CHRISTIAN PERFECTION
AND THE EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION
THROUGH 1875*

by J. Wesley Corbin

The author’s interest in this area of study is related to his own personal history, but it also concerns what may have been a possible shift in perfectionist theology under the leadership of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer. The wife of a New York physician, Mrs. Palmer had an amazing career as author, teacher, publisher, evangelist, and co-sponsor of the famous Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness. These gatherings were an institution in New York City for over sixty years, even after Mrs. Palmer’s death. There Christians of all denominations, but most especially the leaders of the Methodist Church, had “thronged her parlors” and “followed her teachings into 'perfect rest.'”

John Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection had been a dynamic concept. In its final form, it held both the gradual nature of Christian growth and the instantaneous character of God’s present action in a finely-wrought tension. To those who would stress only the gradual growth, Wesley would respond, “But there is also an instantaneous conquest: In a moment sin shall be no more. You are gradually dying for a long time. But you will die in a moment.” But he would not assert that entire sanctification could not take place as a completely gradual experience. And it was the static type of instantaneous perfectionism that he fought against in the case of Thomas Maxfield. The achievement and the growth, the instantaneous and the gradual, formed a cohesive whole in Wesley’s thinking.

In her articulation of Christian perfection, however, Mrs. Palmer stressed several significant variations from the traditional approach

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* This paper will attempt to report on the results of research done on the influence of perfectionism within the Evangelical Association during the first seventy-five years of the nineteenth century. It will endeavor to raise the pertinent questions, whether or not answers have been found for them. It will report on gaps in the resource available. It will draw speculative conclusions on the basis of admittedly insufficient evidence. In short, it is a preliminary sketch, rather than a final thesis.


5 See Peters, op. cit., 33-60, for a balanced summary of Wesley’s position.
of John Wesley. She insisted, for example, that one must give public testimony to a religious experience of entire sanctification, and she rebuked several of her friends in the Methodist bishopric for their neglect of this emphasis. In their position, as Smith points out, the bishops were "following John Wesley's example, though not his advice to others."°

More significantly, Mrs. Palmer developed in about 1847 what has been described as "the altar phraseology," that when one places oneself in complete consecration as "a living sacrifice" upon the altar of God, then "the altar . . . sanctifieth the gift." Therefore, entire sanctification was almost automatic subsequent to consecration, and the seeker need only believe that he had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, whether or not the Spirit had witnessed to the person concerning this experience. The concern of some contemporaries of Mrs. Palmer, both supporters and opponents of holiness, was that this made the experience of entire sanctification a mechanical matter, dependent more on the faith of the recipient than upon the gift of God. Bishop Leonidas Hamline, John S. Inskip, and Nathan Bangs—all close associates of Phoebe Palmer—opposed what they felt to be dangerous tendencies in this approach. Bangs described his friend's phraseology as "not sound . . . unscriptural, and anti-Wesleyan."

Thus Methodist opinion was not united in its interpretation of John Wesley's teachings concerning Christian perfection. Mrs. Palmer's point of view, however, was largely adopted by the later so-called "holiness movement."°

If there are thus at least two streams of thought about Christian perfection to be found within the American church—what we may term the traditional Wesleyan position and the modifications of that position framed largely by Phoebe Palmer—are these same two strands found within the theological texture of the Evangelical Association? How was the Evangelical formulation of doctrine affected by Wesley, or by Finney,° or by Mrs. Palmer? It is the writer's conclusion, based on the research done to date, that the period shortly after the organization of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness in 1867 marks a shift in the controversy among Evangelicals and the advent of the strong influence of Phoebe Palmer's theology upon the Evangelical Association. There seems also to have been some degree of reaction to the position of the "holiness movement," however, by 1875.

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6 Ibid., 112; Smith, op. cit., 125.  
7 Smith, op. cit. For Wesley's lack of explicit testimony to entire sanctification, see the excellent study in Peters, op. cit., 201-215. See also Wesley's advice on testimony in A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1950), 18-19, 51.  
8 Smith, op. cit., 125-6; Peters, op. cit., 112.  
9 Nathan Bangs, quoted in Peters, op. cit., 113.  
10 For another Methodist point of view, see Samuel Franklin: A Critical Review of Wesleyan Perfection (Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern, 1867).  
Apparently there was no public conflict concerning Christian perfection among Evangelicals before 1831, although there was some private disagreement within the ministry and within the church at large. From 1831 until 1834 complaints were brought against John Hamilton and James Brewer for doctrinal deviations. Yost asserted that the basis of Hamilton’s dismissal from the ministry was the doctrine of Christian perfection, while Brewer, who had sympathized with Hamilton, withdrew from the Association after William W. Orwig brought charges against him. Brewer had preached a camp-meeting sermon in which he intimated that the man who attained perfect sanctification would be completely separated from the world and would thus be immediately translated into eternity. After this episode, peace seems to have returned among Evangelicals, although twelve of the forty-five preachers were expelled or deposed in 1834.

Controversy erupted again in the Association in 1849, and Nicholas Gehr, editor of Der Christliche Botschafter and The Evangelical Messenger, resigned under threat of charges of heresy. In September, 1848, Gehr had printed and endorsed editorially an article which held “that the primary elements of holiness, sanctification, or Christian perfection are always implanted in the soul at regeneration.” It is difficult to distinguish this from the official denominational position, since question 142 of Orwig’s catechism, “When does sanctification commence?” was answered, “Sanctification commences in regeneration and must be continued to perfection.” Nevertheless, Bishop Joseph Long reproved Gehr at the request of the West Pennsylvania Conference, formal charges against him were to be preferred, and Gehr resigned the editorships and finally found his way into the German Reformed Church. Orwig, called to succeed Gehr as editor, wrote a series of editorials in opposition to Gehr’s position. In the light of these controversies, it is difficult to understand Reuben Yeakel’s assertion, “Really, there never was a dissenting voice heard in the Evangelical Association before the year 1857.” On the battle-lines that had been drawn up concern—

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15 William Yost, quoted in ibid., 27.
16 Ibid., 30; William W. Orwig: History of the Evangelical Association (Cleveland: Charles Hammer, 1858), I, 154-5.
18 Schwab, op. cit., 31; Orwig, op. cit., I, 168.
19 Quoted in Albright, op. cit., 223.
20 Orwig, Catechism of the Principal Doctrines of the Christian Religion (Cleveland: W. F. Schneider, 1846), 63; Wesley’s Plain Account, 10.
21 Albright, op. cit., 223-4; Schwab, op. cit., 36-7.
22 Mattill, op. cit., iv, 2.
23 Reuben Yeakel: History of the Evangelical Association (Cleveland: Thomas & Mattill, 1884-1895), II, 152.
ing the beginnings of sanctification the controversy raged at least until 1870.24

In 1856 and 1857, however the main protagonists did take the field. The Botschaffer printed in 1856-1857 several articles by Reuben Yeakel on sanctification, and on January 16, 1856, it printed an article by An Old Evangelical, "The View of the Evangelical Association on Sanctification," which held that all those who die without entire sanctification will be lost.25 This seems to be an emphasis that had not previously been central, and it is so much parallel to one of Phoebe Palmer's cardinal doctrines26 that one can speculate on possible influences, although no relationship has yet been established.

Whether or not provoked by Yeakel and An Old Evangelical,27 Solomon Neitz published a pamphlet, Christian Sanctification in Accordance with the Apostolic Doctrine, on February 9, 1857. This pamphlet held that the doctrine of entire sanctification was without apostolic warrant, while sanctification was the possession of all believers: "In its inner essence, Christian sanctification is a general state of grace of believers wrought by the Holy Spirit (at the time of regeneration and renewal) in the heart."28 Neitz also held that sin is covered, and not eradicated, that sin continually exerts its presence in the life of the Christian, and that the power of sin in mankind is broken only by death.29 Neitz was acquitted by his own conference of charges against him, asserting that his basic position corresponded to that of the denomination. Orwig, who had been imported to present the charges against Neitz in the East Pennsylvania Conference, repeated similar charges in the general conference of 1859, on the basis of a more recent article by Neitz in the Botschaffer. The general conference resolved that the published doctrine of Neitz was "conflicting with the doctrine of the Evangelical Association, on Christian holiness, contained in her book of Discipline."30 Neitz defended himself, significantly, in the following manner:

I was of the opinion that it is the same in this matter among us as among the Methodists, from whom we indeed have borrowed the doctrine concerning sanctification, and among them there are two opinions and that with mutual esteem. . . .31

Neitz was not reprimanded, despite the passage of the resolution, but was rather elected a member of the Board of Publication and

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25 Yeakel believed that "An Old Evangelical" was Orwig. See Schwab, op. cit., 38-9.
26 Pottern, op. cit., 112.
27 Schwab, op. cit., 41, believes it was so provoked, but he adduces no proof.
28 Ibid., 142.
29 This summary of the fundamental teachings of Neitz is found in Albright, op. cit., 256.
30 Journal of the General Conference of the Evangelical Association, 1867, 15, hereafter referred to as JGC.
31 Schwab, op. cit., 53.
was assigned the responsibility of revision and enlargement of the catechism. At approximately the same time that the pamphlet by Neitz was beginning to create this furor among Evangelicals, one of his close friends, Theophilus G. Clewell, was assuming the editorship of The Evangelical Messenger, replacing the ailing John Dreisbach. In the first issue of the Messenger to appear under Clewell’s name, an article entitled “The Twofold Work of Salvation; or, Justification and Sanctification” was reprinted from the Western Christian Advocate. As its title indicated, the article stressed the necessity of the second Christian experience for cleaning and empowerment. This issue was already in type when Clewell arrived in Cleveland; the article therefore revealed nothing about the editorial policy that he would pursue.

It may well be significant, however, that no further articles on holiness appeared in the Messenger until July 22, when “J. G.” presented one under the caption “Christian Perfection or Sanctification.” In this, the first article published on the doctrine since Clewell came into control of the paper, the experience of sanctification was seen as different than, but not separate from justification. Christian perfection was declared to be both instantaneous and progressive through life. There are obvious similarities between “J. G.’s approach and that of Neitz.

On September 2, however, “J. G.’s article was criticized by one with an identical title, but authored by “Experience.” The significant fact was that Clewell joined editorially in the criticism of the July article, remarking, “Hereafter we shall send such articles under the table at short order, as are written on argumentative subjects, and are yet so vague and ambiguous in their meaning.” This is the last comment on Christian perfection in the Messenger for the remainder of the year.

As late as 1865, only four articles pertaining to holiness appeared in the Messenger for the entire year, despite the fact that twenty-five were printed in the Botschafter by Orwig during the same twelve months. The first of Clewell’s articles was an editorial, “A Word About Gospel Holiness.” Here Clewell asserted that a second experience is not necessitated either by the plan of God or by the accounts of Scripture. The full gospel is available from the time of conversion: “there is no reason why conscious purity may not co-exist with childhood in religion.” On the other hand, it may be necessary for a second, or a third experience to take place. Clewell,

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22 Albright, op. cit., 258.
23 Albright mistakenly claims that Clewell took up this position in 1859, op. cit., 268. According to The Evangelical Messenger (hereafter abbreviated EM), April 1, 1857, Clewell arrived in Cleveland on March 19; his name appears on the masthead from April 1; also see Schwab, op. cit., 44.
24 EM, April 1, 1857, 52.
25 Ibid.
26 EM, July 22, 1857, 113.
27 EM, September 2, 1857, 137.
28 EM, 1865; Schwab, op. cit., 56, 150.
29 Schwab sees this article as a response to a provocative article by Orwig on August 4, op. cit., 56.
in other words, refused to limit the mighty acts of God to the magic number "two." There may be only one; there might be many. But he was basically concerned "to teach and urge the 'better way' of full consecration from the first, and always."  40

In November, 1865, three articles on sanctification appeared. The first, unsigned, was entitled "Pray for the Holy Spirit." Its most significant emphasis was the continued close association of justification and sanctification: "All revival of the Church is increased sanctification, and all reclaiming of the impenitent is sanctification begun."  41 The second article was written by Jacob Young for presentation at the Baltimore District Meeting of the Central Pennsylvania Conference and was subsequently reproduced in the Messenger. It was more an exhortation than a theological treatise. A prominent characteristic was the use, for the first time in this research, of the fire-motif; it urged "the baptism of fire."  42

The third, and probably the most important of these articles, was an editorial comment by Clewell concerning questions about holiness. Clewell here seems to agree with the general Wesleyan definition of sin, 43 for he states that man is free of both the guilt and the inclination to sin. Man is never freed during his life from the possibility of sin, but this is not sin itself; the believer is capable of resisting all actual sin. Further, however, Clewell asserts that man becomes holy through regeneration. After this, there is growth in grace whose speed depends on man's faithfulness. So far as testimony to the liberating power of Christ from all sin, Clewell urges extreme caution, in marked contrast to Phoebe Palmer. He stresses "the consistent holy life," noting, "Nothing is so offensive—nothing so much adapted to bring reproach upon the cause of Christ and holiness, as great swelling professions unsupported by a holy life." 44

Thus far, the evidence does not seem to be sufficient to support Schwab's theory, that by 1866 Clewell had become a spokesman for the anti-Orwig party, or that he only published articles that agreed with his theological stance.  45

During 1866, a total of fifteen articles on Christian perfection appeared in the Messenger; of these, five were reprints from other magazines. 46 It is during 1866 that Clewell began to reply more directly in the editorial columns to published articles with which he disagreed. This paper will base its analyses primarily on the Evangelical writings, rather than on the reprints, although some of the latter are quite significant.

In April, 1866, the first mention of Phoebe Palmer was noted. The author of the article, "A.W.O.," was presumably Aaron W. Orwig, son of the doughty William. The article, primarily a review of Mrs. Palmer's latest book, Four Years in the Old World, focused

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40 EM, August 16, 1865, 260.  41 EM, November 15, 1865, 362.  42 EM, November 22, 1865, 369.  43 "A voluntary transgression of a known law." See Wesley's Plain Account, for 1866.

44 EM, November 29, 1865, 380.  45 Schwab, op. cit., 57.  46 Ibid., 150, lists only seven articles.
on holiness as "the grand theme of her writings." Just so, in this latest work, Mrs. Palmer's main idea is "the efficacy of the blood of Jesus to cleanse from all sin." The book, together with all of her writings, received a hearty endorsement to Christians of all backgrounds.  

In the same issue of the Messenger, significantly, an editorial comment was printed under the title, "Terms in Religion—Their Use and Misuse." The remarks bore the initial "K."; there is no other identification of their author, but it is assumed that they come from Clewell or from someone representing his views. Beginning in general agreement that the state of sanctification is a necessity for one who would enter heaven, the editorial then points out that the crucial questions concerning sanctification are "How?" and "When?" It is to the latter question that the article is devoted. The biblical words, "salvation," "sanctification," and "holiness," are, it holds, equivalents describing "one and the same state." To sanctify is to set apart. But the saved person is set apart; is not he therefore sanctified, and does not the witness of the Holy Spirit assure him of this work? Our concern, the editorial concludes, should be only with the centrality of God's will in one's life.  

A month later, another unsigned article appeared. It was concerned to emphasize the fact that, according to Scripture, God can cleanse from sin in this life. A second concern, however, opposed the Palmer thesis that the unsanctified Christian could not attain heaven. On the contrary, the Messenger article expressed the conviction that salvation does not hinge on "the degree of sanctification," since the latter is a progressive work.  

Not quite a month had passed when the next article appeared. This was signed "District Meeting"; no other information concerning authorship was available. Alluding to "the most overwhelming changes . . . taking place" among Central Illinois Conference Methodists, the author arrayed himself on the side of those who believed that "entire freedom from sin" was available in this life, although few enjoy it. The experience is grounded in the new birth; indeed, "the greater part of the work is there wrought," but man must continue to grow spiritually until he is completely separate from sin and the world. Showing perhaps a more authentic Wesleyan tension than did the Palmer theology, the author asserted that man must claim the experience of entire sanctification by faith, expecting that "sooner or later, the blessing of entire sanctification will be enjoyed."  

A rejoinder from the other side appeared in the July 4 issue. It repudiated any kind of Adamic perfection, holding that "in every good work the good man sinneth." Nevertheless, the author held, "pure love is the fulfilling of the evangelical law," and this pure love delivers one from sin—in the sense of a willful disobedience—in the present world. Not only so, but this deliverance is accomplished

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47 EM, April 18, 1866, 121.  
48 EM, April 18, 1866, 124.  
49 EM, May 23, 1866, 162.  
50 EM, June 20, 1866, 193.
apart from justification; he who confuses the two distorts the teaching of the Johannine letter: "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 51

The dominant theme of the Messenger, however, was the simultaneity of justification and sanctification, as was again made evident in the next month. Both an article and an editorial reasserted this teaching. The former, by J. Arkler, asserted that sanctification and regeneration are two different names for the same thing. Or, the author continued in somewhat confusing style, they are "two distinct and different blessings, but are given at one and the same time." Man is perfected, yet progress, growth in grace, is necessary.52

The editorial continued the same approach. Sanctification and holiness are not synonymous with Christian perfection. Man is sanctified when he is justified; he is there made holy, "but he has not that Holiness written often with a capital H . . . or, in other words, Christian perfection." Love must be perfected in time, the editorial held. Completeness must grow and develop, even as physical man grows to maturity.53

Finally, in December, an article was reprinted from the Guide to Holiness that described the experience of Dr. Chalmers. Scripture had been used by a Methodist pastor to show Chalmers that "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."54 The same pastor, however, also advised Chalmers in terms markedly similar to Clewell's position: "Regeneration is holiness begun in the heart, while entire sanctification is holiness perfected."55

Thus during 1865-1866 the controversy between Clewell and those who disagreed with him could be seen centering around the relation of Christian perfection to regeneration. The confusing use of the terms "sanctification" and "entire sanctification" does not aid analysis of the problem. But both sides agreed at this time on the necessity of holiness as they cooperatively defined it, the purity that prepares a man for admission to heaven. Both agreed, for the most part, that this preparation was completed before death. Each sought Wesleyan sanction for its views, and because of the tension between the gradual and the instantaneous in Wesley's theology, each could conscientiously affirm that it followed in the footsteps marked by tradition.56 In many respects also Clewell's position showed distinct similarities to the Oberlin school of perfectionism.57

Early in the morning of the second day of the 1867 general conference, Orwig again preferred charges against Neitz because the latter

51 EM, July 4, 1866, 211.
52 EM, August 8, 1866, 249-250.
53 EM, August 15, 1866, 260.
54 I Thessalonians 4:3a. One must note how often this verse, a favorite of the "holiness movement," is cited without regard for its context.
55 EM, December 19, 1866, 403.
57 Smith, op. cit., 103-13; cf. 141: "Although one branch of the Oberlin gospel tree bore holiness from the first bloom of grace and the other insisted on blossoming twice, the fruit of both was the sanctification of heart and conduct."
was still supposedly teaching erroneous doctrines of Christian perfection. Citing the action of the 1859 general conference in regard to charges of doctrinal deviation against Neitz, Orwig now requested that his opponent be forbidden to teach or preach his views on sanctification. Orwig expressed his desire in the following words:

Resolved, that he [Neitz] and all other of our preachers be herewith forbidden to defend or spread said doctrinal views, and that we do endeavor, and enjoin it upon our preachers, to use such language as will harmonize with our article in the Discipline, on the subject of Christian Perfection and Sanctification, as upon every other subject.

The debate over this resolution dragged on for the next three days of the conference. Clewell was the first to speak out against the resolution. He felt that only ill feelings and divisions could come from this apparent “persecution for opinion’s sake.” It was his original suggestion that the whole matter be referred to a committee, who would hopefully clarify the doctrine at issue. While this motion was under discussion, M. J. Carothers of the Central Pennsylvania Conference reported on the confusion voiced in the church over the doctrine of holiness: “No one knows what to believe, for our leading men disagree. One teaches this, and another that.” When another delegate remarked that “a new doctrine” opposed to sanctification had arisen and was being written, Clewell took these remarks personally and affirmed that he both held and obeyed the Discipline. Basically, the charges against Neitz could be summarized in three statements:

1. That sanctification is not a special work, different from justification.
2. That every converted person or believer, even a child in Christ, possesses entire sanctification.
3. That the sanctified Christian is not yet entirely saved from sin, nor would he be saved in this life.

Over against this approach, Orwig alleged that the Evangelical Association’s Discipline held that Christian perfection could be attained in this life, gradually but also by an instantaneous act.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to know the way in which Neitz defended himself against these charges, for his verbal defense, later written out for inclusion in the Journal, was significantly different from the printed form, according to the Journal’s editor. The printed defense insists, however, that his doctrine of sanctification beginning at regeneration called for growth in grace lasting throughout life. His doctrine did specify a continual, dynamic overcoming

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58 He had supposedly done so in a sermon in Philadelphia in the winter of 1866, and had reprinted the sermon in the Lehigh County Patriot in June, 1867. JGC, 1867, 41.
59 JGC, 1867, 9-10.
60 JGC, 1867, 12.
61 JGC, 1867, 13.
62 JGC, 1867, 13.
63 JGC, 1867, 14.
64 JGC, 1867, 15.
65 JGC, 1867, 16.
67 JGC, 1867, 26.
of sin by grace, with no attempt to specify when this warfare would cease. He felt, therefore, that the dispute was basically a semantic one.

After examination of the offending sermon and its author, the committee appointed to investigate the matter came to the same conclusion:

Resolved, That after thoroughly examining the above named sermon in the light of the Scriptures and our disciplinary article, we have come to the conclusion that he makes use of terms, phrases and figures of speech of which we decidedly disapprove; but upon his explanation it appears to us that he does not design to teach doctrines essentially different from those held by our church, and therefore we unanimously recommend his acquittal. Such a report was not greeted with unanimous approval by the members of the general conference. It was pointed out that neither were the disapproved usages mentioned specifically nor was their use forbidden in the future. After much discussion, however, and after the delegates were informed that steps were being taken to prevent such problems in the future, the committee's resolution of acquittal for Neitz was adopted.

It was into such a context that the general conference's committee on the doctrine of sanctification presented the following report:

Your committee desires to submit the following as their unanimous report on the doctrine of Sanctification:

As for some time past different opinions and views of the doctrine of Sanctification and Christian Perfection have been advanced among us, and as this state of things threatens harm in various ways, therefore

Resolved, That we are still convinced, as we have hitherto been, of the scripturalness of the doctrine of Sanctification and Christian Perfection as contained in our book of Discipline, and delivered unto us by the fathers of our Church, unanimously declare that we, as we have hitherto done, shall also in future, hold to, teach and defend the following points:

1. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the only but all sufficient source (cause), and the perfect pattern of our sanctification and Christian perfection.

2. Entire sanctification has its foundation in regeneration, and consists in a complete consecration to God, and salvation from all sin, i.e., all evil affections and desires, together with the enjoyment of the perfect love of God wrought by the Holy Ghost, and Christ dwelling in us, whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

3. Christian Perfection consists in this, that we at all times and under all circumstances love God with all our hearts, our neighbors as ourselves, and God's children affectionately, and thus have the mind that was in Christ, and walk even as he walked.

4. That this state of sanctification and Christian Perfection is attainable in this life, yea long before death, and may be retained unimpaired by watchfulness and faithfulness, even unto the end, with a continual growth in grace, and progress from glory unto glory.

5. That this state is obtained by an entire consecration and offering of ourselves to God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; these being the only conditions sought and laid down in the word of God—usually by a gradual progress, but often also instantaneously, in proportion as our consecration is complete, and our faith in Christ is strong, excluding all doubt.

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68 JGC, 1867, 27.
69 JGC, 1867, 41.
70 JGC, 1867, 41-42.
Resolved, further, That we most earnestly advise all our preachers that they, in all their public teachings and sermons, as well as private instruction in this all-important subject, carefully and deliberately use such terms and phrases as cannot be misunderstood, nor lead to deviations from the clearly expressed sense of our doctrine, so that uniformity of opinion may prevail among us, and we, as nearly as possible, use one mode of expression.


The words "the Holy Ghost and . . ." in the fourth line of the second paragraph were added as an amendment on the motion of none other than Solomon Neitz, whose suggestion was approved by the whole conference. So was the whole report, by a unanimous vote. When the vote was taken, Bishop Joseph Long, who was presiding, commented, "I wish just here to remark that the General Conference of the Evangelical Association has now voted unanimously, and if this is not paramount authority there is none in our church." Thus the issue seemed for a time to be settled.

A different phase of the same problem was also presented for discussion when it was asked whether "holiness meetings" ought to be encouraged or suppressed. To this question Bishop Long again gave his answer:

I should think if such meetings are held in the fear of God for the purpose to seek and promote sanctification, we ought to rejoice and co-operate with them, but if they degenerate, the contrary ought to be done.

While the doctrine was recognized as a part of the church’s heritage, as well as of its present message, it was not to be thought of as a specialty, to the exclusion of all else.

Because the Messenger is not available for the years 1867-1868, it is impossible to trace in it the series of articles in which Clewell incurred the wrath of the Board of Publication in 1868. As a result of these articles, however, the Board brought Clewell to account for what was considered his heterodoxy, first before the Executive Committee in February, and later before the full Board in October. Clewell’s attitude, according to the Board’s minutes, was that since he had been reelected by the general conference, "he could not care about anyone." The editor threatened to seek to defend his position in the civil courts, if necessary, and he added insult to injury by printing between February and October a further provocative article and an editorial of his own labelled as a general conference report. Clewell finally brought a written explanation before the Board; he was ordered to cease disregarding the Discipline and Church Order, to stop distorting theology and disturbing the peace, to retract whatever accusations had been made toward "Jaekel"

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71 JGC, 1867, 67.
72 JGC, 1867, 68.
73 JGC, 1867, 68.
74 JGC, 1867, 68.
75 Minutes of the Board of Publica-
tion, Evangelical Association, 1860—
(translated by Mrs. Margot Burt, unpub-
lished Ms.), 55-56. E. U. B. Historical So-
ciety, Dayton.
76 Ibid., 55-6, 58-9.
(Yeakel) and Dubs, and "to publish in the future fewer political subjects."  

Apparently Clewell continued his former policy, however, because in 1870, after another threatened legal skirmish, he was forced by the Board to resign, and Reuben Yeakel was named editor of the *Messenger.*

In the meantime, one of Clewell's recommendations to the 1867 general conference had become a reality. Clewell had resolved denominational support to anyone attempting to publish "a monthly magazine agreeably with the sense and spirit of our Church." The challenge was apparently accepted almost immediately, since the Board of Publication meeting in October, 1868, approved the project and promised to support the monthly "through our influence." Clewell may have been less than overjoyed with what came into being, however. The Orwig family dominated the administration of the paper; Aaron was the publisher, while both Elisha A. Hoffman and G. L. Wiest, assistant editors, were sons-in-law of William W. Orwig. Reuben Yeakel was named editor. The editorial policy of the paper, appearing on the front page of the first issue, proclaimed the following sentiments:

> It will teach Holiness in strict accordance with the Bible and the standard of the Evangelical Association, as expressed in the article on Christian Perfection in their Discipline from the beginning, and again unanimously confirmed by the General Conference of 1867.

With the publication of *The Living Epistle,* the English-language periodicals of the Evangelical Association moved markedly in the direction of the theology of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness. Phoebe Palmer's theological terminology, in particular, became the vehicle through which this theology was expressed. Articles approving special meetings and special altar calls for holiness began to appear. Strong endorsements were given to the National Association, which was led by John S. Inskip, a close friend of Mrs. Palmer. This organization was especially concerned to emphasize entire sanctification as a second distinct work of grace, "wrought subsequent to regeneration, by the Holy Ghost, upon the sole condition of faith," an experience to which testimony must be given, even as Mrs. Palmer had insisted. Peters describes the theological posture of the National Association in the following manner:

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77 Ibid., 53-4.
76 Albright, op. cit., 272-3.
79 JGC, 1867, 59.
80 Minutes, Board of Publications, 60.
81 Albright, op. cit., 274.
82 *The Living Epistle* (hereafter abbreviated LE), January, 1869, 1.
83 Schwab, op. cit., 63-6, notes this, but he does not specifically deal with the theological connections. See also Albright, op. cit., 274-5.
84 LE, September, 1869, 51-2; October, 1869, 94; April, 1872, 100-2.
85 For an almost identical definition of entire sanctification, see S. L. Wiest, LE, April, 1872, 101.
86 Peters, op. cit., 113, 137-138; for stress on the necessity of testimony to entire sanctification, see LE, May, 1869, 99; January, 1870, 6; February, 1870, 55. For a more qualified endorsement, with cautions, see EM, November 29, 1865, 380.
Justification and entire sanctification were two "gifts." Sanctification as a "gradual work before" does not appear to have been considered. Young converts are to "go up at once to the Canaan of perfect love." It is experience minus process.87

The Living Epistle supported the National Association and its camp-meetings with advertisements,88 editorials,89 and the editors’ personal presence. Extensive reports of holiness camps were given.90 Editor Reuben Yeakel preached at a German service in the 1870 Ohio State Camp Meeting. After his sermon, an "experience meeting" in both German and English was held, which lasted through the dinner hour and which was described by some pastors as "one of the best meetings they ever attended."91 Former editor Charles G. Koch of Der Christliche Botschafter testified at the National Association camp at Des Plaines, Illinois in 1870:

My experience at this meeting is the happiest day of my life. I shall return home an advocate of full and free salvation, and intend to preach it to my German brethren, and by the grace of God live it before them.92

When the Western Union Holiness Association was organized at Jacksonville, Illinois, in 1880, the sixth largest delegation present came from the Evangelical Association.93

The association between the Epistle, its editors, and Inskip seems to have been close and cordial. Yeakel and Inskip were together at the National Camp Meeting in 1869.94 Later in that same year Inskip gave a note of hearty approval to the Epistle:

I am delighted with the spirit and bearing of the Epistle and will most gladly aid all I can in giving it a more extended circulation. God bless you, and give you great success in the blessed work in which you are engaged.95

In 1870 Inskip extended a "special and earnest invitation" to Evangelicals to attend the National Association’s camps. He hailed the Epistle and its staff as "co-laborers," promising to furnish assistance to the periodical in any possible way.96 Thus these fraternal relationships seem to have been fairly well established.

The connection between Phoebe Palmer and the Epistle’s theological position also seems clear. While the Evangelical Messenger had reviewed her book, Four Years in the Old World,97 it had also—for the most part—espoused a kind of gradualism in regard to

87 Peters, op. cit., 138.
88 LE, May, 1869, 116; November, 1869, 118; June, 1872, 187-189; July, 1875, 320.
89 LE, May, 1869, 116; June, 1869, 137; March, 1870, 92; June, 1870, 185.
90 LE, August, 1869, 45-44; May, 1870, 152-155; July 1870, 27-31; August, 1870, 55-63; September, 1870, 65-78; October, 1870, 97-104. By 1875, however, reports of such camps seem to have been both less frequent and less extensive: LE, September, 1875, 412-413; October, 1875, 462.
91 LE, October, 1870, 104.
92 LE, September, 1870, 77.
93 Peters, op. cit., 136.
94 LE, October, 1869, 81.
95 Letter from Inskip, in LE, December, 1869, 143.
96 Letter from Inskip to Aaron W. Orwig, in LE, July, 1870, 26.
97 EM, April 18, 1866, 121.
entire sanctification that was not compatible with the Palmer emphasis on instantaneous attainment.98 In the Epistle, on the other hand, Mrs. Palmer was specifically named as a forerunner of the current “holiness movement.”99 Her presence, together with her husband and Inskip, was noted in the advertising for an Illinois campmeeting. Memorial tributes by both Bishop Janes and Bishop Foster of the Methodist Church were printed at the time of her death.100 A posthumous book of her poetry was advertised as coming from the pen of “the now sainted authoress.”101 Her Tuesday meetings, previously mentioned, were reported in great detail.102 Verses of Mrs. Palmer’s hymns were quoted in articles in the Epistle.103 Her contribution to the spread of entire sanctification are thus noted in many ways.

Perhaps the place at which Phoebe Palmer’s influence may be seen most directly is in the use of “the altar phraseology,” which was described earlier. In John Dreisbach and Bishop Joseph Long one can see the amalgamation of the use of the old and the new approaches: the emphasis on the progressive experience, culminating instantaneously, with the admonition to lay oneself upon the altar, which sanctifies the gift.104 Later, however, the altar methodology was almost taken as normative. Editorials, articles, and letters of testimony from subscribers to the Epistle all spoke in the concepts made familiar in Mrs. Palmer’s books and in her Tuesday meetings.105 The following testimony may be taken as typical:

I laid all on the altar, and consecrated myself to God for time and eternity, and thank God, just as soon as my all was on the altar, the altar sanctified the gift, and perfect peace filled my soul.106

It seems obvious that such an approach to Christian perfection tended to place more emphasis on man’s consecration107 and man’s belief,108 and less emphasis on God’s action. Yeakel, in fact, used the terms “entire consecration” and “entire sanctification” synonymously.109

Some Evangelicals sought entire sanctification over an extended

98 See, for example, EM, June 20, 1866, 193.
99 LE, January, 1872, 4. The first specification of a definite “holiness movement” was found in this same issue of the Epistle.
100 LE, January, 1875, 30-31; October, 1875, 445-448.
101 LE, May 1875, 240.
102 LE, February, 1870, 54-55; November, 1870, 150-152; December, 1870, 182-184.
104 LE, January, 1869, 24; March, 1869, 52.
105 See LE, February, 1864, 39; March, 1869, 52; June, 1869, 132-137; October, 1869, 86; December, 1869, 135; January, 1870, 21; March, 1870, 72; April, 1870, 108, 115; July 1870, 12; November, 1870, 134; December, 1870, 102; February, 1872, 33, 63; April, 1872, 107, 113; June, 1872, 168; May, 1875, 211; August, 1875, 339, 350.
106 LE, October, 1875, 443.
107 LE, January, 1869, 5; February, 1869, 32; June, 1869, 132; October, 1869, 85.
108 LE, February, 1875, 55-56, 79.
109 LE, February, 1870, 62.
period of time, as had George Miller,¹¹⁰ until the assurance of the Holy Spirit was received.¹¹¹ Some also laid special emphasis on the growth that must both precede and follow the experiencing of holiness.¹¹² But for the most part, the Epistle’s columns were devoted to the assertion of the two basic premises of the “holiness movement”; (1) that entire sanctification was separate and distinct from regeneration, and (2) that it was received instantaneously. While Hoffman conceded that possibly one out of one hundred Christians might be sanctified at conversion,¹¹³ Bishop John J. Esher,¹¹⁴ William W. Orwig,¹¹⁵ and other lesser lights¹¹⁶ asserted that the two religious experiences must not be confused. As was mentioned earlier, Bishop Long had attempted in his approach to balance the gradual and the instantaneous in his doctrine of entire sanctification. To other advocates of the “second blessing,” however, such an emphasis on growth meant a postponement of entire sanctification indefinitely. Growth into sanctification was thus impossible and out of accord with Christian experience.¹¹⁷

Coupled with this theological position was a distinctive biblical approach. As was mentioned earlier, I Thessalonians 4:3a was a favorite proof-text of the “holiness movement” and was cited without close attention being paid to its context.¹¹⁸ In this practice the Epistle’s articles concurred. “This is the will of God, even your sanctification . . .” appeared frequently in the issues studied.¹¹⁹ An earlier section of this study also commented on the doctrinal emphasis that all who die without entire sanctification will be lost, an emphasis made by Phoebe Palmer¹²⁰ and echoed by “An Old Evangelical.”¹²¹ The major biblical ground for this doctrine was “Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord,” a slightly twisted version of Hebrews 12:14.¹²² Before August, 1870, while the verse had been

¹¹⁰ George Miller, Autobiography, quoted in LE, February, 1869, 36-38.
¹¹¹ LE, July, 1870, 16.
¹¹² This was emphasized by Editors Elisha A. Hoffman, Aaron W. Orwig, and Jacob Young, in LE, November, 1869, 120; October, 1870, 110; and October, 1875, 434, respectively.
¹¹³ LE, April, 1869, 91.
¹¹⁴ LE, January, 1869, 5.
¹¹⁵ LE, June, 1869, 124-125. Orwig even asserted that such a contention had never been raised among Evangelicals until recent years, apparently not remembering the Gehr episode and his own catechism.
¹¹⁶ LE, March, 1869, 53; June, 1869, 123; August, 1869, 26-27; November, 1870, 134; January, 1872, 5.
¹¹⁷ LE, January, 1870, 11; August, 1870, 38. For an opposing point of view, however, see LE, July, 1870, 12.
¹¹⁸ There is warrant for this, however, in John Wesley. See his Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament. 15th ed. (New York: Carlton & Porter, n.d.), 529. (Hereafter ENNT).
¹¹⁹ LE, February, 1869, 30; March, 1869, 53; April, 1869, 74, 77; June, 1869, 182; September, 1869, 53; October, 1869, 76; December, 1869, 126; March, 1870, 65; November 1870, 143; December, 1870, 169; February, 1872, 39, 40, 50-51; May, 1872, 163; January, 1875, 1; March, 1875, 98; May, 1875, 198; October, 1875, 436; November, 1875, 481.
¹²⁰ See Peters, op. cit., 112.
¹²² For John Wesley’s exegesis of this verse, which does not seem to be the foundation for its later use by the “holiness movement,” see Wesley, ENNT, 591. But cf. his letter to the Countess of Huntington, June 19, 1774, LJW, V, 258, where the same terminology as that of the movement appears.
quoted in its entirety, it had not been used in this characteristic "holiness" manner; after that time, however, it was used in this way fairly regularly in the Epistle.\(^{123}\)

Interestingly, the debate concerning Christian perfection in the Evangelical Association in the decades after 1860 did not make extensive use of John Wesley.\(^{124}\) The Evangelical Messenger reproduced in 1859 a passage of the "Plain Account" that insisted both on the gradual work preceding and following the moment of entire sanctification and on the possibility that Christian perfection might be lost.\(^{125}\) The Living Epistle, on the other hand, cited only the assertion of Wesley that God would perform the work of sanctification at the present moment.\(^{126}\) The Wesleyan definition of sin seems to have been assumed in the discussion, however, and on occasion it was stated explicitly.\(^{127}\) John Wesley did not seem to be a prime source of doctrine for the Evangelicals in the "holiness movement."

In 1872 Reuben Yeakel was elected to the bishopric and his place as editor of the Epistle was taken by Jacob Young. After this change, a large section dealing with Sunday School material was added to the monthly magazine. Nor was this the only change. By 1875 at least half the articles on sanctification in the Epistle were being reproduced from other journals, while five years earlier outside articles had been a small minority.

By 1875 there were other modifications in the "holiness movement," as it was reported in the Epistle. Both Inskip and others were ceasing to argue that entire sanctification must always be instantaneous.\(^{128}\) While strife and division had always been feared as by-products of the movement,\(^{129}\) by 1875 the danger of schism seemed to be a more real possibility.\(^{130}\) Both Elisha A. Hoffman and Aaron W. Orwig answered charges of fanaticism by calling for more such fanatics in 1870,\(^{131}\) but by 1875 Orwig was joining Editor Jacob Young in warning the sanctified that they could be tempted, could fall from a state of grace, could be lost.\(^{132}\) It is a situation strangely paralleling John Wesley's increased emphasis on sin in the perfected after the Maxfield-Bell schism of 1762.\(^{133}\) Bishop Reuben Yeakel, who had addressed words of caution to the sanctified in 1870,\(^{134}\) wrote to Editor Young in 1875 to congratulate him for an editorial that included the following sentence:

\(^{123}\) LE, August 1870, 33; September, 1870, 93; November, 1870, 155; December, 1870, 164, 169; February, 1872, 40; May, 1872, 125; January, 1875, 2; July, 1875, 235; September, 1875, 386.

\(^{124}\) Although Yeakel, op. cit., ii, 146-147, does attempt to tie his position to the Discipline's statement and thence back to Wesley.

\(^{125}\) EM, November 22, 1859, 187.

\(^{126}\) LE, December, 1870, 173-174.

\(^{127}\) LE, July, 1869, 22.

\(^{128}\) LE, June, 1875, 245; September, 1875, 412-413.

\(^{129}\) LE, August, 1869, 44-45; September, 1869, 51-52; April, 1872, 100-102.

\(^{130}\) LE, October, 1875, 449.

\(^{131}\) LE, December, 1870, 163, 165-166.

\(^{132}\) LE, February, 1875, 49-51; March, 1875, 100-101.

\(^{127}\) See, for example, John Wesley to Charles Wesley, February 12, 1767, LJW, v, 41: "Cautions and Directions Given to the Greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies," in Outler (ed.), op. cit. esp. p. 304; "Predestination Calmly Considered," in Outler (ed.), 467.

\(^{134}\) LE, August, 1870, 50 ff.
There is danger of losing too much sight of the truth that CHRIST is our sanctification. In the eagerness to promote holiness, there is danger of presenting entire sanctification in an abstract way, fixing the mind too much on sanctification, not enough on Jesus.\textsuperscript{135}

It was a danger that seemed to be recognized more in 1875 than it had been in 1870.

CONCLUSIONS

While further research would certainly be necessary to validate any final conclusions, it does seem valid to observe on the basis of the contents of this paper that there was a completely different approach to the doctrine of Christian perfection in The Evangelical Messenger of 1865-1866 than was found in The Living Epistle of 1869-1870. The struggle between sanctification at conversion and sanctification as subsequent experience was decided sharply in favor of the latter option in the Epistle. The tension between the gradual and the instantaneous that is found in Wesley and in the earlier discussions of Christian perfection, even in such a defender of orthodoxy as William W. Orwig,\textsuperscript{136} seemed largely to be ignored. The approach that has been herein characterized as the Palmer theology seemed to be the dominant, indeed, the only voice for holiness among English-speaking Evangelicals, so far as the Epistle of 1870 was concerned.

By 1875, however, the picture had changed, and the Epistle was much more cautious about entire sanctification than it had been five years earlier. Research to date has not uncovered the reasons for the seeming change. Perhaps the threat of schism was becoming a live option in the direction that the “holiness movement” was taking. Perhaps the professors of the doctrine of the “second blessing” had been its own worst enemies, even as they had been in the British Methodist schism of 1762. At any rate, the romance between the Evangelical Association and the Palmer-Inskip brand of Christian perfection seemed to have cooled a great deal in a short time. In 1870 one older pastor wrote to Elisha A. Hoffman that the doctrine of entire sanctification as it was being proclaimed by The Living Epistle was not “alt Evangelisch.”\textsuperscript{137} So far as this paper is concerned, he was right; the Epistle’s doctrine owed more to Phoebe Palmer and John Inskip than it did to Jacob Albright and John Wesley.

\textsuperscript{135} LE, May, 1875, 194. Young felt that the great danger of the “holiness movement” was superficiality (p. 194). For Yeakel’s approving letter, see LE, June, 1875, 243-244.

\textsuperscript{136} Mattill, op. cit., ii, 12-13, 18.

\textsuperscript{137} LE, December, 1870, 163.