregations the prerogative to adopt a probationary system. This permitted such churches to receive members who did not measure up to these requirements, although not into full membership.¹

This action also came in response to two rather large groups who were contemplating union with the Nazarenes: the Pentecostal Mission of Nashville, Tennessee and the Louisiana Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church representing some three thousand members.²

The Nashville body was under the leadership of Rev. J. O. McClurkan, a Cumberland Presbyterian minister. McClurkan's leadership was definitive for the group as is partially indicated by the fact that the Mission voted down a motion to unite with the Church of the Nazarene when their leader refused to commit himself on his own

¹Girvin, *Prince in Israel*, 429; Cf. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 233.

²Girvin, *Prince in Israel*, 430; Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 233.

personal move.¹

McClurkan's writings indicate a strong stand against both tobacco and secret societies and a "puritan" attitude toward dress and behavior.² In the correspondence between himself and Bresee on the question of merger, there had evidently been an insistence upon the inclusion of these items in the membership requirements since an extant letter of Bresee says: ". . . that he thought a statement on lodges and tobacco could be arranged."³ The strength of these convictions is evidenced in one of the outlying mission groups at Clarksville, Tennessee where the group split over the two disputed points of tobacco and secret societies. The people who did not feel these prohibitions should be enforced organized the United Brethren Church in that community. Those remaining with the Mission insisted upon the maintenance of these points.⁴

A Commission report from the Louisiana Conference was read to the Assembly which evidently asked for the same concessions, along with identifying labor unions with secret orders, and considerable discussion ensued.⁵

Furthermore, there were numerous accessions to the Church of groups clearly legalistic in their approach. If it is true, as Smith says, that "each attempt to bring in other groups produced significant

¹People connected with the Mission usually retained their church membership. McClurkan was strongly against another denomination which was possibly the real reason he refused to commit himself.

²J. O. McClurkan, *How to Keep Sanctified* (Nashville, TN: John T. Benson Pub. Co., n.d.), 20-29.

³Quoted in Redford, "South," 154. Bresee, however, was unwilling to include a premillennial statement and this became one of the ostensive reasons why the group declined to join.

⁴Conversation with Charley George Smith, January 5, 1969. Mr. Smith was connected with the groups in those days.

⁵This concern was not a provincial situation as many prominent exponents of "Conservative Social Christianity" discussed the same problem. Cf. Henry F. May, *Protestant Churches and Industrial America* (N.Y.: Octagon Books, Inc., 1963), 164.

changes in the character and tendency of Nazarene fellowship," this certainly must have had its effect. A number of the bands of the Oklahoma Holiness Association united in 1909.¹ The mid-west, traditionally rural and conservative, enjoyed mushroom growth under the superintendency of C.B. Jernigan, whose emphasis on "puritan" morality has already been noted.

The results reached at the 1911 Assembly were thus a further capitulation to the ethic of law. E.A. Girvin's report of the proceedings indicate clearly that he was not happy with the compromises. He says:

That all personal training, sectional prejudice, and individual notions melted into perfect oneness as easily as would have been ideal, might be too much to say . . . that perfection was reached, or the very best possible results found in everything, might be too much to claim²

Girvin was apparently Bresee's most confidential assistant and therefore his views would probably reflect the sentiments of the senior General Superintendent as well as his own.

The inclusion of tobacco in the General Rules did not guarantee uniformity of understanding however and the two traditions may even be seen in conflict in a debate which erupted from Editor B.F. Haynes' answer to a question in the *Herald of Holiness*. A reader insisted that he say either "yes" or "no" to whether the use of tobacco was a sin and not to cloud the issue with the idea of "light." Rather unwisely, Haynes answer "No, but I had rather be a clean Christian than a dirty one." This precipitated a flood of letters which assumed such proportions that a front page editorial was devoted to summarizing the editor's position. He argued that to call the use of tobacco an "evil" was not the same as to denote it a sin since the term is used in other ways. The real import of the *Manual* statement, insisted the embattled editor, was that this was a matter which was more consistent with holiness of heart and life, not a law that one must obey to be a Christian. It is indicative of

¹Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 233-234.

²Girvin, *Prince in Israel*, 431.

both the character of the publication and the divided attitude of the Church that the same edition carried a short article by C.J. Kinne, manager of the Nazarene Publishing House, in which he argued linguistically that what was "evil" was "sin," and insisted that this is what the "highest law-making body of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene" intended by its statement in the General Rules. This discussion throws considerable light on the question of the Nazarenes' rationale for their General Rules, and it certainly was not uniform throughout the Church.¹

In the 1915 Assembly there were two changes in the General Rules and these changes virtually finalized their form for the future. In Rule 2, "patronage or reading of Sunday newspapers" was changed to "secular papers." As a reflection of the "scriptural casuistry" approach, scripture (James 4:4 and 2 Cor. 6:14-17) was added to the prohibition against secret societies.

One minor alteration was made in 1923 in the wording of the rule on dress. From "we urge our people to dress with the Christian simplicity that becometh holiness," it was made to read, "our people are to dress" This further eliminates the legalistic possibility of personal decision and creates an apodictic requirement. Freedom in the Spirit is obviously not sufficient as a guard against "worldly" dress.²

There is some evidence of a feeling that the 1915 Assembly marked the Church's coming of age. The "church question" continued to be vigorously discussed through isolated articles and symposia during the years preceding this date, even though the organization had been effected.³ The chief question was whether the holiness movement could be organized and still remain a movement. These were years of experiment, and now the experiment was at an end. It had been shown to be feasible to have an organized holiness church.⁴ If the feeling that

¹*Herald of Holiness*, Jan. 5, 1916, 1ff, 9.

²Cf. "Journal of the General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene," 1923, 128. Hereinafter cited as "Journal."

³The *Herald of Holiness* in these years conducted an open forum and many points of view, even individual concerns, were freely expressed. There was clearly no "closed" position on many matters.

⁴The organization of a denomination, however, clearly set up a tension from the

the Church had arrived in this respect was widespread, it could tend to put a stop to the changes in the *Manual*, and, as just noted it did turn out that the *Manual*, ethically, was finalized for some time to come.

Furthermore, several events took place during the quadrennium intervening between the 1915 and 1919 Assemblies that affected the Church in a striking fashion. Certain changes were operative within American culture that indicated a whole new way of life was emerging. Internally, the death of three General Superintendents, including P.F. Bresee, virtually put the Church in the hands of a new generation of leaders. These factors had repercussions in the ethical outlook of the Church, resulting in what Smith has called a "reshaping of the denomination," and which he described as follows:

The fear grew on all hands that the faith of the fathers might not outlive the second generation. To understand the source and the nature of this fear is to see more completely why . . . the Nazarenes sharpened in this period the lines of their separation from both the secular and the religious world around them.¹

On the national scene, the old morality was being abandoned. Henry F. May describes the development as "Cracks in the Surface" of traditional morality. This was naturally influenced by World War I which was accompanied, like all wars, by a relaxation of morals.²

Here was the age of "jazz," and the "Dance Craze," with all its sensuous implications. It was the age of the Flapper, a new kind of woman who used cosmetics--hitherto the mark of a harlot--and wore indecent clothes that exposed her "ankles" and her "neck." A prominent journal "lamented that it has struck 'Sex O'clock' in America." Censorship became a much discussed theme and crusaders for clean literature found ample game for their attacks.³

very beginning between those who were primarily interested in the purity of the Church, and strictly enforcing the "laws" of the Church and those who were concerned with building the denomination, chiefly among the superintendency. Cf. Will H. Hafer, "The Back-Door Revival," *Herald*, Sept. 4, 1912, 7, and F.S. Thomas, "Law," *Herald*, Sept. 4, 1912, 6 with E.F. Walker's report from the Oklahoma District Assembly, *Herald*, Nov. 20, 1912, 11.

¹Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 289.

²May, *American Innocence*, 333-354.

Many people whom May pejoratively calls "custodians of culture," were terribly disturbed over these and other innovations in contrast to the "Young Intellectuals" who advocated such "progressive" moves. The literature of the Church of the Nazarene reveals that its editorial sympathies were with these "custodians of culture" all the way. The 1919 General Assembly Committee on the "State of the Church and Country" took note of "a growing spirit of worldliness and a great decline of spirituality and devotion throughout Christendom" and therefore it was recommended that Nazarenes "give diligence to abide by our rules" and "maintain a careful separation from the world."

Smith's evaluation of the influence of this period on the Church is enlightening:

Under the circumstances, evangelical Christians needed no new surge of rebellion to widen their separation from the world. If they stood still, or merely accommodated themselves slowly to the new ways of dress and amusements the world would fly on by. Such a situation inevitably deepened the sense of isolation among Nazarenes and taught them to despair of ever making the cities of America a garden of the Lord.¹

Within the Church itself, the death of P.F. Bresee soon after the 1915 General Assembly brought a great shock to the young denomination. He was honored in all quarters as the chief founder and spiritual patriarch of the Church. Added to this was the death only a few months hence of the newly elected General Superintendent, W.G. Wilson. Before the quadrennium was out, E.F. Walker had also passed away. The loss of these early leaders had a profound effect. In fact, considerable turmoil broke out in the west.²

Therefore the natural tendency, even of those who had supported the tradition of freedom of opinion in the Spirit, would be to maintain the present position so as not to deviate from the standards which the Church had adopted under the guidance of its leading spirit.

³*Ibid.*, 344-345.

¹Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 293.

²*Ibid.*, 273.

The whole tenor of the 1919 Assembly indicated a general mood that "the spirit of prophecy had ceased." The General Superintendents' report characterized the preceding quadrennium as "a period of crystallization." They further expressed the desire in their report, "to keep our laws so fixed that we can never depart from the old landmarks."¹ A position had been established which was being increasingly recognized by others, and consequently the call was for the Church to take its stand behind these bulwarks and hold them firm.

Definite steps were taken in the legislation enacted to assure that the ethical standards not be violated. An article was inserted in the *Manual* imposing stern sanctions upon ministers who were accused of "serious laxity in the enforcement of our General Rules and covenant vows."² Furthermore, the duties of the local "Church membership committee" were enlarged to include the screening of prospective members "according to the doctrines and rules of the Church of the Nazarene."³

These defensive maneuvers highlight the fears that the second generation might not continue the spiritual dynamic of the fathers. Smith, analyzing this particular attitude, says:

The assumption was natural that one who was more strict than the founding fathers could not be less religious. To make not simply modesty but non-conformity the standard of women's dress; to insist that lodge members must give up not only their fellowship but their insurance protection in order to belong to the church; to forbid the wearing of wedding bands on the ground that they too were jewelry; to discourage social activities for church youth groups; and indeed to forbid the use of any part of church buildings for fellowship or recreation; and to frown upon educational "frills," whether in athletics or the fine arts, which brought the colleges into association with institutions of the "world"--by these devices, some employed in one locality and some in another, Nazarenes sought to prove both to themselves and others that the fountain of grace had not failed.⁴

¹"General Superintendents' Report," "Journal," 1919, 66, 69.

²"Journal," (1919), 103. Cf. *Manual* (1915), 70 with *Manual* (1919), 80-81.

³"Journal," (1919), 104. Cf. *Manual* (1928), par. 418, sec. 3.

It is obvious from the developments in the Church that the mood was such as to insulate the General Rules against change. But one further action of the 1919 Assembly had far reaching consequences which eventuated in making it very difficult to change them, although not impossible. Up to this time, the state of the *Manual* was quite fluid and changes were easily made by simple action of the General Assembly in session. This had resulted in considerable confusion and ambiguity due to the absence of any type of clearing house, or careful editing. Consequently, the 1919 Assembly authorized the appointment of a commission of three members who should "revise carefully our *Manual* during the next quadrennium."¹

This study revealed such a conglomeration of errors that a resolution was adopted in 1923 which established a "Commission on *Manual* Revision" consisting of seven members who would compose a standing committee to serve as a clearing house for all memorials of revision submitted to the General Assembly. A deadline for receiving these memorials was set up giving ample time for the committee to screen and collate them before the Assembly convened. The seven men appointed were E.P. Ellyson, chairman (author of the resolution and former General Superintendent), E.J. Fleming, secretary, J.B. Chapman, E.A. Girvin, H. Orton Wiley, John Gould and P.L. Pierce, men of whom Smith says, "a group less likely to make radical changes could scarcely have been chosen."²

Part of the charge given to the commission authorized in 1919, and composed of E.A. Girvin, J.E.L. Moore and J.E. Bates (B.F. Haynes was originally appointed but he resigned due to ill health and Bates was appointed to fill the vacancy).³ was to draft a Constitution. In complying with this responsibility, they "endeavored to preserve intact

¹Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 294; *Manual* (1928), par. 418, sec. 3.

²"Journal," (1919), 48.

³"Journal," (1923), 91. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 295. Smith's listing omits the name of J.B. Chapman who would probably be one of the most conservative members of the group.

³Cf. "Journal," 1923, 51.

the Articles of faith, the General Rules, and Special Advices contained in our *Manual*." The Constitution was conceived to include "those fundamental features of our church polity which could not be changed without defeating the objects had in view by the founders of our denomination."¹

The Constitution, as formulated by the Standing Commission on *Manual* Revision was amended by the Assembly "Committee on Revision" and presented to the body for adoption. At this time the General Rules were carefully reviewed and upon motion by B.F. Neely of Western Oklahoma were included in the new Constitution. It was in the course of this discussion that the alteration in the statement on dress, as previously noted, was made. It was not done by vote, but by "common consent." Perhaps there was no awareness on the part of the members of the significance of this change. It is, however, interesting that the constitutionalizing of the Rules carried with a strongly divided vote of 126 for and 67 against.²

Upon the suggestion of General Superintendent J.W. Goodwin, the Assembly voted to submit the approved constitution to the various Districts for their adoption, and its final approval thus be deferred until the Seventh General Assembly which took place in 1928.³

A number of efforts were made at this Assembly (1923) to be more legalistic and demanding with regard to the ethical standards of church membership, but the mood of the Assembly was such that these were all resisted. The Committee on Revision voted non-concurrence on memorials from Kentucky recommending that a Nazarene who joins a secret society automatically expels himself from the Church; and from the Judiciary Committee recommending that pastors be more exacting in receiving members and that those received specify in public confession that they have read the General Rules and Special Advices of the Church and specifically state that they will not unite with secret societies.⁴

¹"Journal," (1923), 49-50.

²"Journal," (1923), 114, 127.

³Ibid., 131.

Although the question of oath bound secret orders had been included in the General Rules in 1911, the deep concern over the matter would indicate that it had not yet become effective. Following the consideration of the General Rules for inclusion in the constitution a delegate from Western Oklahoma requested a ruling from the chair that "membership in, or fellowship in oath bound, secret orders or fraternities is out of harmony with the spirit of the Manual." This ruling was made and "by arrangement" the Assembly supported the ruling by a standing vote. One is left to speculate what these rather strange proceedings might connote.¹

In a sense, during the interim between the 1923 and 1928 assemblies, the whole constitution was "up for grabs." In accordance with the provisions of the 1923 gathering, the Constitutional Proposal of that meeting was sent to all the District Assemblies for vote. E.J. Fleming's report as General Secretary in 1928 of the results of this poll are rather perplexing. His collected results read as follows: "Fifteen voting in favor, five voting against, one voting in favor with an exception [which, he indicated, was tantamount to voting against it]; twenty no report received, reducing the vote really standing to fifteen for and twenty-six against."

So far as any documentary statement is concerned, the Standing Commission on *Manual* Revision apparently just ignored this abortive attempt to involve the whole Church in forming the Constitution and proceeded to present its own document to the General Assembly. The body constituted itself a committee of the whole and considered the proposed Constitution seriatim.

The Commission had left the General Rules intact as previously stated with one small addition in Rule 7 qualifying the prohibition against the "theatre" as "including the moving picture show."² This was apparently adopted, but at this point, Smith says, "a young Illinois pastor arose to complain that the commission had left out something

⁴Ibid., 140-141.

¹Ibid., 128. I personally recall preaching in a revival in a local church on a "radical" district in the mid-1950's and mentioning the issue of the lodges in a sermon which precipitated vigorous opposition from leading members.

²"Journal," (1928), 123.

far more serious than movies, mixed public bathing."¹

This set off a debate that culminated in the adoption of the report with the exception of Rule 7 since agreement could not be reached on it and it was referred to the Committee on the State of the Church. This committee brought back a recommendation that the addition concerning "mixed bathing" be adopted with their revision in wording from "the participation in public promiscuous bathing" to "mixed public bathing places."²

This was followed by an amendment that provided only that the General Assembly go on record as being opposed to "mixed bathing" but that "no reference to the bathing beach be included in the *Manual*." This amendment was adopted, and the whole report of the Committee on the State of the Church was then approved. The item on "moving picture shows" disappeared along the way so that the final adoption was identical to the way the 1923 Assembly had left it.

Immediately, H.B. Garvin of the Chicago Central district--who was apparently the "young Illinois pastor" involved in the fracas--proposed that a statement including this matter, along with many other external impositions, be included in the Special Rules. His statement said:

We, as the holy people of God, should carefully avoid all practices, both public and private that are not conducive to the standards of morals consistent with our profession of grace. It must be remembered that modesty in speech, dress and behavior has a very vital connection with the gospel we preach. Therefore, those who are members of the Church of the Nazarene should exercise the greatest care to avoid all that is immodest in the fads and fashions of this age. Neither should they dress in the attire of the opposite sex, nor participate in public promiscuous bathing, nor other like practice, so prevalent in our generation.

The women of our church are further advised against the practice of wearing the wedding ring, as out of harmony with the Holy Scriptures. I Timothy 2:9-10. I Peter 3:3, 4.³

¹*Called Unto Holiness*, 295. Smith's account is so brief at this point, and draws upon some personal conversations unavailable to this writer, that it is a little unclear about the precise order of the detailed events, and the "Journal" does not record the debate, only the outcome.

²"Journal," (1928), 165.

This was ruled out of order by General Superintendent R.T. Williams basing his decision on the previous adoption of the Committee Report whereupon Garvin countered by moving that it be referred to the Committee on Resolutions. The whole matter was smoothed over when two days later the Board of General Superintendents made the following announcement:

We, your General Superintendents, wish to announce that the resolution concerning the patronage of promiscuous public bathing places passed by the General Assembly on Saturday morning as an amendment to the Report of the Committee on State of the Church and Public Morals, will be printed in the appendix to our 1928 *Manual*. This will define the position of the General Assembly before the church and the world on the matter of "promiscuous public bathing places," and will be in harmony with the decision of the General Assembly not to make it a test of church membership.¹

As Smith observes, this provided the General Assemblies with the precedent of a "ready means of amending the Church's conscience without changing its constitution."²

Two further matters should be noted which moved in the legalizing direction. One was the change in terminology from Special Advices to Special Rules and the other is an almost unconscious adoption of the use of the term "laws" in reference to the Church's standard of conduct.³

The provisions for amending the Constitution placed the ethical standards into a hallowed position of being practically immune to change. Any amendment must be concurred in by "not less than two-thirds of all the District Assemblies of the Church of the Nazarene."⁴

³"Journal," (1928), 167.

¹Ibid., 205.

²*Called Unto Holiness*, 295.

³Cf. *Manual* (1923), 196.

This brought the formative period of the Church to an end. There was very little change in the General Rules up until the mid-1970's. At that time there were some significant changes that we shall have occasion to explore later.

Chapter 4

Convincing a New Generation

Already by 1923 there was evidence of unrest among the rank and file of the Church over the "high" ethical demands. The General Assembly Committee on the State of the Church noted that "while there is no disposition to lower the standards of the church rules, there is a danger of laxity in observing them. . . . Some of our people, we fear, are not observing the Sabbath Day as it should be, and there is a tendency to disregard our rules on this and other points."¹

The 1928 Assembly report of this same Committee continued to insist that there was no disposition on the part of the Church to lower the standards, but its warnings tell a different story. This time the special attention extends beyond the matter of Sabbath observance to "immodesty in dress and behavior, seeking for worldly pleasure or honor, and disregard for our church law and standards of right," all indicating that at the grass-roots, Nazarenes were being influenced by the spirit of the age. The local leaders were exhorted to "hold the Rules of behavior continually before the people."

In addition to, or perhaps as a part of, if not a major contributor to this development, the Church was facing a problem of assimilating new members in large numbers. In 1926, an editorial called attention to the high percentage of new members that were being added to the ranks. In the year 1925 there was a net growth of 4,625 which was approximately 13 per cent of the entire membership. "At this rate of change," said the editor, "in four years sixty per cent of the Church will be persons who have been members less than five years."²

These trends set the stage for a program of reselling the "ancient landmarks" to the new generation of Nazarenes. This task fell largely on the shoulders of three men who, more than any other persons, molded the conscience of the Church and influenced its practices

¹*Journal* (1923), 171.

²J.B. Chapman, "Editorial Notes," *Herald*, April 14, 1926, 2. Timothy Smith cites growth per centages of from 35 to 45 per cent per quadrennium up to 1935 and says, "The denomination's remarkable growth continued through the years of World War II," *Called Unto Holiness*, 348.

⁴"*Journal*," (1928), 205.

during this next period of development. They were J.B. Chapman, R.T. Williams and D. Shelby Corlett. Williams had been chosen as General Superintendent to fill out the term succeeding the deaths of P. F. Bresee and W. C. Wilson. He had rapidly risen to a place of prominence in directing the affairs of the Church, taking firm steps to establish the new denomination on a substantial organizational footing. Chapman was elected in 1928 by the General Assembly from the post of editor of the *Herald of Holiness* which position he had occupied since 1923. Though not as prominent as Chapman and Williams, Corlett played a significant role worthy of consideration. He was in the influential position of editor of the official paper and was a true editorialist from 1932 to 1948.

Chapman founded the *Preacher's Magazine* which he edited even after his election to the General Superintendency with D. Shelby Corlett serving with him as Managing Editor during three years. This magazine was under the direction of these two men, then, from its beginning until 1952.

All three men gave considerable attention to the ethical problem and developed rather well-rounded theories as a support for the moral traditions of the Church. Chapman's influence was perhaps the most definitive in this respect but each of the men here mentioned attempted to defend and support the General Rules on a rationale of "scriptural principles" which is an adequate rubric for this period of the Church's ethical history.

James Blaine Chapman

Chapman came into the Church of the Nazarene as part of the Holiness Church of Christ, himself being originally a member and leader in the Independent Holiness Church of Texas. He had united with this group in 1901 at an early age. He was an influential member of the Western Council of the Holiness Church of Christ which had been hesitant about coming into the Church without certain changes in the Nazarene position. Thus his roots were in the legalist tradition although he was not himself a legalist in attitude or rationale.

Probably no man in the Church was more widely read than Dr. Chapman. His articles and editorials appeared regularly in a well-written and thoughtful manner over a period of some three decades in addition to numerous books and pamphlets which he was able to produce almost without revision, due to a massive intellect and a

photographic memory. Even his extempore speeches were "printable." He was elected in 1945 to the International Mark Twain Society, as a recognition of his ability as an author. Consequently, his work and thought significantly molded the thought of the Church until during his lifetime, a household word among Nazarenes was, "Dr. Chapman says"

It was the judgment of his biographer that J. B. Chapman was tremendously influential in breaking down the sectionalism of the Church and unifying the thinking of the whole Church during this period. This work was practically complete when, in 1928, he was elected General Superintendent, his influence having been exercised from his editorial post.¹

As General Superintendent, Chapman self-consciously saw himself standing midway between two generations, as a sort of bridge builder, justifying the ways of the founders to the new generation of Nazarenes. This was particularly true with regard to the "standards" of the Church and he spoke to this problem both in articles and in the "Question Box," a column that he conducted sporadically from 1923 until 1948. It was Chapman who clarified the ethical conscience of the Church to and for the constituency more than any other man, followed closely by R. T. Williams, and seconded by D. Shelby Corlett.

Chapman's basic understanding of the ethics of Christianity is set forth succinctly in a little booklet entitled, *A Christian, What it Means to be One* where he defines Christianity as 1) a creed to be believed, 2) a life to be lived and 3) an experience to be enjoyed. In explicating the second point he sets forth the conception that dominated all his ethical writings:

There are not many "rules of thumb" in the New Testament, but the principles of proper conduct are clearly set forth. Our Master made a summary of the ethical demands which underlie the Christian life in what has come to be called the "Golden Rule"-- "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also even unto them." But in reality that is not a rule, but a principle out of which all rules for right living spring.²

¹D. Shelby Corlett, *Spirit-Filled* (K.C.: Nazarene Publishing House, n.d.), 96.

Thus it is that scriptural injunctions give principles that one may apply to the concrete decisions of life and thus determine the specific course of action. This he sees to be the case because "the incidentals of life change with the passing of time so that no rule of thumb can be of permanent value."¹

Fundamentally, Chapman saw three sections of scripture as being the basis for ethical principles: the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and 1 Corinthians 13. These three "sheet anchors of Christian morality and experience" are valid for all times and places and embody the principles of "love to God and men." His advice is, "If we are pressed by exigencies along the way, let us make these three our guide peaks, and if the conduct suggested does not line up with these, then let's count them as forbidden . . ."²

From his writings it is evident that Chapman thought of ethics as having two divisions: one having to do with man's relation to God and the other having to do with his relation to his fellows. The Golden Rule, which he employs frequently is the principle upon which all "other-relations" are built.

The principle that controls one's relation to God is incorporated bodily from Susannah Wesley in the form of the advice given to her children: "Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of your body over mind, that thing for you is sin."

While not ever quoting the complete statement in answers to inquirers to "The Question Box," he draws on all parts of it and utilizes it *ad infinitum* through exact quotation or paraphrase, adding to it on at least one occasion: "Do nothing which is injurious to personal efficiency or *Christian influence* or which will serve to lessen your enjoyment of God."³

This particular formulation he considers to be the "principle of

²J.B. Chapman, *A Christian, What it Means to Be One*, (no data).

¹*Herald of Holiness*, March 8, 1948, 1.

²*Herald of Holiness*, January 13, 1947, 19; and March 8, 1948, 1.

³*Herald of Holiness*, Feb. 10, 1947, 13.

conduct for a New Testament Christian." It is on this basis that he justified the Church's prohibition of tobacco and the movies, apparently two of the most contested rules, judging from the inquiries from the laity. In using it to reply to a high school senior seeking a rational explanation for the Church's stand, he speaks of it as the highest test of all and applies it as follows:

Worldly people would not be likely to appreciate and understand it, but a genuine Christian will understand, and I think there will not be a single voice raised when I say that I have an idea that attending motion picture shows will diminish one's enjoyment of God, diminish his love of prayer, subtract from his love of Bible study and reading and cool his fervor for the public services of the Church. This should be enough--why should any Christian ask for other arguments.¹

This, however, is not the only principle that he employed as a bulwark for personal righteousness as prescribed by the Nazarene *Manual*. He appeals to "any and all scriptures which teach that God's people are to be separated from worldliness, filthy and expensive habits, waste of time and encouragement of impurity in thought and deed." This principle may be stated scripturally as "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."²

But in addition to these negative principles, there are also some positive ones: perhaps the primary one is "the glory of God"--one must do all things with this end in view. Another is the injunction to "be filled with the Spirit" which as a positive pursuit prohibits anything that hinders it.³

At times, Chapman was careful to distinguish between personal tastes and the true application of the principles; and he also saw that many things are neutral, i.e., do not have a moral quality attaching to them. He consequently advises prohibition from only that which is "actually wicked." At other times he gave the impression of being a rank conservative as when he observed: "If one looks at the past I

¹*Herald of Holiness*, Oct. 19, 1942.

²*Herald of Holiness*, Oct. 5, 1942, 10; and Dec. 2, 1946, 15.

³*Herald of Holiness*, Dec. 2, 1946, 15; and June 5, 1944.

think he must conclude that no human invention has ministered to godliness." Once when asked for his opinion on birth control, he bluntly replied, "It is of the devil."¹

The main line of his teaching, however, reflects a rather consistent application of the "scriptural principle" idea, leaving many things for the spiritual judgment of the individual. The whole scheme may be summed up under three principles: "first, we must rule out everything that is strictly forbidden by the Word of God, and also those things which we have found by experience serve to diminish our enjoyment of God" and second, "we should avoid attaching moral quality to anything on account of its normal proximity to things that are wrong," and third, "we should not build up a conscience on innocent things."

Chapman's concept of Christian conduct is built upon a hierarchy of values, which if rejected causes the whole edifice to collapse. Consequently it is explicated in the context of holiness as entire devotement to God and complete commitment to realizing perfection of life.

This scale of values is explicitly stated and is quite enlightening in evaluating the nature of the principles of conduct: First things should be kept first and these are religious exercises such as prayer and works of mercy. Second in importance is intellectual pursuits including "attendance upon lectures." Third place is given to the body, i.e., take care of it to remain healthy. Fourth is social life where priority should be given to good friends.

Here we have an obvious ethic of self-fulfillment. Granted that it may not always be consistently applied and that there appears in Chapman at times a degree of arbitrariness (see above) the main tenor of this teaching was in the direction of organizing the whole person around certain basic principles as to realize his highest, sanctified aims. It should be noticed that this approach is thoroughly Wesleyan in mood and application.

Roy T. Williams

R. T. Williams was elected to the position of General

¹*Herald of Holiness*, April 8, 1946, 2.

Superintendent in a time of great crisis. At thirty-three, he was the youngest man ever elected to the office and "probably served longer than will be true of any other man." Yet his maturity of judgment and magnetic personality peculiarly fitted him for the task. The crisis into which he came, and the role which he played in settling it, makes it probably true that he was almost single-handedly responsible for the survival of the Church of the Nazarene beyond the 1920's.¹

It is therefore not surprising that his biographer--also his successor in the Superintendency--could speak of him as standing "like a colossus at the head of the procession" and determining "the policies and ideals of the Church of the Nazarene as no other man has done."²

Williams' background, like Chapman's, was the legalistic tradition of the Southern branch of the Church. He was reared in the backwoods of Louisiana and showed evidence of a strongly "puritan" stand. While president of Texas Holiness University, he exercised strict discipline and rigidly enforced the rules. "In the bulletin under the caption of 'outdoor exercise' the following statement is found: 'No boisterousness, vulgarity, disrespect, or brutality. Baseball and notorious Rugby football are not allowed.'" "An easterner brought a bat and ball which was confiscated upon its discovery and the student "sternly rebuked."

While his influence in the area of ethics does not seem to bear as directly and practically upon the rank and file of the Church as Chapman's, he gave considerable attention to this aspect of the holiness message. He was academically qualified to work systematically in the area since "he had delved into psychology and philosophy as well as theology. In an extraordinary way he translated his knowledge of those subjects into practical application."³

Williams wrote three small volumes that bore directly on the ethical life: *The Perfect Man* (1913), *Sanctification, the Experience and the Ethics* (1929), *Attitudes and Relationships* (n.d.) later revised and enlarged under the title *Relationships in Life* (1928). These writings reflect self-conscious consideration of the problems of living the

¹G. B. Williamson, *Roy T. Williams, Servant of God* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1947), 11-21, 129-143.

²*Ibid.*, 127.

³*Ibid.*, 66.

Christian life and also some of the technical problems of ethics although written on a simple level for plain folk.

Although he was nurtured in the legalistic tradition, his biographer insists that he rose above any local or sectional prejudices to become a representative of the whole Church.¹ He is furthermore given large credit for the Church of the Nazarene being a "middle of the road" holiness church.

He upheld the standards of modesty, chastity and honesty. He insisted that pastors and evangelists should require of church members a conscientious conformity to the general and specific rules laid down in the *Manual*. He held that people called Nazarenes should keep the Sabbath holy; that they should be loyal to the church and its program. He strongly urged that they should not patronize the worldly places of amusement. In short, he maintained high standards of conduct for Christian people always. On the other hand, "Dr. Williams steered our good ship Zion safely past the rocks and reefs of legalism He emphasized the fact that outward conformity to rules of thumb did not make one a Christian. He knew if the tree was good it would bear good fruit and if the fountain was pure it would send forth sweet waters."²

Williams' approach to ethics was determined to a large extent by psychological insights. He saw personality as being the only thing in the world of intrinsic value and this perspective informed all his writings.³ That which violated personality was *ipso facto* evil and the fulfillment of personality in terms of character and usefulness is the highest good,⁴ all other candidates are "purely instrumental, means to an end. The end is man--his happiness and his final divine destiny."⁵

The pursuit of life is character and usefulness. Will wealth help us reach this end? If so, use wealth. Will reputation and learning? If so,

¹Ibid., 163.

²Ibid., 165-166.

³R. T. Williams, *Relationships in Life* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1948), 7.

⁴R. T. Williams, *The Perfect Man* (Kansas City: Pentecostal Nazarene Publishing House, 1913), 11.

⁵Williams, *Relationships in Life*, 30.

use them. But in all things make good character and usefulness the great aim of life, and the great object of endeavor. In no other way can life be explained as having a meaning. Why the struggle, the heartaches, the disappointments, the sufferings, the toil of humanity if it be not the formation of strong, robust, stalwart manhood, which is of eternal and inestimable value; and the ability to serve and bless others?¹

However, this is not a naturalistic development but must be understood within the context of man's fallenness and his need to have a correction made in his native capacity. Although God has an ideal of manhood for each person, this goal cannot be attained outside of grace. "Evil must be overcome and goodness established in the character of everyone in order for him to reach his divinely planned position." Regardless of how well a person may actualize his natural capacities they will always fall short unless there is "the changing of the moral nature."²

As he succinctly puts it: "Character is life's goal, but it cannot be attained in its highest sense without a vital religion. A man without God is incomplete, one sided, abnormal, undeveloped."³

In line with this understanding, Williams says in his reading of the quadrennial address of the General Superintendents to the 1928 General Assembly of the Church that the unity of character, which is envisaged in his ethical theory, is accomplished in terms of four factors: knowledge, wisdom, holiness and love.

Knowledge is the power to see situations, to analyze them, to understand them. Wisdom is the power that can take those situations and properly relate them. In other words, wisdom is said to be ethical knowledge. Holiness furnishes the standards and the motives for our actions . . . [and] furnishes the ability to reach those standards Love is the passion that gives the buoyancy, the pleasure, the inspiration and the joy to live, to exist, to act.⁴

¹Williams, *Perfect Man*, 11.

²Ibid. 61.

³Ibid. 135-136.

⁴"General Superintendents Quadrennial Address," *Journal*, 1928, 52-53.

Within the framework of the transformation of grace, the full ethical life is the fulfillment of the constitutional structure of human nature in the production of character. Therefore, Williams holds certain capacities or functions of human nature to be fundamental in achieving character which is defined as "the sum total of all our tendencies, plans, actions, desires, imaginations, and affections."¹

Human nature has five aspects which must be developed in achieving the highest good: "Man is an industrial being, therefore he must labor." "He is intelligent therefore he must promote his intellectual life." "He is social, therefore he must develop the social side of his being" He is a political being and therefore must participate in government. "Man is a religious being. He needs God."²

Since each of these aspects must be developed on the "right basis," it is important to note the central place of attitude and relationship. Since to carry out this program is to enter into relationship with either "things" or other persons, human and Divine, Williams argued that right relationships are based on right attitudes. But due to the "fallenness" of men, personality has been debased and wrong attitudes predominate. "Thus, wrong attitudes and wrong relations lie at the root of the world's trouble."

This condition reflects itself in every phase and department of life: social, financial, educational, religious. Therefore when one gets his attitudes adjusted, he is on the road to ethical fulfillment, or as Williams says it: "Right attitudes and right relationships will help to place our feet in the paths of prosperity."³

As an industrial being, man finds meaning in life by participating in labor. Although there are many peripheral benefits of work, such as wages, the chief object is character since in labor man fulfills his nature. He disagrees completely with Aristotle who said, "The best regulated cities will not permit its mechanics to be citizens, for it is impossible for one who leads the life of a mechanic or hired servant to practice a life of virtue." Such an outlook, if put into practice will only bring about the downfall of a nation. On the other hand, however, man ~~must not be made a slave to~~ industrial life.⁴

¹Williams, *Perfect Man*, 11.

²Ibid. 17.

³*Relationship in Life*, 20.

"Character" is then made the rationale for passing judgment on many of the things which the General Rules prohibit. It is not "mere" labor that truly fulfills man's nature, but industry "governed by right principles." No man has a right to spend his energies in a way that is not for the good of society and therefore such pursuits as "the saloon, the gambling house, the brothel, the race track could not rightly be called industry." This is because they "rob men of the price of honest toil."¹

Further, a man must develop mentally. Education is important in the process of achieving character but only when pursued in the power of a transformed moral nature.²

Man's social life is of utmost importance since "the gregarious instinct is constitutional with everyone."³ Therefore, for a person to seek isolation for the purpose of promoting his personal holiness is to violate an "infallible law of human nature."⁴ "Social contacts are essential for self-expression and self-expression is essential to the highest development and achievements of personality."⁵

Society is the relation of men and women on the basis of some interest and, therefore, within itself is not evil as some in the earlier legalistic tradition of the Church seemed to think. This does not mean, however, that one joins in society indiscriminately, rather association for the purpose of recreation and pleasure must be pursued on the right basis for it to produce its best fruits.⁶

⁴Williams, *Perfect Man*, 21, 35, 43. Cf. Wesley: "Without industry we are neither fit for this world, nor fit for the world to come," *Works*, 7:123. Cf. also his opposition to the Bristol playhouse, *Works*, 12:128-129.

¹Williams, *Perfect Man*, 34.

²Ibid. 61.

³Ibid. 70.

⁴Ibid. 72.

⁵*Relationships in Life*, 20.

⁶*The Perfect Man*, 72.

But one does not seek companionship *only* in perfect society since the activity and choices in avoiding and opposing the evils of society produces a strong will which is one element of a good character. In fact, "there is no place where a person has a greater opportunity to put himself on record to establish righteousness . . . than in his social life."¹

Some of the evils that one must avoid are "polite gambling," "card playing," "the modern theatre," the "dance," "improper dress," and "Sunday amusements." These do not contribute to the development of character. It is on this basis that the position of the Church against secret societies is supported. These organizations are not exemplary examples of brotherhood since they "do not have character as their basis. They exist because their members have some common interest, which might be selfish or unselfish, harmful or beneficial to the rest of the world: but whatever the object, the basis of union for them is interest and not character. Goodness is not made a test for membership." It is therefore only a pretense and a sham since the real spirit of brotherhood requires no oath. The Church on the other hand is a real brotherhood because it is a "community of character."²

Human nature furthermore demands government. Although civil organization is an absolute necessity for peace and security because of the depravity of the human heart, it is also necessary "because of the natural self in man." Man's constitutional sense of self-preservation and desire to live make it important to provide a basis for mediation of equalities.³

The inherent need for government implies that a person who shirks political responsibility is not only a useless citizen but a one-sided man. He cannot avoid this responsibility because politics are less than perfect but to have a full-orbed personality must respond to the challenge.⁴

Then, of course there is the religious dimension which rounds out personality. Man's capacity to fellowship with God is a standard element in personality and it is this quality that sustains the dignity of

¹ Ibid. 91.

² Ibid. 81-82.

³ Ibid. 96, 114-116.

⁴ Ibid. 114-116.

man.¹

But once again, this development must be on the right basis:

This relationship means more than a mental assent or decision. It goes deeper than church ordinances or membership in conformity to creeds. Relationship is more than a creed--it is life. It deals with personality more than with conformity with doctrines, principles, or ethical ideals. Relationship with God is conformity in character; human character becoming consonant with the divine.²

Here again we have a teleological ethic that is worked out in an amazingly sophisticated fashion.

D. Shelby Corlett

The third man in the trilogy is D. Shelby Corlett. Corlett served in extensive editorial capacities both in connection with the *Herald of Holiness* and the *Preachers' Magazine*. He was also the first executive secretary of the Nazarene Young Peoples' Society and this association would give him a keen sense of urgency in assimilating the youth into the Church in such a way as to perpetuate the traditions of the fathers. This concern remained with him throughout his long editorial career. In 1948, the last year of his editorship, he pled for those who were legalistic to become aware of the responsibility and necessity to adjust to new methods and plans in order to save the youth: "The same methods will not always work for all people as for those of different generations." He argued that the main concern for the Church should be people rather than laws and standards and the adequate leader should be flexible "within the bounds of truth and righteousness, within the limits of no compromise with spiritual principles."³

In an article in the very beginning of his editorializing when just fresh out of the N.Y.P.S. work, he insisted that the young people "have a right to know why we regard certain actions as right and others as wrong." Part of the problem, he said, in retaining the new generation

¹ *Relationships in Life*, 88, 81, 94.

² Ibid. 97-98.

³ "Serving Our Youth," *Herald*, January 12, 1948, 3.

was in occasionally making "principles out of our notions" and consequently holding up "unfair standards and almost fanatical ideas as the demands of Christ."¹

As an editorialist, Corlett attempted to speak to any situation that had relevance to the conscience of the Church and strove to support the position of the Church and its leaders in the event of any question. Therefore one may quite adequately catch a reflection of the trends occurring within the Church by an examination of his writings.

His own particular approach to the ethical position of the Church may be summed up in the word, "expediency," a concept that he chiefly based on 1 Corinthians 6:12: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient." He recognized that the relation between religion and morals had more than one dimension. There are, of course, those areas where "there should exist a rigid line of demarcation between the white of right and black of wrong."² There are other areas that fall into the category of "unedifying."

This latter category moves into the realm of lawful matters that do not distinguish the Christian from the non-Christian but rather encompasses the question of personal conscience and "light." Rational reason may not necessarily be available to support convictions of this sort but they are not irrational. That course which a Christian pursues on this basis "must be considered as being done solely because it is most satisfying to his own conscience, as for the glorifying of God in his personal life." Therefore these particular standards of conduct are not to be imposed arbitrarily upon others.

The General Rules of the Church of the Nazarene, he consistently argued, are based upon this principle. They are not a means of identifying true Christians, but rather spell out what in the opinion of the Church is the kind of life that is "more becoming to God."³

When principles of expediency, however, move into the realm of Church law, they take on a different dimension. It is now group conscience and one who has united with the Church no longer has personal choice in these matters, but the rule of expedience causes him to ~~keep church rules inviolate~~ since it would not permit a person to

¹"Serving Our Youth," *Herald*, March 27, 1937, 2.

²"The Rule of Expediency," *Herald*, Dec. 25, 1937, 2-3.

³*Ibid.* 2-3.

break a covenant.

In justifying the Church's position on movies, he states: "This issue with us is that we believe our church can give a clearer witness to holiness and spiritual life, and that our people may better glorify God in their lives if they refrain from such worldly activities as these."¹ Like J. B. Chapman, he often uses the criterion for worldliness drawn from Susannah Wesley.²

Those who concerned themselves with attempting to keep vital the standards of the Church in this period operated on the basis of several clearly defined presuppositions relating to the ethical life. One of these was the principle that if they could enlighten the conscience of the Church they would be able to insure its continuance in the faith of the fathers.

This approach assumed a specific view of conscience which is most clearly enunciated by R. T. Williams but concurred with by both Chapman and Corlett. Conscience has two aspects: discrimination and impulse. In terms of the latter, conscience can be perfect; in terms of the former it doubtless will never be. The major problem in ethics for those who are sanctified is that conduct "is based not only on impulse, which is accepting right and rejecting wrong when it appears, but it is based upon discrimination, or knowledge, as well."³ It is in the light of this analysis that Williams can say in his 1928 Report to the General Assembly: "It is the business of the church to create conscience."⁴ Chapman agrees that "conscience is a creature of education."⁵

Closely joined to this is another principle that was widely advocated in the Church during this period: the safeguarding of the standards cannot be done through legalistic methods but must be done through the maintenance of spiritual vitality. It was generally accepted

¹"The Christian and the Movies," *Herald*, Sept, 24, 1945, 3.

²"The Sin of Worldliness," *Herald*, August 28, 1944, 3.

³Williams, *Sanctification*, 38.

⁴*Journal* (1928), 50-51.

⁵*Herald*, May 15, 1937, 11.

that one of the symptoms of declining spiritual life was the tendency to increased legislation of righteousness. But this is a dead end street because the question of conduct is at the heart a dispositional matter and the enactment of laws cannot touch the disposition. While there is need for certain negative emphases, they must be closely related to a positive spiritual emphasis.¹

Thus the education of conscience is not a matter of imposing law but of bringing "light to the heart." As Williams exhorted the General Assembly:

For us to keep simple in matters of living, holy in character, ethical in conduct and uncontaminated by the moral pollution around us is an absolute essential. We believe it is possible for God to so equip the human heart and life, and for the Holy Ghost to fill the church, as to make it possible to throw off those influences that would mark and blight the holy heart and the ethical life of a movement. We must not take on the colorings of our surroundings. The only power that can defend the Church against the world is the Holy Ghost himself.²

But despite such earnest appeals, there is considerable evidence of trends appearing that indicated that Nazarenes were in fact taking on the colorings of their surroundings.

A potential trouble spot was pinpointed by editor Corlett in 1940 when he lamented the problem of a great group of "young people in our church constituency who are Nazarene in every particular except in spiritual experience." These were the children of the Church who had inherited its traditions, were "by birth, training and association, Nazarene" but did not make a "definite profession of Christian experience."³

The leaders of the Church were aware of the historical patterns of churches that started out like the Church of the Nazarene and the difficulties involved in maintaining high standards after the first generation. It is in this light that Corlett wrote: "Are we drifting? . . .

¹H. Orton Wiley, "Substitutes for Holiness," *Herald*, March 21, 1931, 2; D. Shelby Corlett, "There Ought to be a Law," *Herald*, Oct. 21, 1939, 2-3.

²*Journal* (1928), 50, 57.

³"Youth in the Church," *Herald*, May 11, 1940, 3.

We must correct trends before they become general practices. We must always remember that while we will not under any circumstances change our printed standards, they may fall into misuse or be abused by our neglect. At all costs let us maintain our standards."¹

H. V. Miller, who was elected as General Superintendent in 1940, began issuing warnings about trends in the early 1940's. Nazarenes were in danger of becoming too familiar with their worldly surroundings and taking on practices that pointed in an "unspiritual direction." He lamented: "Without question, it is a pity that some things could not be used wisely and strategically by the Church, but they simply cannot, for they become the innocent beginnings of vicious trends that will eventually lead us into the same paths to which others have tragically lost their way."²

This warning became his war-cry during the years that followed and in District Assemblies across the nation where he presided he issued his challenge to avoid the dangerous trends. The General Rules of the *Manual* function, in his presentation, to guard against falling into these treacherous traps.³

The 1944-48 Quadrennium proved to be a Rubicon, however, for the Church of the Nazarene. An almost identical situation to the 1924-28 quadrennium emerged and as then the denomination turned a significant corner. The two leading General Superintendents who had guided the Church from the days of its founders until then--Williams and Chapman--had died. The only other General leader who provided a link with the original founders, General Superintendent Emeritus J. W. Goodwin, also had passed away. Thus when the 1948 General Assembly convened, as editor Corlett reminded the Church regularly, it would be completely in the hands of a new generation and a new era is in the beginning.⁴

The editorials during the months leading up to this pivotal meeting were almost frantic with concern for the future of the Church.⁵

¹"Maintaining our Standards," *Herald*, July 23, 1945, 3.

²H. V. Miller, "Trends," *Herald*, May 15, 1944, 4.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Corlett, "Where are we Going," *Herald*, April 12, 1948, 21; "Renewing our Position," *Herald*, June 21, 1948, 2-3.

Cognizance was taken of the presence of the two traditions that have been traced throughout this historical survey. They were still very much alive. Furthermore there was the foreboding fear that the Church might split over these ticklish ethical issues.¹

In fact, the diversity of interpretations of the General and Special Rules throughout the Church was so intense that a resolution was presented to the 1948 Assembly calling for a "standard interpretation" to be effected by the General Superintendents to be read "each year in every District Assembly." This obviously was an attempt to curtail the activity of those sections of the Church that were going beyond the "letter of the law" and imposing very strict interpretations upon the rules. The motion was lost, however.²

Another factor that was indicative of the drift of events in the Church was the discussion over the character of the Appendix of the *Manual*. As previously noted, the 1928 Assembly had begun the practice of including non-constitutional ethical opinions in this part of the *Manual* with their statement about public mixed bathing. Since that time a number of other items had been added including a provision for only intermural athletics in Nazarene colleges, warning against dramatics in educational institutions and a statement in opposition to the use of the church building for "recreational and educational purposes." These items were added by the 1940 gathering. The point at issue was the binding character of these matters, i.e., what is the status of the Appendix. Those who were more legalistic insisted that they had the power of church law while those who did not feel so strongly about these matters argued that they were merely advisory. Obviously originating with the more "moderate" side, a memorial was presented to the 1948 Assembly asking that the Assembly "formulate a statement making clear the authority and binding effect of these terms on our church government." The Judiciary Committee voted non-concurrence however.³ This attempt was taken by the so-called "radicals" to be a

⁵Corlett, "A Call to Prayer," *Herald*, April 5, 1948, 2; "The Stewardship of the Church," *Herald*, Feb. 9, 1948, 2.

¹Corlett, "Liberty in Nonessentials," *Herald*, Mar. 8, 1938, 2; "Renewing our Mission," June 7, 1948, 3.

²*Journal* (1948), 133-134.

part of a plan to undermine the ethical standards of the Church.

It is therefore not surprising that the leaders at the 1948 General Assembly rang the changes on the standards of the Church. H. V. Miller, reading the Quadrennial Report, came down heavy on this matter, emphasizing that "a breakdown in ethics has always been a symptom of inner spiritual decay." There is no place, he insisted, where the church can afford to make any moral adjustments, the Rules are inviolate:

Our church with much wisdom took careful pains to specifically outline the common patterns of ethics which is consistent with the profession of holiness. The content of our General Rules, which outlines this body of ethics, was not carelessly compiled, they have their inspiration in both scripture and the common conscience of many generations of holy living. There is not a single explicit statement contained in our General Rules that is not supported by scripture. We want to say, first of all, that our church standards do not need to be re-evaluated.¹

But a new day had dawned, and in order to meet it and maintain the ethical ideals of the General Rules as live options among the people, a new approach had to be found. One need not look far, as it had been in the making for some time.

³*Ibid.* 138.

¹*Journal* (1948), 167-168.

THE CONSCIENCE OF THE CHURCH

One of the major factors that had driven some of the founders of the Church of the Nazarene to organize a new denomination was a desire to bring the gospel to the poor. Its message remained a message to the common people and therefore it found a point of contact among those who still felt at home in the traditional religious atmosphere of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The emerging religious and cultural situation left many people looking for this kind of emphasis and therefore the Church had a phenomenal growth "through the years of World War II."¹

But with the financial prosperity of the war years, and the changing cultural climate growing out of the times of crisis, many Nazarenes of the new generation were significantly influenced and found themselves in a state of affluence and therefore differently related to society than their forefathers. This had the potential for ethical difficulty since, as Robert Chiles so penetratingly puts it, "it seems clear that a particular formulation cannot be imposed successfully on a religious disposition to which it is essentially alien."²

Thus the rationale for the General Rules given by people like J. B. Chapman did not seem to bear the weight of persuasion that it had carried to the previous generation. Therefore a new basis was sought and one was found ready to hand in the concept of "the conscience of the church."

This position had already been advanced in a much earlier day but it did not occupy the center of the stage as it came to do. D. Shelby Corlett had already talked about it as early as 1937 in an editorial previously referred to. He said: "When a Christian has become a member of our church he has accepted the general rules, which represent the conscience of the church, as his rule of life."³

¹Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 348.

²Chiles, *Theological Transition*, 16.

³Corlett, "The Rule of Expediency," *Herald*, Dec. 25, 1937, 2-3.

This idea occupied a large place in the address of H. V. Miller at the 1948 General Assembly:

We possess a collective conscience that cannot be challenged in the light of scripture and wholesome living. This collective conscience stands inviolate, unequivocally outlining the standards of conduct for all who call themselves Nazarenes. To compromise here means the surrender to trends which eventually bring spiritual disintegration. No minister can remain loyal to his church who trifles with this collective conscience.¹

Miller also published a book entitled *The Path We Take* which appealed to collective conscience and argued for the validity of the ethical position of the Church as a safeguard for the future.²

By 1960 this particular rationale had found its way into the *Manual* in the "Foreword" written by the General Superintendents: "Those who violate the conscience of the church do so at their own peril and to the hurt of the witness and fellowship of the church."³

The editor of the *Herald of Holiness* from 1948 to 1960, S.S. White undertook to continue the "Question Box" which J. B. Chapman had conducted so successfully for many years. However both questions and answers take on a different character. The fact that the denomination had come to overshadow any individual personality doubtless contributed to the lack of strong personal views expressed in the answers but more significant is the fact that there is no consistent rationale given for the position of the Church. Both questions and answers primarily operate within the orbit of the *Manual*, and once the issue has been clarified in relation to this criterion, no further explanation was thought to be necessary. While the "church conscience" appeal is not overtly made, it is implicitly assumed.

A clear example of this is found in an answer to a question ~~concerning whether eating in~~ restaurants is not the same as patronizing

¹*Journal* (1948), 168.

²H. V. Miller, *The Path We Take* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, n.d.).

³Cf. also the two succeeding quadrennial addresses. *Journal* (1952), 210; and (1956), 195.

the Sunday paper. White replied that ". . . taking Sunday papers and going to a restaurant on Sunday are [not] in the same class. In the first place, the reading of Sunday papers is specifically forbidden in the *Manual*. Such is not the case as to purchasing our Sunday dinners."¹

As a corollary to this approach one observes an attempt to reinforce it by inserting that if one is truly sanctified, he will not have a rebellious attitude, but will be humble and cooperative. He who disobeys the rules is manifesting a rebellious disposition.²

There is also in evidence another rationale that assumes only minor importance. It is voiced chiefly by those who attempt to write systematically upon ethics. This view stresses the necessity of discipline in the Christian life. Within this context the *Manual* standards will function as providing a meaningful and necessary guide to the disciplined life.³

The crucial issue, however, in the 1950's was the interpretation of the General Rules. It is at this point that the two traditions which have been traced in this survey came to the surface and overtly collided. It was now a question of either stringent or moderate application of the adopted standards.

The "radicals," as they came to be called,⁴ insisted that the rules were merely minimal standards and implied much more than was explicitly stated. Their preaching enlarged the specifications of worldliness to include every practice that had the flavor of contact with society and conformity thereto. They would have gladly added to

¹*Herald*, May 23, 1949, 10; Jan. 31, 1949, 9; July 4, 1949, 9; Aug. 1, 1949, 8; Nov. 14, 1949, 10; March 27, 1950, 11.

²W. Shelburne Brown, *Let's Look at our Rules* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1956); H. C. Powers, *Manual, 1908-1958*, 3-4 67; Richard S. Taylor, *Life in the Spirit* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1966, 170-171; *Journal* (1952), 210.

³Cf. Richard S. Taylor, *The Disciplined Life* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1962), and *Life in the Spirit*; Brown, *Rules*.

⁴The term "radical" literally means "pertaining to the root." Thus its use here is a misnomer but in the historical context it was used to refer to persons who advocated the most rigid standards of dress and behavior and sought to impose these standards upon the whole Church.

the Rules but this was apparently out of reach. The moderates, as they may be called, were those who did not feel that the restrictions on life should be so rigidly interpreted and particularly that many of the matters condemned by the radicals should be considered wrong or sinful. Both groups agreed that "worldliness" was bad or even "sinful," but there was no unanimity of opinion on what worldliness entailed.

Although the leaders of the Church attempted to hold to a middle of the road position between libertarianism and legalism, these two groups grew further and further apart and as the most influential leadership of the Church would not condone an extensive amplification of the concept of worldliness, the radicals felt themselves more and more pushed into a corner. The radical emphasis thus largely entrenched itself in certain geographical locales where sympathetic district leaders promoted this kind of approach and protected the preachers who wished to stand for the "old landmarks."

The message of the earlier protagonists of the ethical standards actually contributed to the widening split in the Church. They had done their work well in insisting that spirituality and keeping the General Rules went hand in hand. Therefore when the radicals saw the drift toward conformity to society in a large segment of the denomination, they concluded that the Church was "backsliding."

Just as the identification of holiness with puritanism had contributed to a separation of some "second blessing" people from the old-line churches at the turn of the century, the same identification in the second half of the twentieth century caused two schisms from the Church of the Nazarene.

Two issues can be documented as precipitating the split. One, already discussed, was the debate over the character of the Appendix and the observance of the matters contained therein. In 1956, an indication of the diversity of views in the Church came with a memorial from the New England district to "eliminate the confusion which arises from the identification of resolutions in the appendix of our Church *Manual* with the General Rules and from their varying observance in different sections of the country" by arranging for the "preparation of a quadrennial pastoral address, which shall be printed in place of the resolutions on ethical and spiritual matters which now appear in the Appendix of our *Manual*."¹

¹*Journal* (1952), 132.

The other issue that may be documented has to do with the Church's stand on television. The radicals had adopted a position of unqualified opposition and sought to impose this upon the conscience of the whole Church. At the 1952 General Assembly, a group of memorials were presented that sought to incorporate an abstinence clause in the *Manual*. These were rejected by the Committee on the State of the Church and the body of the Assembly adopted their report. Although an effort to offer an amendment from the floor was made by one of the conservative leaders, a representative from Illinois quickly moved the previous question which parliamentarily closed off debate. The amendment was voted down and the same representative moved the question on the committee report.¹

The Assembly adopted, instead, a lengthy statement to be included in the Appendix which declared the view of the Church to be discrimination rather than prohibition, appealed to the rationale that had been made prominent by J. B. Chapman and quoted Susannah Wesley's advice to her children as the criterion.

The conservatives left the 1952 Assembly feeling that they had not been given a fair hearing and that "anti-spiritual" legislation had been railroaded through the convention.²

The feelings of this segment of the Church was perhaps most graphically expressed in a tract by Rev. Spencer Johnson in which he argued that the "offence of the cross" moved from issue to issue and that at the present time the offence was the "standards of holiness," by which he meant the most "puritan" emphasis on external matters of dress and behavior.³ At least one "wildcat" publication sprang up to defend the "holiness standards" and it was anti-everything from Romanism to toeless shoes.⁴

Consequently about the end of 1955, a group of 126 people gathered near Nampa, Idaho under the leadership of Rev. Glenn Griffeth and organized the Bible Missionary Union. In ten months this

¹*Journal* (1952), 90.

²Spencer Johnson, "Twenty One Reasons Why I am Leaving the Church of the Nazarene, (pamphlet).

³Spencer Johnson, "The Offence of the Cross," (n.d.).

⁴"Voice of the Nazarene," W.L. King, Editor. Published at Elizabeth, PA.

organization had spread to twenty states with virtually all its members being enticed out of the Church of the Nazarene largely on the basis of more rigorous ethical requirements, but also on the basis of "no budgets" or centralization of ecclesiastical authority. Its name was later changed to the Bible Missionary Church.¹

This division evoked little notice on the official level with no reference in the official literature. Perhaps the remark of General Superintendent Samuel Young in his 1956 quadrennial address had reference to this crisis when he said:

We are never free to deny or ignore the disciplines of holy living. There is no divine strength without obedience to the divine will. We would avoid the perils and confusion of the legalistic approach to religion, but we need to be reminded constantly of the Word of God, "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Nazarenes must be different if they would follow the meek and lowly Nazarene.

A final effort was made in 1956 to bring the Church around to a legalistic position on television. This was rejected again but with a fervent plea that the Church was not approving anything worldly, only that the Committee felt the issue was adequately covered in the General Rules.²

Not all the conservative people had left the Church in 1955, only the most rabid ones. One of the more moderate conservatives was actually appointed to the post of Executive Secretary of Foreign Missions for the denomination and those who remained with the Church held considerable hope that he might be elected as General Superintendent. However this was never very close to realization and in 1960 he was relieved of the position and eventually led another schism from the Church in 1967.

This new organization, taking the name of the Church of the Bible Covenant, met in its first General Assembly on August 10-13, 1967 at Cleveland, Ohio. The condensed statement of its proposed articles

¹*Manual of the Bible Missionary Church* (1956).

²*Journal* (1956), 131-132.

sums up very clearly the emphasis which it wished to make and thus its *raison d'etre*. They believed

... the Bible to be the Word of God and that liberties taken with it will result in eternal destruction for souls. Therefore, in matters of doctrine, internal attitudes and *external standard* it seeks to follow the Bible even though such a course may be diametrically opposed to the spirit of the age and the mood of the church world in general and the holiness movement in particular. It believes, on this basis, in a separation that is both unique and obvious, knowing that "the Church that is married to the spirit of the age will find herself a widow in the next generation."¹

Both these groups prohibited everything in their *Manual* statements that they had opposed as individuals and therefore the ethical sections were vast arrays of specifications including such matters as the lengths of the womens' dress sleeves and prohibition of attendance at beauty parlors, with total boycotting of all competitive sporting events, etc.

This appeared to leave the Church of the Nazarene free to make any adjustment that it wished to make in its own General Rules. But the fact that no effort was made in the succeeding years to do this lends support to the contention of Timothy Smith that

As far as close observers can tell, the devotion of the denomination to its distinctive belief in the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification and the commitment of its people to the firm discipline of the General Rules are as great as ever.²

In fact, a move was made in 1964 to strengthen the Rules. A committee was appointed to study the feasibility of adding reinforcing scriptures to the General Rules. This may be interpreted as either a carryover of the "scriptural casuistry" concept that was prominent in the earliest days, or an effort to make certain that the position of the Church was a true Biblical morality. In any case, the committee brought in its report in 1968 recommending that no additions be made.³

¹Church of the Bible Covenant, Proposed Articles, 2.

²Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 349.

In this context, it is interesting to note that in the late 1960's there was a significant movement organized to lobby for the removal of all rules from the *Manual*. This movement called itself "The National Conference of Concerned Christians," and oddly enough was a movement that appears to have emerged in Idaho, where the Bible Missionary Church also emerged. It, too, attracted support throughout the nation.

This group published a pamphlet entitled, *The Case for Christian Liberty*, and subtitled, "A Plea for Constructive Change in the Church of the Nazarene."¹ Although it did call for the elimination of the General Rules that specified particular matters to avoid, it was not a call for antinomianism. Rather the major thrust of the essay was to call into question the rationale for the General Rules. Its logic was not impeccable but its reasoning had important implications.

The chief complaint about the rationale for the rules was that the *Manual* statement identified the rules as evidence that a person was either entirely sanctified or seeking to be so. Early in this study, we saw how that ethic early came into the thinking of the holiness movement out of the transformation of the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification.

On the positive side, it argued for Christian freedom, that is, the freedom of the individual under the guidance of the Spirit to choose his own Christian lifestyle. While this may have been unduly optimistic, it did reflect the approach to the legislation of behavior quite similar to that of P. F. Bresee, to whom the writer (unstated) frequently appealed.

Whether or not this movement made an impact upon the General Church we cannot say from official literature. There *was* a verbal agreement that if this group would discontinue its campaign, General Church officials would work on the situation.² In 1972 there were several resolutions presented to the General Assembly asking for some attention to the Rules. None of these approached the radical nature of

³*Journal* (1964), 95.

¹*The Case for Christian Liberty* (Pub. by the National Council of Concerned Christians, 1969).

²Telephone conversaton with Stanley D. Crow, May 24, 1995. Mr. Crow was the executive secretary of this group.

the movement to which we just referred. All of these were referred to a Commission that was appointed at this Assembly under the auspices of the Board of General Superintendents to study the General Rules. This may have been their response to the "National Council."

The transformation that occurred as a result of this action was phenomenal and reflected an ethical "coming of age" on the part of the denomination. We will not explore in intimate detail the various changes that were recommended, and approved at the 1976 Assembly but merely note the transformation in ethical understanding that was reflected.

Perhaps most revolutionary, and possibly reflecting the influence of the National Conference of Concerned Christians, was a significant restatement of the rationale for the General Rules. Only a few words were changed but the import was far reaching in its implication. No longer did the preamble to the rules identify them as identifiers that one was entirely sanctified or was seeking to be, but that these ethical guidelines would "evidence" one's "commitment to God." While this could still be open to criticism, it was a significant concession to a theological rationale.

The order of the rules was changed and the positive injunctions were placed first in order and the negative rules were streamlined so as not to be culturally specific. The rationale for this is rather clearly stated in the preamble to the section of the "Special Rules" on "The Christian Life." There is now the position of relating "timeless biblical principles to contemporary society." These principles are identified as being embodied in the Ten Commandments as reaffirmed in the New Testament.

In this brief development we see how there has been a consistent pursuit of a holy lifestyle throughout the history of the holiness movement on the part of the leaders of the Church. Any realist would recognize that any institution, as it grows and matures, and enters into its second and third generations will experience tensions and include persons who will have some problems with any lifestyle restrictions. But those who have voiced the official position of the Church have never wavered in their commitment.

What is equally obvious is that throughout its brief history there has been a variety of ethical views, some more adequate than others. In its maturity, the Church of the Nazarene has appeared to have moved past many detours and backwater possibilities to arrive at a truly Wesleyan

understanding of its ethical views in its official statements.

Chapter 6

Social Ethics

As the previous pages have demonstrated, the Church of the Nazarene has been intensely concerned to maintain its ethical purity in terms of the standards of conduct laid down in its General Rules. The attention of both people and leaders were so focused on these issues of personal righteousness in the first several decades that little attention was given to the area of social ethics.

However, the Church has sought throughout its history to relate its message to certain problems of society, and make some pronouncements on social issues that have become prominent. But never, in all its history, has its teaching moved outside the context of evangelical theology, or compromised its concern for biblical morality.¹

Theological Characteristics

Insofar as an attempt has been made to set forth any systematic presentation of social ethics, it has been within the context of both the holiness message as understood by the Nazarenes, and Biblical injunctions. Consequently, social ethics is considered to be that aspect of Christian duty that relates to others, or the manifestation of love toward one's neighbor as enjoined in the Second Commandment or exemplified in the Golden Rule.²

Therefore, the greatest concern in these discussions is with the individual's personal attitudes and conduct toward other individuals. Brotherly love, according to Wiley, prohibits such "private" reactions as anger, evil speaking and revenge, and requires one to honor "the rights and privileges of others" such as life, liberty, and property.³

¹Cf. the excellent treatment of the ethical characteristics of evangelical Christianity in Langdon Gilkey, *How the Church can Minister to the World without Losing Itself* (N. Y.: Harper and Row, 1964), 32-34, esp. the statement: "Thus while evangelical Christianity concerned itself relentlessly with issues of personal vice--and so prepared man to be a respectable member of the community--it had relatively little to say about his Christian obligations to be a responsible member of society."

²Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3:68ff; and W. T. Purkiser, et. al., *Exploring Our Christian Faith* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1962), 503-506.

In the early part of this study, attention was called to the claims of the Church of the Nazarene to be Wesleyan in its teaching. The examination of this claim should be renewed at this point to see in what ways the views of the denomination on social ethics agree with those of John Wesley.

There is first a common theological understanding of the doctrine of original sin as a basis for approaching societal problems. This "explained for Wesley the reason for man's inclination toward evil and . . . the presence in man of a diseased will,"¹ and functions in the same way for the Nazarene view.²

Wesley and the Nazarenes furthermore agree that "the main spring of social welfare is based upon the moralized initiation of the individual."³ Christ is seen, to use H. Richard Niebuhr's term, as "the transformer of culture" by way of the transformation of personal life, the cleansing of the believer from all sin.⁴ Nels F. S. Ferrè speaks appreciatively of this perspective: "We need very much indeed to read John Wesley afresh and to feel his fire with respect to this New Testament doctrine" and adds, "Surely one aspect of the power of the Nazarene position in our day is its stress on walking in newness of life."⁵

This emphasis on individual conversion as essential to social welfare is nowhere more clearly expressed than in the Nazarene response to the Social Gospel movement in the early days of the denomination. There were areas of agreement but in this one crucial point there was a consistent diversion.

The Social Gospel emerged as a movement in American

³Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3:70-75. These "rights" are those specified by John Locke in his *Treatise on Civil Government*. Locke based these on the philosophical premise of "natural law."

¹Cooper, *John Wesley*, 1.

²Cf. *Manual* (1964), 27.

³Ibid., 2.

⁴H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (N. Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1956).

⁵Nels F. S. Ferrè, *Christianity and Society* (N. Y.: Harper and Bros. Publishers, 1950), 137.

Christianity in response to the rising industrialism and burgeoning urban problems. These crises in society created challenges to religious ethics to which the church and ministry could not adequately respond because its concepts and methods were "the products of a rural, middle-class society"

The Social Gospel was an attempt to confront these situations and speak prophetically to them. It took notice of the "mounting injustices created by the radical transition into an urbanized, industrial, society in which masses of immigrants to cities were poverty stricken, exploited and powerless."¹

The problems to which the Social Gospel addressed itself were real enough, but some of its presuppositions later turned out to be historically naive and subsequent theologians, such as Reinhold Niebuhr, incisively called attention to this. While its ideal that the law of love "could be met and lived by as a social policy in personal relations and social patterns"² was commendable, it failed to take into account the fact of evil, understood traditionally as original sin.

It is important to note the nature of its aims as well as its proposed method. Henry F. May says that the Social Gospel was the characteristic of American religion of "the articulate and up-to-date middle class" in 1912. This was, he feels, one of its great limitations since it "remained the view of the middle class" and thus "failed in its campaign to convert the immigrant urban masses."³ This supports the statement of Timothy Smith that it was therefore not really revolutionary in its aims. He says, "the basis of its appeal was a stern application of the old standards of morality to the new abuses of wealth and the new evils which many thought stemmed from urban slums and from Catholic immigration."⁴ Its method therefore was a program of social reform to Christianize the institutions of American society, and it seems out of character at that time to question the success of its approach.⁵

¹Albert T. Rasmussen, *Christian Social Ethics* (Inglewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), 134.

²Ibid., 135.

³May, *American Innocence*, 12-13.

⁴Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 200.

The Nazarenes of this period were in thorough agreement with Social Christianity about the nature of the problem and lamented that the Church was failing to face the challenge. "The urban problem," said editor B. F. Haynes, "is the strategic problem with the Church, and yet it's one which the Church seems to shy around if not actually retreat from."¹

However, they never veered from their disagreements with the major assumptions of the Social Gospel, which they opposed along with "socialism."² The whole approach, they felt, was wrong. The problem must be approached through the regeneration of the individual. An editorial clearly states the whole thrust of the Nazarene convictions:

The difficulty with most of the ultra-insistence upon the social side of Christianity today is that it seems to proceed from the idea of building men and society from the outside instead of from within . . . Christ tells us that the cause of moral disorders is from within . . . Social ills, as numerous and dire as they undoubtedly are, are but the outward experience of the inward constitutional trouble whose root must be reached by other and deeper and more efficient remedies than denunciations, in reformatory effects, in educational or philanthropic systems for social relief.³

Consequently it sought to speak to the problem in a different way than attacking social ills directly. As Timothy Smith says of all the small groups similar to the Church of the Nazarene: ". . . they approached the problems on a spiritual rather than a sociological plane. All of them acted out of a passionate desire to preserve the old-time faith in a new kind of society."⁴ The *Herald* editor put it: "the Church's mission is to save men, and by saving men and women she is

⁵Cf. May, *American Innocence*, 18-19.

¹B. F. Haynes, "Keeping in Touch with the Wealthy," *Herald*, April 23, 1913, 4.

²H. G. Cowan, "Christianity and Socialism," *Herald*, Nov. 11, 1914, 6-7.

³B. F. Haynes, "Building from Without," *Herald*, Aug. 27, 1912, 8; cf. also June 19, 1912, 4; August 7, 1912, 1; March 5, 1912, 4.

⁴Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 200-201.

helping onward the relief and betterment of society."¹

Another point where an affinity between Wesley's views and those of the Nazarenes is seen is in the understanding of sin. Sin is largely seen by both as individual in nature, a point that has been severely criticized. H. Richard Niebuhr's analysis of Wesley's view at this point is instructive. Wesley, he says,

envisaged sin as individual vice and laxity, not as greed, oppression, or social maladjustment. Sin meant sensuality rather than selfishness to him and from Wesley the entire Methodist movement took its ethical character. Wesley was more offended by blasphemous use of God's name than by blasphemous use of His creatures. . . . Apparently Wesley believed that the justice of a cause was quite secondary in the eyes of God to the personal purity of its defenders.²

This strong statement is probably overdrawn but it does highlight the personal view of sin that is the major emphasis of both Wesley and the Nazarenes.³

However, some Nazarene writers in the earlier days did allow for sin's taking on a corporate form. In speaking of the big trusts such as Standard Oil, and other economic monopolies, Andrew Adams refers to "the sin of syndicate and corporate business," as being impersonal in nature and therefore worse than private immorality.⁴

He makes a clear distinction between "the collective behavior of men and their individual attitudes," and thus anticipates to some extent Reinhold Niebuhr's main point in *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. "Take the face to face element out of a relation," says Adams, "and any lurking demon in it comes to the surface The moral character of the stockholders makes very little difference in the conduct of the affairs of the corporation."⁵

¹B. F. Haynes, "A Seductive Temptation, *Herald*, May 6, 1914, 3.

²Niebuhr, *Social Sources*, 67-68.

³Cf. Langdon Gilkey, *How the Church*, 30, n. 3.

⁴Andrew Adams, "The Great Modern Sin," *Herald*, June 26, 1912, 6-7.

⁵*Ibid.* 6; Cf. *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960),

Another closely related theological factor that characterized the attitude of the Church toward social activity is its firm conviction that personal salvation should be the aim of all the Church's activity. In the earlier days, in some quarters, this was carried to the extreme of prohibiting young people's social activities for purposes of fellowship or fun. Although not always interpreted in this narrow way, there has been an unswerving loyalty to this principle in all the official Church declarations relative to institutions that might operate under the auspices of the denomination.

Although the General Rules of the *Manual*, in its positive section, requires members to do those things enjoined in the Word of God including "Seeking to do good to the bodies and souls of men, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and ministering to the needy, as opportunity and ability are given," this has been almost entirely left to individual initiative until recent times when a Compassionate Ministries program was officially established.

Jack Ford says that the British counterpart to the American holiness movement manifested an even sharper antithesis between the spiritual and the social than was evident in the United States. Their concentration, as he puts it, "on the spiritual and eternal salvation of the individual made them inclined to regard any organized attempt to better the material and mental condition of men as less than the supreme task which God had assigned to them."¹ This might possibly be attributed to the socialist form of government in Britain.

While it is true, as Timothy Smith says, that some of the perfectionist movements in America participated in social work, the Church of the Nazarene as a denomination constantly maintained official independence from such involvements until recently, as noted above.²

While some institutions have been supported by the denomination on the foreign fields, their purpose was been kept crystal clear as is evident in the statement of General Superintendent J. W. Goodwin in his quadrennial report in 1932:

first published in 1932.

¹Ford, *In the Steps of John Wesley*, 208-209.

²Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*.

There is always a burning desire in the heart of spiritual people to build institutions, which is a noble aspiration and spiritual forces must crystallize in institutions to some extent, but one of the outstanding dangers of every church is to be over institutionalized, so that its energies and finances are consumed in operating institutions to the neglect of Holy Ghost evangelism. Hospitals on foreign field or at home may be needed, but they must serve merely as a means to an end.¹

Even the Church's participation in political action chiefly operated in the area of personal salvation rather than in terms of the betterment of the human race, for example, its opposition to liquor in all forms. Its support of prohibition, local dry efforts, and every means of limiting the distribution of alcoholic beverages is primarily based on the fact that they understand it to be subversive of true religion. This is not the exclusive reason but doubtless was the basic consideration.

Editor B. F. Haynes can see only one valid reason for the Church's involvement in politics, that is "to effectuate some great moral reform for the need of which the Church and world generally are suffering egregiously," such as the liquor reform, or "putting down the Louisiana State Lottery." There is, of course, the motive which he ascribes to Romanism, of simply wishing to secure lucrative offices for its members, but this is unworthy of the Church.²

Thus it may be concluded that since the Church saw man's basic problem to be spiritual in nature, stemming from an internal sinfulness that will issue in eternal lostness, it did not consider his temporal condition as having fundamental significance. Therefore its task is to address the man who is "lost" and lead him into a solution to his spiritual problem. All the Church's resources must be pressed into this service and may not be squandered on secondary concerns.

Patterns of Response

Sociologists and political analysts have described certain response patterns that characterize particular types of persons or groups. Some of these analyses are clearly represented by attitudes and positions

¹*Journal* (1932), 188.

²B. F. Haynes, "Church and Politics," *Herald*, April 16, 1913, 4.

expressed by the Nazarenes in various stages of their history. The purpose of this section is to illustrate some of these patterns.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, an approach to national issues emerged known to historians as progressivism. This "mood" is described by Richard Hofstadter as follows:

It was not nearly so much the movement of any social class, or coalition of classes, against a particular class or group as it was a rather widespread and remarkably good-natured effort of the greater part of society to achieve some not very clearly specified self-reformation. Its general theme was the effort to restore a type of economic individualism and political democracy that was widely believed to have existed earlier in American life and to have been destroyed by the great corporation and the corrupt political machine; and with that restoration to bring back a kind of morality and civic purity that was also believed to have been lost.¹

This political stance has been identified with "middle-class politics" and is referred to by Henry F. May as the position of the "custodians of culture."² Progressivism is characterized, says Mowry, by a strong individualism with stress upon *moral* individualism: "Thus the progressive proposals for abolition of prize fighting . . . gambling . . . prostitution, and the liquor traffic. And thus their demands for the censorship of literature, the drama and social dancing."³

As a counterpart to these characteristics, there was also the widespread aversion to the rise of big business. The Progressives' attack upon monopolies, says Smith, "was an expression of their desire to go back to the simple conditions of free competition in business."⁴

The voice of the Church of the Nazarene during those years made common cause with this prominent attitude toward national affairs including its fears of big business. In the article previously cited, Andrew Adams can see no "essential" difference in the modern sin of

¹Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (N. Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 5.

²May, *American Innocence*, 33ff. George E. Mowry, "The California Progressive and His Rationale: A Study in Middle Class Politics," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (XXXVI) Sept. 1949, 239-50.

³Mowry, "California Progressive," 248.

⁴Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 200.

big business and so-called personal sin. He says:

Modern sin has an impersonal nature and the hurt passes out into that vague man, the public, and is there lost to view; hence the manufacturer of spurious life-preservers, the packer of spoiled meat, the seller of infected milk, or the careless inspector need not be a murderer according to the common understanding of the term. In fact, many sins simply augment risk, and when an awful tragedy occurs it is called an "accident" or "act of God."¹

Therefore considerable attention was given in the earlier days of the denomination to the problem of whether or not a Christian could enter the business world. The danger lay in the idea of a double standard that seemed to permeate the thinking of many people. Editor Haynes speaks pointedly to this issue:

There is the corporate conscience as opposed to the individual conscience. The sense of obligation felt by many as individuals is not the same as that they feel as members of a corporation. Many men claiming to be personally clean and honest are connected with corporations guilty of extortion, usury, or gross violations of right and justice in some way. These men disclaim responsibility for these corporation wrongs, and still claim their moral characters to be unimpaired by such connections. This vain philosophy proceeds upon the false assumption that moral wrong and turpitude can exist from which multitudes suffer, and yet this moral turpitude have no personal responsibility anywhere.²

General Superintendent R. T. Williams similarly attacks "dishonesty on a big scale" and considers the "Wall Street gambler who corners the wheat market and robs the nation of the profits of the soil and snatches bread from the widow and orphan" to be as bad as the "blackleg gambler" or the "thief who beats the brains out of a sleeping victim for the sake of a few dimes."³

¹Adams, "Modern Sin," 6.

²B. F. Haynes, "The Double Standard," *Herald*, April 23, 1913, 1.

This is the excruciating problem that the Christian must face. He must maintain a unity between his religious conscience and his business. The real debate is whether or not personal puritan morality can be practical in corporate business life, and many felt that while it may be possible it is very difficult.¹ Williams advocates honesty because "it is possible to be [both] honest and prosperous."²

The latter faith is a reflection of Clebsch's point that the rationale of Puritan morality in America was that it pays to be good because good men prosper. That is, it is a prudential ethic. This merged, he argued, with the Quaker theme of doing what the individual conscience dictated, all part and parcel of the American approach to life.³

Furthermore, like the progressives, the Nazarenes saw in the rising urban centers, threats to the "American way of life" as they understood it, as well as to spiritual life: "The city is the center of every peril which threatens our civilization. The rum traffic, Romanism, political graft, poverty, crime, foreignisms, anarchy, and every other menace to society, the church and the state are found centered in our cities."⁴

During the early years of Woodrow Wilson's administration, the *Herald* was replete with commendations and approval of his presidency and his own person.⁵ May's statements show the perfect pattern of conformity to progressive views:

When Wilson moved briskly into command, even his admirers were surprised . . . Progressive members, that is of the amorphous American majority, could hardly believe their good fortunes; . . .

³Williams, *Perfect Man*, 36.

¹H. B. Ciprico, "Holiness in Business," *Herald*, Oct. 8, 1913, 6.

²Williams, *Perfect Man*, 36.

³William A. Clebsch, *From Sacred to Profane America* (N. Y.: Harper and Row, 1968), 157. Cf. also Max Weber, "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism" *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 1958), 313.

⁴B. F. Haynes, "Keeping in Touch with the Wealthy," *Herald*, April 23, 1913, 4.

⁵Cf. for example B. F. Haynes, "Should be a Universal Favorite," *Herald*, June 11, 1913, 4.

Nobody was more delighted with the great accomplishments of Wilson's first two years than the custodians of culture. More than had ever seemed possible even to the most optimistic, the people had surpassed themselves, electing a man of the right kind, in fact of the highest type.¹

On the other hand, William Howard Taft, who had been attacked by the "progressive press",² was regarded with concern and the pages of the *Herald* warned about the danger that he posed to American security. C. E. Cornell, the writer, points out Taft's friendliness to Mormonism and Catholicism which showed "the President's relation to this most dangerous foe to religious liberty and American institutions." His own Unitarian faith and his wife's alleged Catholicism made them unfit to lead the country "toward loftier ideals of morality and honor." With such a man at the helm, Cornell contends, "this nation will fast go on the rocks."³

The Prohibition Crusade was also an aspect of the Progressive movement and as Smith puts it, "was symbolic of their concern for old standards of morality," and then goes on to say "the loyalty of all of the holiness leaders to the prohibitionist platform is an obvious aspect of the 'progressive' mind at work."⁴

But support of prohibition has also been considered a mark of rural, as over against urban, churches. H. Richard Niebuhr says:

the rural churches in the amelioration of industrial conditions in their espousal of social reforms, . . . the rural churches reflect the interest of the rural West, whose moral character they largely helped to fashion in the frontier days. They are the supreme champions of prohibition legislation especially with regard to the use of liquor and to Sabbath observance Urban churches, when they enter the field of social reformation show a larger interest than do the rural churches in the amelioration of industrial

¹May, *American Innocence*, 356.

²Ibid., 3.

³C. E. Cornell, "Godly People ought to know about President Taft," *Herald*, Jun 12, 1912, 6.

⁴Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 200-201.

conditions.¹

In describing what he calls the "anti-urban bias" of American Protestantism, William Peterson emphasizes much the same point when he speaks of the strand of Protestantism in America in which the Church of the Nazarene would be located:

An important characteristic of this puritanical strain has been the recurrent attempt to use the state's police power to impose village morals on the whole country The principle example, of course, is Prohibition, American Protestantism's successful achievement in social policy.²

It is, of course, true that the Church of the Nazarene was predominantly rural, and that its position on Prohibition was unequivocal. As has been previously noted, Dr. Bresee felt that holiness and prohibition were the twin planks in the Nazarene platform. Therefore it is to be expected that the Church's position would be in favor of limiting the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages. It has never once deviated from the statement adopted in the 1907 General Assembly that "of all the forces for evil now existing in America, there are none that bear any comparison to the 'Liquor Traffic.' . . . The Standard Old Company, the beef trust, and other kindred trusts are angels in comparison to this black demon of hell."³

During the years preceding National Prohibition, the literature was filled with articles supporting this possibility and rejoicing that the country was manifesting a growing sentiment in favor of stopping the liquor traffic.⁴

When the Eighteenth Amendment was finally passed it was the

¹Niebuhr, *Social Sources*, 183-184.

²"The Protestant Ethic and the Anti-Urban Animus," *The Church and the Exploding Metropolis*, ed. by Robert Lee (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1965), 68.

³*Journal* (1907), 57.

⁴Methodists and Baptists were also very active in the movement toward Prohibition, Bishop James Cannon, Jr. being one of the chief actors and the head of the Anti-Saloon league during these times. Cf. Virginius Dabney, *Dry Messiah* (N. Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 115-137.

result of a long process of development in the nation that created a situation that made the circumstances ripe to actualize the legal curbing of alcohol for beverage consumption. In addition to the influence of the War, Slosson cites four factors that contributed to this mood. One is the widespread success of state prohibition. The General Assembly Report of 1907 took note of this and rejoiced in the "growing sentiment against the liquor traffic" and the enlarging "white map of the South."¹ Second was the rising feeling in the South that liquor aggravated the race problem. Third was the automobile which provided "intoxication of speed" for "intoxication of drink" and finally the pressure of the Anti-Saloon league.²

That religious conviction was the core of this sentiment is highly questionable but nevertheless the mood of the country was in accord with the faith of the Church and the Church could therefore rejoice in the establishment of "righteousness."

The "official" attitude throughout the whole period was to vote for Prohibition and to support the parties and candidates that took a definite stand for the Eighteenth Amendment. For example, the 1932 General Assembly all but officially endorsed the Republican Party and President Hoover for their stand on this issue. A resolution was also sent to the National Democratic Convention urging it to take a stand on the enforcement of the Constitution at this point.³

Thus as the enforcement of Prohibition became increasingly difficult, the Church lifted its voice in support.⁴ But in 1933, Prohibition was finally repealed by the ratification of the 21st Amendment.⁵ The Ninth General Assembly (1936) responded by adopting a report that read:

¹*Journal* (1907), 5-8.

²Slosson, *Great Crusade*, 108-109.

³*Journal* (1932), secs. 102, 153, 159.

⁴Cf. *Manual* (1932), par. 442, sec. 3, adopted by the 1923 General Assembly urging support of the 18th Amendment.

⁵"Prohibition," *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1967, XXII, 638-639.

We deplore the brazen and impudent return of the saloon through the present administration; our nation has been plunged into an unparalleled carnival of social and moral debauch through the liquor and tobacco traffics and their attending evils.¹

But the battle was lost and with the passing of national sentiment the pronouncements of the Church became less pronounced. Although it never revised its stand on total abstinence for the individual and "total prohibition of the traffic in intoxicants as the duty of civil government,"² it learned to live with the situation. On the local level, Nazarenes always stood on the side of "dry" legislation but they ceased to speak to the situation as it really was, that is, there was no compromise position. However, there is evidence that the voting habits changed. In the early days the holiness people voted the Prohibition Party, even if there was no chance of winning. But as S. S. White put it:

There are many Christian people who honestly think that they can promote prohibition better by fighting for it in a party which has an opportunity to win than by joining a party which stands for Prohibition but practically has no chance to carry the vote in the elections.³

On the matter of Sabbath observance, the Nazarene position also is in accord with Niebuhr's analysis of a rural-type church. So far as its literature is concerned, at least, it has consistently maintained a near-Sabbatarian approach.⁴

¹*Journal* (1936), 138.

²*Journal* (1936), 138.

³S. S. White, "The Question Box," *Herald*, Jan. 31, 1949, 8.

⁴By "Sabbatarian" here is intended the observance of the Lord's Day with the same rigor as was demanded by the Jewish law of Sabbath. Cf. *Herald*, April 15, 1912, 4; April 24, 1912, 10; June 12, 1912, 4; July 3, 1912, 3; Clement C. Carey, "Keeping the Sabbath," *Herald*, July 3, 1912, 6 says: "No more vital question is up for discussion in these modern times than the right observance of God's holy day, and none seems to be

Much of the foregoing is a commentary on some of the contemporary critiques of denominationalism. Perhaps as strong a statement as possible is Niebuhr's that "denominationalism . . . is a compromise . . . between Christianity and the world It represents the accommodation of Christianity to the caste system of human society."¹

Langdon Gilkey has given a penetrating analysis of how the American church reflects the surrounding culture more than its own transcendent source by showing how the denominational structure "preserves no essential area separate or removed from cultural domination."²

It is interesting that the history of the involvement of the Church of the Nazarene in social problems has an intimate correlation with the character of the contemporary culture. Therefore, in the transition of America from a "sacred to profane culture," there is a corresponding withdrawing from direct social action in many ways. While this does not tell all the story, the official organ of the Church spoke in the earlier days clearly and vitally to issues of national life with an optimism that a positive influence could be effective. This "outward looking" editorial policy continued for several years but with a gradually developing introspectiveness. About 1948, with a change in editors, the periodical became almost totally concerned with the life of the Church--matters of denominational promotion and devotional emphases but not often speaking editorially to current situations either national or ecclesiastical.

This reflects a growing pessimism about society which is further reflected in the conservative eschatology of the Church. Although never taking an official position, virtually the whole Church became "premillennial" in its interpretation of "last things." This view holds forth little hope for the redemption of society and thus tends to deaden concern for social improvement. This change may be partly attributed to the fact that two of the influential editors of the official periodical were premillennialists: B. F. Haynes, the first editor and J. B. Chapman. ~~The main thrust of the denominational emphasis then, came more ignored.~~

¹Niebuhr, *Social Sources*, 6.

²Gilkey, *How the Church*, 15-20.

to be saving souls, and enabling them to be delivered from "this present sinful world."

While it is true, as Timothy Smith points out, that there was a sharp divergence in the earlier days of the denomination between "those who hoped to fashion a better future for society and those who despaired of anything more than a holding action until the Second Coming," he makes the following observation: "The outbreak of World War I, and continuing disillusionment with measures of moral reform, attracted many others to this view (premillennialism). By the late 1920's . . . it had become the dominant one."¹

Clearly indicative of the way things developed is the statement of editor S. S. White:

The Church of the Nazarene--or the Church of Jesus Christ as a whole--is a religious institution . . . the task of the Church is to bring men to God . . . the Christian Preacher is to give himself to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He has not been called to discuss secular subjects in the pulpit, merely for their own sake. He can refer to them only as they bear directly on man's relation to God.²

Social Work

While the main work of the Church was consistently conceived to be evangelism, there is a history of engagement in social activity by groups and individuals within the Church of the Nazarene that at times took on large proportions. But consonant with the findings of the preceding section, such activity almost disappeared until recent times.

Much of the earliest work of the Church was city mission work and may be considered social to some extent. However the greatest flurry of activity came during the first two decades of the twentieth century when the white slave traffic was at its peak. The whole nation was stirred. ~~May calls it the "white slave panic,"~~³ but if the numbers of

¹Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 202-203. He considers this early conflict a further similarity to the "wider progressive movement."

²"A Religious Task," *Herald*, Nov. 8, 1948, 2.

³May, *American Innocence*, 343.

unfortunate girls who passed through the Rescue Homes operated by Nazarenes are any indication, it was not a "panic" but a reality. Ten homes founded by Seth C. Rees "sheltered more than 2000 girls" and others quote similar figures. Rees estimated that there were five hundred thousand white slaves in America alone.¹

It is difficult to know how many rescue homes were operating during this period but they were scattered all over the country. The 1913 Easter edition of the *Herald of Holiness* was given over completely to the task of rescue work and ten homes are listed in the notices.

Incidentally, the holiness people's involvement in such work also gave impetus to the opposition of the Church to many practices such as social dancing, since this was a prolific source of trouble in producing "merchandise" for the white slave trader.²

The great need for such work, as well as the possibility for it was that the traffic was an enforced prostitution. Young girls were lured into it and retained against their will. Venereal disease as well as the terrible abuse that they suffered took such a high toll that "the life of a girl in sin is about five years."³ Many were turned loose when their usefulness was over and doubtless others escaped and these rescue homes played a crucial role in attempting to rehabilitate them into society.

It was a risky and difficult ministry, however, which met with tremendous opposition. Citizens did not want such homes in their neighborhoods and in some cases took legal action to prevent their establishment. Thus those who sponsored them were often greatly misunderstood and maligned.⁴

The strength of conviction that gave these early Nazarenes courage to carry on this work grew out of the feeling that they had the only

¹Seth C. Rees, "Why the Church Should Engage in Rescue Work," *Herald*, March 19, 1913, 2.

²Jennie A. Hodgin, "Traps for Girls," *Herald*, March 12, 1913, 10.

³*Herald*, March 19, 1913, 4.

⁴*Herald*, June 25, 1913, letter from Seth C. Rees.

message--not the only one with it--but the only message that could provide a genuine solution to the problem.

Strangely enough, however, while the denomination was in complete sympathy with this work, it never assumed any obligation for any of the homes. They were supported by districts and local groups and thus were continued by contributions from other than regular church funds. The reports from the various district assemblies in the *Herald of Holiness* indicate that rescue work was given a prominent place in these annual gatherings and often a special service was set aside for this. Doubtless the precarious financial condition of the General church made it appear impractical to take on additional financial burdens.

Numerous efforts were made by various homes to secure the sponsorship of the denomination but these appeals were consistently referred to the district assemblies, for the reason, as the 1919 Report puts it, that "the General Assembly does not wish to adopt any home."¹

This situation, coupled with the fact that the institutions were so numerous, led to the rapid collapse of many of them. Individuals who had been operating the homes found themselves unable to continue unless subscriptions could be obtained.²

In 1919 the General Committee on Rescue Work was changed to the General Board of Social Welfare.³ It then took on more general duties and the rescue work began to fade out as a prominent interest. By 1928, R. T. Williams in his quadrennial address named only two which could claim Nazarene sympathy: Rest Cottage at Pilot Point, Texas and Rest Cottage in Kansas City, Missouri. His words put the situation in focus:

While the Church of the Nazarene looks with sympathy upon the orphan children and the wayward, erring girl who has lost her way, we have done very little as a general church to aid these worthy

¹*Journal* (1919), 45.

²Cf. an appeal from the Beracha Home in Arlington, Texas, *Herald*, Feb. 25, 1914, 13.

³*Journal* (1919), 56.

causes. There is one orphanage in our connection, owned and sponsored by certain districts in our church. This is not a general church institution but has rendered such service as its means would afford. We have at least two rescue homes supported in the same way, though they are not owned and sponsored by the general church.¹

Only the Pilot Point institution has survived but still without official sponsorship. There was an attempt made as late as 1964 to bring it under the wing of the Church when two districts memorialized the General Assembly to recognize it "as an institution of the church, give it publicity as such, decree its future, and plan for same." These memorials were unanimously rejected by the committee.²

There had also been considerable interest in orphanage work in the earlier decades. A General Orphanage Board had been organized in 1919. Previously this interest had been included under the jurisdiction of the Board of Rescue Work. None of these social welfare boards, however, directly controlled any homes or institutions but merely encouraged the work carried on by local groups, with the one exception noted above.

Members of the Pentecostal Mission in Nashville, Tennessee not only carried on considerable rescue work but also undertook to establish a home for unfortunate children. This home was founded in 1907 under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. Tim H. Moore and by October, 1908 housed seventeen girls. It was under the supervision of the Mission.³

There was an orphanage in the Southwest known as the Peniel Orphan's Home that apparently operated for a time under the General Orphanage Board of the Church of the Nazarene. But in 1929, the children whom it sheltered were placed in other institutions, "the property was disposed of, and the Church of the Nazarene discontinued recognized orphan work."⁴

¹*Journal* (1928), 46.

²*Journal* (1964), 139.

³Redford, "Nazarene Church in the South," 160-162.

This discontinuance was not the result of lack of interest, although there was not universal agreement in the Church over this kind of activity.¹ Several districts indicated that they would be willing to support an orphanage if it were rightly conducted. Such stipulations may give an insight into the real reason the Church dissolved its relation with the Peniel Home. The Report of the General Orphanage Board indicated considerable deficit, chiefly in the form of unpaid salaries to the directors. The property was offered to these directors provided they would accept it in lieu of salary payment, pay the other outstanding debts and place the children in acceptable homes or institutions.² Thus it was that the work stopped.

The General Orphanage Board continued to exist in the 1968 *Manual* but it had no vital function and discontinued reporting at the General Assembly. Its 1932 report wrote *finis* to denomination social work as it described the closing of the agreement with the directors of Peniel Home in a prophetic statement: "Thus ended a chapter in the history of the Church of the Nazarene closing Peniel Orphan's Home at Peniel, Texas, and the discontinuance of recognized orphanage work in and by the said church. The Home was closed and all indebtedness against the home and the church was canceled, and settled."³

Therefore it may be concluded that the immediate reason for the Church's refusal to sponsor any institutions of social welfare was monetary.⁴ Although these financial problems may have seemed insurmountable, there was also a philosophy that did not see such activity to be in full accord with the major purpose of the Church.

For example, in 1914 the *Herald* editor spoke of the work of "social and material amelioration of the race" as being a "seductive temptation" to the Church to turn aside from its mission of saving men.

⁴*Ibid.*, 188.

¹*Journal* (1928), 221-222.

²*Journal* (1932), 305-311.

³*Ibid.* 310.

⁴As already suggested, the Church was in a very precarious condition during these years and financially was barely solvent.

He felt that if this were accomplished it would help "onward the relief and betterment of society."¹

Although in recent years there has been a reawakening of interest in social work among the people of the Church, the denomination has not deviated from its early stand. A number of local churches have sponsored retirement homes using Government finance but have done so against the advice of the General and District leadership.² Consequently, so far as the leaders are concerned, the exclusive business of the Church is still evangelism.

Marriage and Divorce

The institution of marriage and the phenomenon of divorce have been given considerable attention by the Church of the Nazarene through its few years of existence. However there are some points in which there has been quite universal agreement with no change during its historical development. There is full accord on the idea that marriage in its monogamous form is of Divine origin and thus is above the vicissitudes of civil law. Consequently the marriage covenant is binding throughout the lives of the partners. There is, furthermore, a strong opinion that it is a violation of scripture for a Christian to marry a non-Christian.³

On the matter of divorce, it could simply be said that the Church has always opposed it. In support, appeal has consistently been made to the scriptures that provide, it is said, the only ground for divorce, namely adultery. Nevertheless there has been considerable discussion of this topic, and judging from the numerous debates and questions raised in General Assembly action, many problems have arisen in the attempt to administer the Special Rule dealing with divorce.

The position that existed for many years was tentatively stated in

¹B. F. Haynes, "A Seductive Temptation," *Herald*, May 6, 1914, 3.

²Cf. correspondence in the files of Rev. T. E. Jones, Nashville, Tenn., relative to Trevecca Towers home for the retired, sponsored by College Hill Church of the Nazarene. In subsequent years, both District and General leaders have become "proud" of this pioneering development.

³Cf. *Manual of the Holiness Church of Christ* (1906) under "Institutions of Christianity," article 4; Holiness Association of Oklahoma and Indian Territory, *Yearbook*, 1906-1907, 12-20. *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* (1968), 49-50.

1915 but, with no change in wording. It was given more legislative force when the "Special Advices" became "Special Rules" in 1928.

As indicated above, marriage was generally conceived as a natural rather than merely a civil condition. The nearest to a genuinely "natural law" statement is found in the 1906 *Manual* of the Holiness Church of Christ in its Ritual:

Emanating thus directly from supreme (sic) authority, and preceding all other social or civil compacts, this institution cannot undergo changes or pass away in the progress and mutations of society; but will remain the same and unalterable, the foundation of human government, of social order and domestic happiness to the end of time.¹

This should not be construed, however, to be purely a philosophical interpretation but is obviously a theological belief. There is, furthermore, no literature available to indicate whether those who support this position either recognized the full implications of it or were willing to stand by it, as for example in the case of common law marriage which would be entailed by the statement here cited.

An indirect answer to the question may possibly be found in the writings of J. B. Chapman, a former member of this parent body. In responding to inquiries, whether persons may be married "legally" but not "in the sight of God," his reply does not assume a completely "natural law" situation but insists that "marriage has to do with human society as well as with individual relation." "Marriage," he said in another place, "is a civil contract which is binding upon both parties and cannot be broken with impunity by either one." To take such a position as his inquirers suggest would serve both to "loosen the bonds of human society" and tend "toward free love and is a doctrine of the devil."²

Another problem in relation to the married state occupied the thinking of the early Nazarenes and evidently aroused considerable attention in certain sectors. This is a teaching known as "marital purity." It was a rather delicate matter and therefore was not discussed

¹*Manual of the Holiness Church of Christ* (1906), 42.

²*Herald*, March 30, 1940, 12; May 11, 1940, 13. Cf. also Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3:79-92.

as openly as might be desirable for us to understand all its implications but in essence advocated abstinence from sexual relations in the married state except for procreation. The situation must have been more acute among those who advocated rigorous "puritan" standards of conduct, since an article is included in the *Manual* of the Holiness Church of Christ specifically disavowing their approval of this "modern teaching." This article appealed to 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 in support of the rejection of this teaching.

Some churches were terribly distraught over this matter and in some situations separation of marriage partners actually ensued and many young people raised under the influence of that teaching either never married or did not make a success of their marriage. Many people in the church developed serious spiritual problems. One who was a child in one of these churches wrote:

I faintly remember prayer meeting talks about "marriage relationships" for producing children only and a heavy, brooding, dark spirit on the people during and after these talks. They meant nothing to me, but the subject of the talks and the strange tension relating to them was not lost on me.¹

There is no doubt that this teaching was marginalized and eventually disappeared from among the main body of holiness people.

The Church of the Nazarene was in its formative years during an era of American history when mores about marriage were undergoing radical changes, and this is mirrored in the teachings of the Church. Much of the revolution in thinking was directly related to woman suffrage. One of the matters that aroused widespread public reaction was "birth control." "In 1913," wrote Henry F. May, "Margaret Sanger . . . coined the term birth control for a movement that had a long subterranean history." In her lecture tours she "obviously ran into a complex whirlpool of public emotions."²

¹"Personal Memories of Early Nazarene Concepts of Marital Purity," hand written note by Dr. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop as information for this study. I personally recall an early evangelist of the Church of the Nazarene telling me that his first marriage was

destroyed because he subscribed to this belief.

²May, *American Innocence*, 341-342.

While this, too, is not a matter that would occupy a lot of public discussion among people like the Nazarenes, there are a few pointers that indicate that, as with many other new teachings, there was an initial conservative reaction. The strength of the opposition in some quarters may be seen by the title of an article in 1913, the year when Mrs. Sanger was arousing such attention: "Wholesale Slaughter of the Innocent." This editorial denounced the practice of "prenatal murder" through planned parenthood.¹

On the matter of divorce, the holiness people in various areas of the country held the same opinion prior to the unions in 1907 and 1908. There was therefore virtually no differences to be settled. Some of the more legalistic groups did specifically exclude persons from membership who had been divorced,² while the Church of the Nazarene in California did not make it a membership test since the statement on marriage and divorce was in their "Special Advices." But there was an obvious "tightening" up in the California organization between the 1895 *Manual* and the 1905 edition. In the latter document, ministers of the Church were positively forbidden to solemnize marriages of persons who were divorced without "Biblical" grounds. This restricting was carried into the *Manual* of the united Church.

The article that was ultimately adopted on divorce read as follows:

We hold that persons who obtain divorce under the civil law where the scriptural ground for divorce, namely, adultery, does not exist, and subsequently remarry, are living in adultery; and though there may exist such other causes and conditions as may justify divorce under the civil law, yet only adultery will supply such ground as may justify the innocent party in remarrying.

So stated, the rule is open to considerable variety of interpretation. The most obvious latitude is involved in the fact that the door seems open to allow divorce on any grounds deemed sufficient under civil law, but remarriage is dependent on the cause of the divorce. This ambiguity may have aroused some questions as later developments

¹B. F. Haynes, "Wholesale Slaughter of the Innocent," *Herald*, July 2, 1913, 2. During his adolescence this writer remembers a leading preacher from the "radical" wing of the holiness movement preaching against birth control during a revival meeting.

²*Yearbook*, Holiness Association of Oklahoma and Indian Territory.

will reveal.

Believing as strongly as they did in the sanctity of the home and the inviolability of marriage, the increasing divorce rate during the period from 1914 to 1928 created consternation among the early Nazarenes over the welfare of society. They found themselves drawing the same conclusions referred to by secular historian Preston W. Slosson: "The most common argument of those who believed that the traditional monogamous family was disappearing in America was, of course, the very high divorce rate, by far the highest rate for any part of Christendom where statistics were carefully kept."¹

The Church responded to these developments by amending its Rule on Divorce to exclude from membership divorcees who were without "Biblical" grounds, namely adultery, and had subsequently remarried. The rationale behind this was doubtless to maintain the purity of the Church.²

Another flurry of activity came in the mid-1930's when divorce became a problem among the clergy,³ along with other problems of understanding the Church's position. One may infer that certain parties were attempting to justify remarriages by attributing adultery to the other partner at some time subsequent to the divorce and thereby remain within the letter of the law. Therefore a memorial was submitted requesting that the phrase, "at the time of the procurement of the divorce" qualify the condition of adultery. There was no concurrence however.⁴ There was also a request by a representative from New York for the General Superintendents to formulate a statement on the Church's position on divorce. This doubtless reflects the ambiguity in the statement as previously noted. The request was not recognized however, since the necessary statement was already

¹P. W. Slosson, *The Great Crusade and After: 1914-1928, A History of American Life*, ed. by A. M. Schlesinger and Dixon Ryan Fox (N. Y.: The MacMillan Co., 1944), 12:142.

²Cf. B. F. Haynes, "A Disgusting and Disgraceful Evil," *Herald*, Oct. 15, 1913, 2.

³*Journal* (1936), 136.

⁴*Ibid.*, 138.

included in the *Manual*.¹

In relation to divorce among ministers, five memorials were submitted in 1936 requesting some sort of restriction be placed upon the recognition of those separated from their spouse. The committee report was finally amended to add the following to the Special Rule: "No person having more than one living companion or who marries a person who has more than one living companion can be ordained."²

However, there were second thoughts on this sweeping provision and so in 1940, the Assembly rescinded its action, reverted to the statement of the 1932 *Manual* and charged the General Superintendents with discretionary powers in ordaining divorced persons.³

As the Church continued its commitment to evangelism, it more and more found itself in a position of attempting to minister to persons whom it legally could not receive into its fellowship. Many persons, faced with the problem of being a Christian, yet refused church membership because of errors in their past life, turned away from the Christian faith. As society became more complex and the divorce situation became so widespread, pastors became aware that their field of service was rapidly diminishing, their gospel was not for every person.⁴

The situation became so acute that in 1964 the agitation was too great to be ignored any longer. In response to a wave of requests, the General Assembly provided for the appointment of a commission to study the issues of marriage and divorce. The stated purpose of the commission was to study "the status of marriage in our society, to define the scriptural position relative to the problems of marriage and divorce, and to outline how these problems may be solved through the life and ministry of the Church."⁵

¹*Journal* (1936), 137.

²*Ibid.*, 138.

³*Journal* (1949), 176-177.

⁴Cf. *Journal* (1964), 120: "Whereas, we are now being confronted with converts who are products of an almost completely secularized society that has no knowledge of divine law"

A sub-committee worked with a minimum of help from those ostensibly most capable of giving light, to attempt to determine the theological and biblical soundness of the *Manual* statement.¹ They recommended that the phrase "are living in adultery" be stricken out as descriptive of the condition of those who had remarried without Biblical divorce. This move was doubtless in response to a widespread feeling that the Rule "limited the Atonement." Otherwise there was no melioration of the practical problem of church membership that was the pressing pastoral issue.

As the Assembly approached the question, with several revolutionary memorials before it, the gathering erupted in vigorous debate with the outcome being that nothing was done. The General Superintendents declared themselves unanimously in favor of maintaining the *status quo* so the memorials for real change were rejected, the commission's report was tabled and the *Manual* statement was left as it was with the study to continue.² Once more the Church manifested its strong devotion to the teaching of scripture as its ultimate norm for ethical pronouncements.

But the pressures of the exploding divorce rate led eventually to a significant relaxing of the membership requirements. In 1976, with the major restructuring of the behavioral rules, the subject also came in for review. The Special Rule explicitly recognized the theological point that had been long argued that God's grace could forgive past sins and divorce was no longer to exclude one from church membership. Ministers were cautioned but no longer prohibited from marrying persons who had been divorced. It is safe to say that church law was altered to coincide with what had long been practiced.

Social Issues

The Church of the Nazarene has always sought to make an official declaration on issues of major significance to society. Consequently it has spoken on a variety of topics, each of which deserve some mention

⁵*Journal* (1964), 139-141; and *Journal* (1968), 191.

¹The religion faculties of Nazarene colleges were asked to contribute to the study, but did not respond significantly.

²*Journal* (1968), 80-82.

if not extensive elaboration.

In 1940 a position was officially adopted protesting the anti-Semitism that was becoming quite prominent in the United States. It was opposed both on the basis of its unchristian character and its subversiveness towards national religious liberty.¹ Communism was also officially denounced in 1936 and a committee was appointed in 1960 to reaffirm the Church's position on "godless communism" to be published in the public press if the General Superintendents thought advisable.²

In times of national military emergency, Nazarenes have searched their conscience to see precisely where they stood in relation to war. Obviously there was no question that they were unequivocally against violence,³ but this did not solve the problem of individual Christian participation in military service.

One factor that was consistently outstanding, and was especially prominent during the World War I era, was the Church's commitment to patriotism.⁴ This attitude had the tendency to accept uncritically the position of the country as always being one of non-aggression. It appeared quite clearly during the War when the literature carried accounts of war atrocities by the Germans in a rather anti-German sentiment.⁵ In looking back upon the conflict, the General Superintendents' report of 1919 spoke of the "end of Prussian militarism thereby saving democracy for ourselves and the rest of the world."⁶

The Church has never taken a stand for conscientious objection as a

¹*Journal* (1940), 176.

²*Journal* (1936), 149; *Journal* (1960), 117.

³Cf. *Journal* (1936), 126: ". . . the general attitude of the church shall be that of opposition to all war; and in particular, that our attitude shall be one of refusal to participate in, or to support aggressive warfare."

⁴Cf. *Journal* (1923), 172: "We, the General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene, hereby declare ourselves to be unswervingly loyal to our government, and patriotic in every respect; . . ."

⁵B. F. Haynes, "War Atrocities," *Herald*, Sept. 9, 1914, 2.

⁶*Journal* (1919), 66.

denomination although it has given considerable attention to it. Instead of withdrawal, it has sought to make its contribution to the fighting men of the nation by providing many chaplains in the armed services, operating a standing Nazarene Serviceman's Commission,¹ and presently maintaining a general office to supervise and promote institutional chaplaincy, including the military.

Preceding the American entry into the First World War an appeal was made for the General Assembly of 1915 to take advantage of the "Dick Military Law" which provided that members of established religious organizations "whose creed forbids its members to participate in war of any form, and whose religious convictions are against war or participation therein" may be exempt from military service. The Nazarene denomination could qualify if it made its stand a matter of record and printed it in the *Manual*.² But the General Assembly did not give consideration to the matter. Its true attitude may be best reflected in the resolution it adopted in 1919 following the War: "Inasmuch as it has been demonstrated that it was possible for a man to go through this great world war as a hero both to his country and his Christ, a motion prevailed that this Assembly wire greetings to Sgt. Alvin York, World War Hero."³

The approach of the Church has been to leave the matter of participation in war to the personal conscience, but does lay stress upon the Christian's obligation to render service to his country "in all ways that are compatible with the Christian faith and the Christian way of life."⁴

But in recognition of the fact that some among the membership were conscientious objectors, the General Assembly of 1946 made provision for their protection and set up a "register whereon those persons who supply evidence of being members of the Church of the Nazarene prior to a nation's entrance into war may record their convictions as conscientious objectors." A statement was provided for

¹*Journal* (1968), 477.

²S. L. Flowers, "An Important Issue," *Herald*, Sept. 22, 1915, 5.

³*Journal* (1919), 41. York was a Nazarene from upper East Tennessee who earned national acclaim as a soldier.

⁴*Journal* (1940), 159, *Journal* (1944), 106.

such persons to sign.¹ This provision was reaffirmed in 1968² and remains as a denominational provision until the present.

The denomination has also made its stand plain on the matter of separation of Church and State. While it consistently affirms the American "tradition," what its deliverances really seemed to be concerned with was the governmental recognition of the Roman Catholic Church. A resolution was adopted in 1948 requesting President Harry S. Truman to withdraw his representative to the Vatican. This request, the Assembly said, was "in full accord with the American principle of religious freedom."³ The same request was reiterated in 1952.⁴

The report of the special committee appointed in 1960 to draft a resolution voices a concern for political and religious freedom as being endangered if separation is not maintained. It is highly probably that it was the Catholic Church that the committee had in mind when it said, "we resist any invasion of these principles by religious groups seeking special favors."⁵

With regard to the very closely related issue of Bible reading in public schools, the 1964 Assembly framed a resolution in favor of this and other recognitions of God and religion in national life. It bases its statement on the premises that America is a traditionally Christian nation, the Constitutional provision that Congress shall not make a law prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and the voluntary nature of prayer in public institutions.⁶ It is obviously based upon the populist misunderstanding of the 1963 Supreme Court decision, assuming that its ruling had prohibited prayer and Bible reading in public schools *en toto*, and possibly failing to recognize the entailments of its own stand on the separation of Church and State.⁷

¹*Journal* (1940), 174-175.

²*Journal* (1968), 154.

³*Journal* (1948), 60.

⁴*Journal* (1952), 91.

⁵*Journal* (1960), 162.

⁶*Journal* (1968), 143.

Furthermore, while speaking out against the state's imposing legal restraint on these matters, it is at least interesting that the Church was willing for the government to enforce prohibition by law, and doubtless would support such a situation again. Yet its reasons in this latter case are distinctly religious, as noted earlier.

One other issue needs to be noticed: the most contemporary matter of race relations. The first pronouncement relative to this issue came in the General Assembly of 1956 which adopted a resolution against racial discrimination based upon the "sacredness of personality," an interesting reminiscence of the teaching of R. T. Williams. The report recommends:

1. That the almost world-wide discrimination against racial minorities be recognized as being incompatible with the Scriptures' proclamation that God is no respecter of persons; and further, with the basic principle of the Christian faith that God is the Creator of all men, and that of one blood are all men created, and further is contrary to the experience and doctrine of perfect love,
2. That each member of the Church of the Nazarene humbly examine his personal attitudes and actions toward other races as a first step in achieving the Christian goal of full participation by all in the life of the community.¹

Reflecting the emerging problems of segregation, the 1964 Assembly reformulated its statement more in a "civil rights" direction, affirming that it believed "all races should have equality before the law, including the right to vote, the right to equal educational opportunities, the right to earn a living according to one's ability without discrimination, and the right to public facilities supported by taxation."²

In the light of the attempt of the Afro-American to gain recognition and equality with the white man in America, the attitude of the majority of thinking Nazarenes was probably best expressed in an article by General Superintendent G. B. Williamson which he

⁷Cf. the statement in the *Manual* (1968), 386.

¹*Journal* (1956), 131.

²*Journal* (1964), 142.

entitled "Meritocracy." It is wrong, he argued, to deprive a person of privileges because of the color of his skin, his race, or his nationality. Rather the principle that he advocated said that "any person may lawfully live, lodge, eat, travel, and do business according to the state of his prosperity. He may have equal opportunity to acquire knowledge and skill and hold any position of which he is capable."¹ This position speaks against what the working class would feel very strongly about, namely the assigning of persons to positions which they are qualified neither by education nor capability to fill simply to demonstrate that they were not being discriminated against.

The contention was made at the beginning of this chapter that the Church of the Nazarene never moves outside the orbit of its evangelical faith and concern for Biblical morality. This is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in connection with race relations. As the concluding remark of its *Manual* statement in 1968 has it:

We reemphasize our belief that holiness of heart and life is the basis for right living. We believe that complete understanding between racial groups will come when the hearts of men have been changed by complete submission to Jesus Christ, and that the essence of true Christianity consists in loving God with one's heart, soul, mind, and strength, and one's neighbor as oneself.²

¹G. B. Williamson, "Meritocracy," *Herald*, July 22, 1964, inside front cover.

²*Manual* (1968), 385.

CONCLUSION

Any organization that seeks to perpetuate traditional values while at the same time maintaining a relevant relation to its contemporary society must be constantly engaged in self-examination. If this is not critically and honestly done it tends to lapse into either blind traditionalism on the one hand or irrelevant accommodation on the other.¹ The church is such an organization and is particularly susceptible to the danger of lack of self-scrutiny.

One of the most important values of self-scrutiny is self-understanding. A recognition of its relation to its particular historical context is the most fruitful means to this end. This is especially true of an institution like the church, which is apt to think of its deliverances as being absolute in the sense of being above the vicissitudes of history. This tendency seems to be a particular weakness of certain forms of sectarian religion which lay claim to exclusive access to truth. The weakness of this attitude is often the failure to recognize the historical conditionedness of both its organizational structure, its theological teachings and its ethical standards. Many of these groups tend to live under the illusion that they are making a simple return to the Bible, or primitive Christianity, via a kind of hot line that bypasses all the historical developments of the preceding centuries as well as the sociological factors that have been formative in molding their own consciousness. The result can become bigotry, obscurantism and unchristian exclusiveness.

The avowed purpose of the Church of the Nazarene creates subtle dangers in this area. Its *Manual* statement of denominational intent is to “seek the simplicity and spiritual power manifest in the primitive New Testament Church.” This brings it face to face with the responsibility to engage in the hermeneutical task of understanding what this means in the first part of the 21st century.

When I wrote the original conclusion to this study, I offered certain critiques as well as suggestions for progress that reflected what I perceived to be the situation around the middle of the 20th century. From my present standpoint in the first third of the 21st century I can

see that most of these suggestions are now irrelevant because of the way the Church has transformed itself.

For one thing, theologically the Church has experienced to a great measure the same transformation I personally experienced as a result of the research into John Wesley’s teaching. Although I had been a Nazarene from my teen years and a pastor for several years, I discovered John Wesley for the first time. My education in denominational institutions had basically exposed me to only the American Holiness interpretation of sanctification. The intimate exposure to the wider world of Wesley’s thought and teaching opened up a whole new realm that was extremely liberating. In like manner the Church itself, under the influence of leaders like W.M. Greathouse, gradually became more Wesleyan in its theological outlook. This move was exacerbated by more and more young Nazarenes pursuing graduate study outside the former intellectual ghetto of holiness education.¹

The concern to maintain the holiness tradition, connected with a lack of theological orientation had caused the Church to identify with non-Wesleyan forms of Christianity. In particular, it resulted in the Church being deeply influenced by Fundamentalism, a mentality foreign to the Wesleyan spirit.² This could possibly have been avoided through a self-evaluation of both its Wesleyan heritage and the historical and sociological factors that this study has shown to have so largely contributed to the early form of the Church. In the absence of this self-analysis, the Church tended to sanctify certain historical “accidents” of the Christian faith and to elevate them to the position of eternal verities.

For example, in the period covered by this study, its heritage from the American Holiness movement caused it to read Wesley—whom it acknowledged as its father—with certain preconceived categories so that it seemed virtually unable to recognize the dynamic element in Wesley’s thought that could have saved its early teaching from stultifying narrowness and loss of viability and vitality among its members.

¹See Wesley Tracy, “Introduction” to H. Ray Dunning, *Becoming Christlike Disciples* (Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2010).

²See Paul M. Bassett, “The Fundamentalist Leavening of the Holiness Movement, 1914-1940” (*Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol. 13, Spring, 1978).

¹Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (N.Y.: Meridian Books, 1960), 14-15.

The nineteenth and early twentieth century holiness message was molded in the light of certain controversies that have, like the Fundamentalist-modernist controversies, largely lost their “bite.” Therefore, beginning in the second half of the century, particularly following World War II, when the message of holiness cast in the traditional mode was preached in Nazarene churches, using the same terminology and arguing the same polemics of the past century, it began to fail to find an existential response among the laity.

One of the most obvious needs of the Church was to attempt to make a meaningful response, theologically, to the developments in psychology and philosophy. Much that has come to light in these areas and others has revealed a need for such a message as the Church of the Nazarene could formulate out of its Wesleyan heritage. Timothy Smith, for instance, suggested at the conclusion of his study of the first 25 years of the Church that there was a need for “pondering the relevance of Wesleyan perfectionism to a generation awed by its rediscovery of the deep sinfulness of man.”¹

One of the perceptive preachers of the holiness movement during the mid-20th century had repeatedly insisted that the Church was so bound up in a “theological strait-jacket” that it was unable to cope with the realities of life.² Far too many of those who formulated the doctrinal position of the Church continued to work with outmoded metaphysical concepts resulting in the creation of a dogmatic system that was internally self-consistent—all its words fit together—but took on all the characteristics of an Hegelian “idea.” While it maintained rational consistency, it lacked existential contact so that what it gained in coherence it lost in personal adequacy.

The findings in this study, particularly in the first chapter, opened up possibilities for revitalizing the message by coming to terms with the heart of Wesley’s teaching. Since the completion of this dissertation, proposals have been made, including by this writer, that attempted to address the situation in the ways suggested here and which met considerable opposition by those who subscribed to the traditional formulations.³

¹Smith, *Called Unto Holiness*, 351.

²J. Sutherland Logan, past president of Vennard College, University Park, Iowa, in sermons on different occasions heard by this writer.

It is easy to understand how, in the light of the controversies of the nineteenth century, one aspect of the doctrine of sanctification should be overemphasized to the point of losing the other. John Peter’s observation is correct that the holiness movement of that period took over the instantaneous aspect of Wesley’s teaching while neglecting his equal insistence upon the gradual aspect, and his cautious approach toward claiming to possess perfect love.¹

The issues now have changed, however, and the theologians of the Church have generally returned to the more balanced views of Wesley himself and to an honest evaluation of the early form of the message of perfectionism in the light of more adequate Biblical exegesis. The contextual analysis of many of the “holiness” proof texts revealed a basic ethical denotation that had been largely lost in the stress upon an inward experience of the “eradication” of some nebulous thing called “carnality.”

This interpretation of the experience of entire sanctification was the area that was most susceptible to perversion by the use of the concept of “substance” that is no longer philosophically viable. If the experience of sanctification is seen more in terms of “perfect love,” involving a positive type of relation to God and fellow human persons rather than as a negative removal of or cleansing from some sort of inner “thing,” like a rotten tooth, the theological and experiential problems raised by the metaphysical inadequacies of substantival thinking will be largely eliminated. Furthermore the ethical dimension will be more adequately recovered.

The Wesleyan understanding of a gradual process moving in part by stages and involving merely degrees of the same “kind” of holiness, with its ultimate and yet ever receding goal being the full recovery of the image of God eliminates the illogical division of scripture and experience into parts, some of which apply to the “merely regenerated life” and others to “the sanctified life,” as taught by some early “exegetes.” A view of the whole of life—seen as a dynamic process of continuous enlargement in grace—provides for the removal of tensions

³E.g. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love* (K.C.: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972, republished in 2015); H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith and Holiness* (K.C.: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988).

¹Peters, *Christian Perfection*, 191-192.

and stimulates to joyful striving, since the stigma of failing to meet a certain minimal standard of “experience” is no longer determinative. Every Christian is now “being saved” and his Christian practices are a means toward approximating the goal.

With the ethical quality of the doctrine of sanctification restored to the “Wesleyan” perspective, room will be made for the newer psychological insights that find depths of human personality beneath consciousness. Rather than seeing sanctification as being some sort of psychic therapy that removes something that is “deeper down and farther back” than conscious sin, it would be recognized as a conscious level of love being perfected. To take the former position creates barriers to a wholesome self-examination and acknowledgement of those depth dimensions. But to take the latter, ethical view of sanctification makes possible a recognition of these disturbing aspect of personality without losing faith.

This study was, by design, focused on the ethical issues, which stood at the heart of early Nazarene identity. This identification was the consequence of a widespread correlation of holiness and the “puritan ethic.” It was this relation that made the ethical question both one of the most defining aspects of Nazarene history as well as the most contentious. It lay at the heart of the schisms that occurred around mid-20th century as adherence to the “puritan ethic” began to slide.

Several factors might be identified to account for the decreasing conformity to this standard of morals by Nazarenes in general. One is the obvious and repeated generational changes that result in a loss of intensity in conformity to the original ideals. As Wesley noted among his followers, frugal and disciplined living resulted in increased wealth and thus an “upward mobility;” with its own transforming influence.

The study has also demonstrated that the social efficacy of the Church was limited by its early unwillingness to share time with the work of evangelism. One problem was that evangelism has been losing its effectiveness partially because it was tied to certain methods, notably revivalism. Once again, the need was for the church to develop a theology of evangelism that would enable it to operate in a broader context. And like its theological development, since the period covered by the dissertation, the Church has in fact developed a broader vision that essentially incorporates “compassionate ministry” into its sense of mission.

One of the greatest problems in the early struggles for self-understanding was the absence from the Articles of Faith of a doctrine of the church. As Gordon Kaufman said, this doctrine is important “to a fully developed Christian ethic.”¹ Once more, since the period covered by this study, a doctrine of the church has been formulated and included among the Church’s articles of faith. This writer was involved in the formulation of the article.

This study has shown how the precepts that identified a holiness lifestyle were formed out of a particular historical and sociological matrix that no longer exists. With the changing modes of life, a gap between this conception of what it means to be a Christian, or possess perfect love, and the present situation emerges. Some of the areas become meaningless and cease to be practiced. Many felt, for example, that to forbid all theatre attendance there is no possibility of exercising a redeeming influence upon this industry. While conscientious observance of most of the rules will doubtless make one’s personal life more exemplary, the needs of the times also call for responsible action in social crises. Many therefore felt that to set up this particular pattern of life as the all-embracing meaning of holiness was not only to be out of step, but to deny the basis of holiness, namely love. There was in many cases no rebellion or lack of a sense of obedience, but rather an honest questioning of what specifically should be obeyed to be meaningful in these times.

There was also a need for some rethinking in the Church of the Nazarene in the area of a social ethic. There was a tendency to regard anything less than a completely Christian answer in social issues unworthy of the Church’s time and effort. But we have learned to recognize the practical impossibility of a society being controlled by “perfect love” and therefore made provision in our own thinking for ways of involvement in social programs that can achieve only penultimate goals. The Church could consider with profit the statement of Reinhold Niebuhr that “love may be the motive of social action but . . . justice must be the instrument of love in a world in which self-interest is bound to defy the canons of love on every level.”²

¹Gordon Kaufman, *The Context of Decision* (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1961), 57.

²Niebuhr, *Christian Ethics*, 9.

The Church of the Nazarene is to be commended in its efforts to maintain its heritage against what appears to be an almost inevitable cycle of decline following the initial enthusiasm of a new religious group. It furthermore is praiseworthy for its noble effort to maintain its ethical standards in the light of divine revelation rather than in dialog with the world. It is to be further commended for seeking to exemplify a living truth not enshrined in a tomb of crystallized concepts resulting in an institution that is dead because not in living relationship with its world. It is hoped by this writer that it may be possible for the Church of the Nazarene to achieve a creative and redemptive synthesis between the heritage of perfectionism with its lofty moral ideals and the urban, commercial and near-secular culture of the last part of the twentieth century so as to gain a hearing for its message and thus become a saving force in the world.



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y, when our culture is being drawn back into the dark ages of moral anarchy
Judges 17, where "every man did what was right in his own eyes," the church
needs to proclaim and to demonstrate a life style of moral and ethical integrity.
Dunning presents here the account of how the Church of the Nazarene has struggled
years since its founding to agree upon and articulate such a message, which would
be to the principles of Wesleyan holiness. Exhaustively researched, this is the nar-
rative of the sometimes halting, but steady, development of a standard of social conscience
and behavior for the people who embrace the Biblical demands of holy living. Every
person who is trying to live a life pleasing to God and attractive to the world, should read
this book. It would enhance our appreciation for this little studied facet of our history.
— [Name], Professor Emeritus of History, Trevecca Nazarene University

With the clarity and thorough detail we have come to expect, Dr. H. Ray Dunning has
served his Church and the Wesleyan tradition with this valuable book on the
ethical foundation among the people called "Nazarenes." This book will in-
form readers about the strong personalities along with the social and cultural trends that
have shaped a people seeking to live out
their faith in the power of Christ's sanctifying presence. For those of us who have lived through many
ethical struggles, it is informative and insightful to review the ethical debates that occurred
in the first century. This book belongs on the reading list of everyone who would un-
derstand the present ethical shape of the Church of the Nazarene.

— Allen Henecke, Retired Pastor, Nashville, TN First Church of the Nazarene

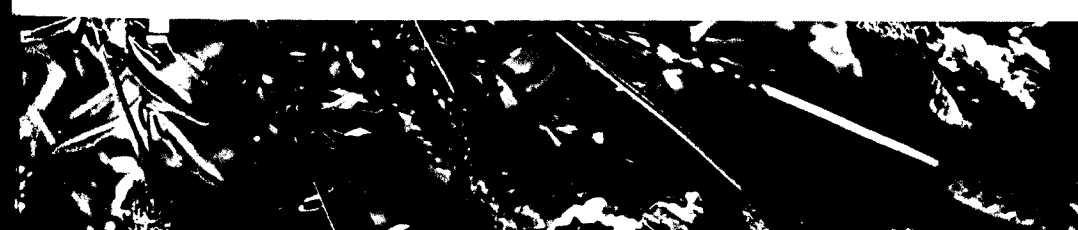
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