PREACHING THE "NARROW WAY":  
WILLIAM B. GODBEY'S HOMILETICAL AGENDA FOR THE  
EARLY HOLINESS MOVEMENT  

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Methodism's debate over "holiness" in the late 19th century, "perhaps the most controversial issue" of the post-Reconstruction era in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has been thoroughly documented in several sources. Most accounts of this controversy focus on the doctrine of Christian perfection and on episcopal supervision. Related to these is the theology of homiletics in the early Holiness Movement, regarding the nature and fulfillment of a divine call to preach. Ideas concerning the nature of the church and its ministers sharply divided the "flaming evangelists" from the majority of Methodist ministers in the last quarter of the 19th century. The holiness evangelists were universally characterized by an intense concern for revivals and a strong commitment to a specialized definition of Christian perfection. The evangelists pursued these interests until they were alienated from Methodism's episcopal supervision. One of the most prominent and influential holiness evangelists was William B. Godbey, a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.² His name is recognized in some circles in the holiness denominations, particularly those in the conservative wing of the Holiness Movement. However, he is probably unknown to most United Methodists. By examining Godbey's life and his theology of preaching, this paper will suggest that the Holiness Movement restricted its homiletical agenda in order to enhance its effectiveness among its constituents. This specialization was characterized by a clearly-defined, but restricted, "methodology" which nourished holiness revivalism. Holiness pulpits subscribed to this agenda for the sake of increasing professions of conversion and entire sanctification—the fruits of revivalism—in contrast with Methodism's broader agenda for nourishing the life of the Church.

William B. Godbey was born June 3, 1833 in Pulaski County, Kentucky, to parents with extensive roots in the Methodist ministry. He was converted in a revival in 1849 and licensed to preach in 1853 by the Kentucky Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He was admitted on trial in 1866 and into full connection in 1868. He graduated with a baccalaureate degree from Georgetown College (KY) in 1859, and served as president of Harmonia College in Perryville, KY from 1859 to 1869, temporarily relocating the college to Indiana during the Civil War. In 1860 Godbey married Emma Durham, whose family was prominent in early Kentucky Methodism. In 1868 he experienced entire sanctification and became a strong holiness advocate. He served several pastoral appointments from 1870 to 1872, served as a presiding elder from 1873 to 1876, and returned to pastoral appointments from 1877 to 1881. He served as “Tract and Book Agent” for the Maysville District in 1882, and in a pastorate in Vanceburg in 1883. In 1884 Godbey is listed in the minutes of the Kentucky Conference as having “located.”

Godbey’s pattern of ministry from 1868 to 1884 indicates a career path out of the Methodist ministry. His strong desire to itinerate on behalf of converts led him, in 1883–1884, to exercise most of his ministry outside the boundaries of his own conference. Making a specialty of holding revival meetings and promoting holiness, Godbey’s traveling temperament alienated many of

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3See James McGraw, “The Preaching of William B. Godbey,” *The Preacher’s Magazine* (March 1956), 7. McGraw states that “in W. B. Godbey’s family there were four other preachers beside [sic] himself, and in his father’s family there were five. Godbey’s great-grandfather was converted under the ministry of Bishop Asbury and later called to preach. On the venerable old gentleman’s ninety-sixth birthday, there were twenty-five preachers among those in the family who attended the reunion in his honor.” See also William B. Godbey, *Autobiography of W. B. Godbey* (Cincinnati, OH: God’s Revivalist Office, 1909), 22.

4Emma Durham (1839–1915) was the descendant of John Durham, leader of the first Methodist class in Kentucky (organized by Francis Clark in 1783). For more information on John Durham see A. H. Redford, *The History of Methodism in Kentucky* (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1868), 1:26, and W. E. Arnold, *A History of Methodism in Kentucky* (Louisville, KY: Herald Press, 1935–1936), 1:22–26. For a short biography of Emma Godbey see William B. Godbey, *My Better Half*, Cincinnati, OH: God’s Revivalist Office, n.d. According to Godbey, John was Emma’s grandfather, and his son Benjamin was the father of James Wesley, from whom Emma inherited the property where she and William resided when the latter was an evangelist. The house was “known throughout the State as the Methodist Tavern: because in the antecedency of all public conveyance it was to the Methodist preachers as a lodge in the wilderness.” The house still stands two miles east of Perryville on U.S. Highway 150, built near the location of the cabin in which the first Methodist class meetings west of the Allegheny Mountains were held. A marker in front of the property provides this information. Minerva Godbey, granddaughter of William B. and Emma Godbey, pointed out the house to the author in June, 1993, and stated that the house is the same structure standing when she visited her grandfather in her childhood. She reminisced that her grandfather, returning from his evangelistic tours, would have the grandchildren “march” across the front porch, singing the gospel song, “We’re Marching to Zion.”
his Methodist colleagues. He frequently clashed with Methodist pastors and
with laity over his "hellfire-and-damnation" tactics, and scathingly de­
nounced cooperative endeavors between Methodists and "Campbellites." Godbey’s uncompromising tactics, zeal for converts and holiness, and eccen­
tric personal habits earned him a reputation as "crazy." His dramatic pulpit style drew ridicule from newspaper reporters, and his colloquial sermons res­
onated with the lowest classes of people. However, Godbey was never ejected
from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He remained a member of that
denomination until his death in 1920. Numerous Methodist pastors and other
leaders recognized an element of authentic Wesleyanism in his preaching, and
defended Godbey as a champion of old-fashioned Methodist orthodoxy.
Other southern Methodist revivals had outbursts of emotional fervor such as
"shouting." Godbey was by no means alone in his techniques of "hellfire-and­
damnation" preaching. Additionally, Godbey’s personal character was uni­
versally acknowledged to be unassailable. Not one shred of historical data has
been found that would blemish the reputation of his moral character. God­
bey’s effectiveness as an evangelist was beyond dispute. In 1872 he served as
pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Foster, Kentucky, and
claimed 500 converts. The Methodists would not be anxious to rid them­
selves of such an effective revivalist. Yet his revivalistic tactics and radical
holiness teachings were dividing many Methodist churches. Godbey’s bishop;

Briane Turley states that William B. Godbey was the most popular evangelist in the Georgia Holiness Association, whose members belonged exclusively to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Turley points out the difficulties many people had with Godbey’s eccentric personal man­ner: “He was, nevertheless, occasionally described as somewhat peculiar. One correspondent to the Southern Christian Advocate, an official publication of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, wrote that, ‘Dr. Godbey is a profoundly learned man. . . . He would be regarded as a much greater man, and would certainly be more useful, were it not for his painful eccentricities. He is frequently grotesque in his physical action, and many persons have come to me in all candor and serious asking if he were not regarded as crazy.’” Turley is citing J. A. Thompson, D. D., “Notes from Georgia;” Southern Christian Advocate (1 October 1891), 1. See Briane Turley, “A Wheel Within a Wheel: Southern Methodism and the Georgia Holiness Association,” Georgia Historical Quarterly, vol. LXXV, no. 2 (Summer 1991), 305.

See McGraw, “The Preaching of William B. Godbey,” 7. Godbey recalls how a newspaper reporter characterized his preaching: “Oh, how vividly and ludicrously he described my pantomimic gesticulations, leaping like a kangaroo and howling like a wolf!” Turley states that “the revival meetings that Godbey and other Holiness evangelists held in Georgia were often emotionally charged with loud preaching and “holy shouting”—in this regard, they differed little from much of mainstream southern Methodists revivalism during the latter quarter of the nine­
teenth century.” Turley points out in a footnote that “this is a fact that some Methodist histori­

tion of early Methodism. See Godbey, Autobiography, 305.

Godbey, Autobiography, 270.

Holland N. McTyeire, resolved this quandary by persuading him voluntarily to accept conference status as "located" in order to serve as an unofficial evangelist for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. McTyeire imposed no limits on Godbey's range of travel, a decision which matched Godbey's wide-ranging temperament. Since no office of evangelist existed in the denomination, this arrangement was a private understanding between Godbey and Bishop McTyeire. Godbey always remembered Bishop McTyeire as the man who "turned him loose" on the Church.

From this point on, Godbey's motto could have been, "The World is My Conference." His propensity for travel was manifest in the restless energy with which he carried out revival campaigns. On being "turned loose," Godbey headed for Texas, where he relentlessly itinerated across the state and depended on the support of presiding elders and pastors friendly to "holiness." Opposed by pastors hostile to the young movement, threatened by rope and "six-shooter," pelted by dirt clods and eggs, Godbey preached "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," becoming one of the leading evangelists of the early Holiness Movement. Though southern Methodism was immersed in a revivalistic culture, the Holiness Movement's strong emphasis on entire sanctification, as well as its divisive nature, gave that movement a marginalized status within the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. However, in its earliest years, the Holiness Movement found pockets of favor among some presiding elders and pastors, due to its appropriation of the teachings and ethos of early Methodism, as well as the visible results of its

"The office of "evangelist" was explicitly rejected by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at the General Conference of 1886. See Hamilton, "William Baxter Godbey," 43.
"See Hamilton, "William Baxter Godbey," 26. Methodism was never prepared to accept the Holiness Movement's doctrine of entire sanctification as its definitive understanding of Christian perfection. This was consistent with Methodism's treatment of the doctrine of Christian perfection as 'experimental.' Methodism had the capacity to tolerate both the instantaneou  s and progressive aspects of the doctrine, but never wished to confine itself to a clearly-defined "methodology" for obtaining a particular kind of experience. The Holiness Movement required a clearly-defined ordo salutis, and a thoroughly-elaborated revivalistic methodology, in order to set up its well-oiled machinery for mass-producing saints. The "evangelistic anxiety" which fueled the growth of this movement consisted of the "push-and-pull" of the Great Commission and the Second Coming.
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revivalism. Pockets of friendliness, alongside outright hostility on the holiness question, kept Godbey within the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, albeit as a marginalized minister who could extend his influence only through "unofficial" channels. As far as the officialdom of southern Methodism was concerned, Godbey was for all practical purposes an ecclesiastical outsider.¹⁴

However, within the Holiness Movement Godbey became one of its most prominent evangelists. Between 1884 and 1918 he produced a flood of pamphlets, books, sermons, Bible lessons and editorials. His pamphlets and books alone amount to more than 230 titles. Melvin Dieter calls Godbey "the nineteenth-century holiness movement's most prolific author."¹⁵ Through the dissemination of these popular-level theological publications, as well as through his far-ranging evangelistic travels, Godbey can readily be identified as one of the most influential preachers in the formative years of the Holiness Movement. During this prolific period of his life, through his publications, sermons, and lectures, Godbey was cast in the popular mind of the Holiness Movement as a biblical scholar and world traveler—an expert on the Bible through his knowledge of biblical languages and his first-hand acquaintance with the geography, people, and customs of Palestine. Responding to concerns voiced throughout the Holiness Movement "from the full salvation standpoint," Godbey began the project only after first completing his first journey to Palestine.¹⁶ This was the first of four around-the-world trips through which he gathered information not only on the geography, people, and customs of Palestine, but also on the "signs of the times"—evidence' that Christ's Second Coming was imminent. The commentaries thus

"Godbey regarded Methodism as a "fallen" church which had forsaken its heritage. "Methodism, in the good olden time, simply meant the great Holiness Movement, which God in His mercy launched through the instrumentality of John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Thomas Maxfield, John Fletcher, Adam Clarke, and others." He states that "If Methodism had been true to her own doctrines and vows, there never would have been a Free Methodist Church, nor a Wesleyan Methodist Church, nor a Nazarene Church." See William B. Godbey, Methodism, Cincinnati, OH: Office of God's Revivalist, n.d. Apparently Godbey remained a lifelong Methodist, even though he joined Martin Wells Knapp's International Holiness Union and Prayer League in the 1890s and later assisted Alma White in promoting her Pillar of Fire Church. See D. William Faupel, "Preface," in Six Tracts by W. B. Godbey, ed. by Donald W. Dayton, The Higher Christian Life series no. 19 (New York: Garland, 1985), ix. In his sermon, "The Midnight Cry," Godbey may be defending his Methodist membership when he speaks of "millions of preachers in Babylon .... I feel God wants me there to preach Holy Ghost religion, and I won't be condemned .... I know I am all right so long as Babylon doesn't get in me." See Godbey, "The Midnight Cry," 20, in Six Tracts. Pagination in this reprint follows the original pamphlets. Faupel's preface offers a brief overview of Godbey's life and ministry.


¹⁶ Godbey credits his friend Martin Wells Knapp with persuading him to write the commentaries. Godbey and Knapp met each other after the latter had moved to Cincinnati in 1892, and became acquainted when Knapp preached at a holiness convention in Kentucky. Knapp recognized in Godbey one who could clearly and persuasively present the Holiness Movement's teachings to a popular audience. See Godbey, Autobiography, 365–366.
had two principal doctrinal thrusts: (1) to disseminate the teachings on entire sanctification from the perspective of the Holiness Movement that subscribed to the ‘eradicationist’ theory, and (2) to persuade that movement that premillennialism should be the “orthodox line” on eschatology. Perhaps the principal literary vehicle for propagating “holiness premillennialism,” the *Commentary on the New Testament* is a mishmash of Greek-jargonizing and Methodist theologizing, as well as a sermonizing commentary which imposed the Holiness Movement’s *ordo salutis* on the biblical text. Godbey’s *Commentary* became a handbook for homiletical prooftexts, reinforcing the Holiness Movement’s self-image that its message rested on solid biblical foundations—that the Holiness Movement was simply a restoration of the pristine gospel message of “full salvation.” The *Commentary* persuaded numerous readers that Godbey led the way back to primitive Methodism and *New Testament* Christianity—the two would be synonymous to most readers—and holiness people would be nothing more or less than “Bible Christians,” the intended aim of the Holiness Movement.

Godbey’s other significant publications include a *Translation of the New Testament*, which is a literal translation of the *Codex Sinaiticus*. The best account of his world travels is his *Around the World*, a sermonizing travelog which “confirms” the “signs of the times” that Christ’s Second Coming is imminent. Other well-known publications include *The Apocalyptic Angel, Bible Theology, Christian Perfection, Happy Nonagenarian, The Incarnation of the Holy Ghost, Mundane Restitution, Revive and Refire*, and *Tongue Movement, Satanic*. A collection of six tracts, principally on the Second Coming and on divine healing, was published in 1985. Not to be overlooked is Godbey’s outspoken advocacy of women preachers through his sermons and publications.

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20 Vinson Synan names W. B. Godbey as one of the most influential preachers who after the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 kept tongues out of the rest of the Holiness Movement. A. B. Crumpler marshalled Godbey’s influence in his fight to keep tongues out of his Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) movement. See Synan, *The Old-Time Power, 117; The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 143–144.

21 See the citation for *Six Tracts* in footnote 14.

When he was not on an international or domestic tour, Godbey taught at God's Bible School in Cincinnati, Ohio. He became renowned among his students, not only for his biblical knowledge, but for his eccentricities of personal manner, including his extreme thrift for the sake of missionaries. Above all, he left the Holiness Movement a rich legacy through the numerous people who were converted through his revival meetings. Some of these persons became leaders in the movement, including Alma White, founder of the Pillar of Fire Church, and reputed to be the first woman bishop of a Christian denomination. Ms. White was converted in a Kentucky schoolhouse revival led by Godbey in 1874. Bud Robinson, perhaps the most celebrated evangelist in the history of the Church of the Nazarene, heard about entire sanctification for the first time while attending Godbey's revival meeting at Alvarado, Texas, in 1886. Godbey also exerted considerable influence through his affiliation with the National Holiness Association.

The most provocative remembrance of Godbey is his obituary in the Minutes of the Annual Conferences (Kentucky Conference) for 1921. The Kentucky Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had a mixed remembrance of this fiery evangelist. The obituary recalls several events of his early life, including his conversion and school teaching. Significantly, the obituary omits any mention of his "sanctification" in 1868.

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23 Founded by Martin Wells Knapp in 1900. For more information on Knapp and God's Bible School see Jones, Perfectionist Persuasion, 99–104. See also A. M. Hills, A Hero of Faith and Prayer, or, Life of Rev. Martin Wells Knapp, Cincinnati, OH: Mrs. M. W. Knapp, 1092. Godbey's prayer and funeral sermon can be found on pages 300–310.

24 The enduring legacy of this extreme thrift is his refusal to have his grave marked with a tombstone. Buried near Perryville, Kentucky, next to his wife Emma, his name can be found at the bottom of her tombstone. Godbey's former students recollected both his saintliness and his eccentricities, such as his statements concerning "celestial evangelism"—that if human life were discovered on other planets, God would send his resurrected saints to preach the gospel to them. Mrs. Francis R. Guy, interview with the author (Bethany, OK), June 1978. For a reminiscence of Godbey's appearance and manner, as well as a photograph of the evangelist in his "customary linen duster" see J. Lawrence Brasher, The Sanctified South: John Lukin Brasher and the Holiness Movement (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 160–161.

25 Alma White, The Story of My Life, 5 vols. (Zarephath, NJ: Pillar of Fire, 1919–1943), 1:217f. White states that in this revival meeting, "some were so convicted that they left the room and threw up their suppers, and staggered back into the house as pale as death."

26 Reuben R. "Bud" Robinson, "God Ran A River Through My Heart," sermon preached in 1941 at Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky. Recorded on an audiocassette obtained by the author in 1979 from the Minister's Tape Club (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1979). The audiocassette copy of the sermon was produced from a wire recording in the archives of Trevecca Nazarene University, Nashville, TN. Robinson recollects that people in the region of Alvarado at that time were saying (in reference to Godbey) that "there was a crazy man going around preaching holiness."

primes the discerning reader for the rest of the article. Godbey is praised for his revival meetings, but the praise is qualified. This reflects Southern Methodism’s ambivalence toward Godbey’s “holiness revivalism.” Methodism understood the Church to hold a broader agenda than revivals alone.

But he was neither a pastor nor a presiding elder. He knew nothing of organization and conservation, and gave himself little concern about the management of the affairs of charge or district. He was an evangelist, and this alone occupied his mind and engaged his effort. His charges prospered in revivals only. He used both the pastorate and the presiding eldership as occasions to evangelize, and had no genius for the detail work necessary to permanence and to the great program of the Church.

The author of the article, recalling childhood memories of Godbey, states that when Godbey was on the Sharpsburg and Bethel Circuit, he preached nearly every day in the week. However, “the work was like a rope of sand.” “Like Whitefield,” Godbey “left his converts to the care of someone else, or to the tender mercies of a godless world.” The writer epitomizes his style of ministry: “Temperamentally and by choice he was a gospel ranger.” But Godbey’s positive contributions were not forgotten:

Out of his abundant labors sprang one of the greatest revivals of modern times; and when the history of the Church is written, the name of W. B. Godbey will loom large in that part of its dealing with the revival which came to Methodism during the latter part of the last century.

The writer singles out his association with the newly-formed holiness denominations:

As he got away from home, Brother Godbey, in our opinion, made the serious mistake of drifting away from his Church. . . . Yet his heart yearned for the fellowship of his brethren of the Kentucky Conference, and he longed to die with them. In 1918 he came to our Conference asking to be readmitted, that he might die a member of the body to whose service he had given the years of his mature manhood. The Conference gladly readmitted him, and he died a member of our body, September 12, 1920.

One of the most influential pioneers of the Holiness Movement, William B. Godbey lived and died in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. His publications represent a theological and cultural perspective which reveals much of the inner character of the early Holiness Movement. Through Godbey the modern reader looks through a large aperture on the eradicationist wing of the Holiness Movement. Alienated from his lifelong denomination, he nevertheless remained associated with that body, even at substantial personal cost, in order to serve as a living embodiment of one of the Holiness Movement’s highest ideals, that of Christian unity.

28Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1921), 56–57.
According to Godbey, the preeminent qualification for preaching is the experience of entire sanctification. His prooftext for this assertion is Hebrews 1:7, "He maketh his ministers a flame of fire." This qualification relieves the minister from the need for a "collegiate education, extensive travel, nor any other thing." Godbey acknowledges the potential usefulness of education and other cultural attainments, but declares them to be "positive hindrances" when they become substitutes for the experience of entire sanctification. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit, synonymous with entire sanctification, is identified with the experience of early Christians described in Acts 2. According to Godbey, the "Pentecostal Experience" sent these believers preaching the gospel everywhere, as described in Acts 8. This eisegetical reading of Acts, in which the experience of the late 19th-century Holiness Movement is read into the biblical account, bolsters the notion that if believers receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit, they will effectively evangelize the "multitudes who are traveling to Hell at race-horse speed." Godbey describes the "cloven tongues" of Acts 2 as representing conversion and sanctification as two distinct works of grace. The believer who had experienced entire sanctification would be empowered to preach conversion to sinners and entire sanctification to believers.

According to Godbey, the principal task of the church is to carry out the Great Commission as stated in Matthew 28:19. "Making disciples" for Godbey means getting people saved, and that means having all their sins "utterly destroyed." Godbey believes that the Holiness Movement is delivering the full message of the Bible as commissioned by Jesus, and that the deficiency of the "popular churches" is that they have failed to deliver the complete message. Preaching the "narrow way," encouraging people to get "converted solidly and gloriously," getting them ready for heaven, is the main business of the church. Broadening the way to heaven, dispensing with revivalistic preaching and its emphasis on soul-saving, is the certain path to damnation. Godbey asserts that "popular religion teaches a broad way to heaven." Preaching which diverts attention away from the scriptural way of salvation is a strategy employed by Satan for the purpose of populating Hell.

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29See William B. Godbey, Popular Evangelism (n.p., n.d.), 3. "Jesus positively forbids any one to preach in the Gospel dispensation without the baptism of the Holy Ghost, i.e., sanctification. Therefore Wesley arranged for all of his preachers to take a solemn vow certifying that they expected to be made perfect in love in this life, and were going on to it, even groaning after it."


31Godbey, Victory, 6. See also Godbey's Popular Evangelism (n.p., n.d).

32This is one of Godbey's principal themes in his publications, a sentiment shared by his close friend Martin Wells Knapp. Knapp excoriates the "popular churches" in virtually every issue of God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate until his death in December 1901. For an example of Godbey's description of the "popular churches" as manipulated by the devil, see William B. Godbey, Tribulation Revivals (Greensboro, NC: The Apostolic Messenger Office, n.d.), 3.
Using "spiritual geography," a practice which transformed biblical place-names into metaphors for spiritual experience, Godbey elaborates on the two types of preaching, one type to sinners and the other to the sanctified. According to revivalistic practices, preaching to "sinners" required stirring up conviction for sin. Godbey transliterates the Greek term *dunamis* into the English word "dynamite," thus rendering Romans 1:16 as "The gospel is the dynamite of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." He equivocates on the meaning of this term, reading into "dynamite" several shades of meaning which suit his polemical intentions. For Godbey, "dynamite" refers to "hellfire-and-damnation" preaching which aimed to kindle conviction of sin in unbelievers. Godbey refers to this type of preaching as "taking Mount Sinai for our pulpit," and "thunderbolts, earthquakes and lightning-shafts." Such "spiritual weather" required some athletic ability in order to carry out the theatrics. In his old age, Godbey states that he no longer had "the physical power adequate to the Sinai Gospel." He credits this type of preaching with producing phenomenal results in terms of revivalism. According to Godbey, entire sanctification was the foundational experience which had transformed him into such an effective evangelist.

When the Lord baptized me with the Holy Ghost and fire, forty-two years ago, actually making me a fiery cyclone, I was in the vigor of young manhood and I preached the Sinai Gospel all the time, until conviction settled down on the people, as if the archangel had come down and was blowing his trumpet, and the dead were all rising. The result was that the Lord gave me a glorious revival everywhere I went.

Apparently, this type of preaching was not representative of the entire Holiness Movement. According to Godbey, the Holiness Movement desperately needed the "Sinai Gospel" in order to stimulate the results of revivalism. The Holiness Movement was "lamentably deficient" in "Sinai preaching," and needed "sons of thunder" to "rally by thousands to rescue the lost millions." A "radical revolution on the Sinai Gospel" was needed to get people moving down the *ordo salutis* to sainthood and subsequently to heaven.

Without conviction there can be no conversion; without conversion no sanctification; without sanctification no Heaven. Hence you see conviction is the foundation, the foundation being the most important part of the house. The entire Holiness Movement needs a radical revolution on the Sinai Gospel which is more neglected than any other. As it is the indispensable beginning of every successful work, we see the deficiency all along the

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6 Godbey's friend Martin Wells Knapp used this term in reference to such vociferous preaching.

Two factors may be at work in this conviction that "hellfire-and-damnation" preaching was the remedy for the Holiness Movement's alleged deficiencies. (1) The Holiness Movement's rate of growth was far below the expectations of Godbey and other evangelists who had hoped that their enterprise would produce a massive harvest of souls and hasten the Second Coming. (2) Godbey and other evangelists who invoked this type of preaching may have been mistaken in their hellfire homiletics, having taken a methodology from the early 19th-century frontier and expecting similar results in the early 20th century. The Holiness Movement's rejection of "hellfire-and-damnation" preaching as a principal methodology may have alienated evangelists like Godbey, leading them to consider the Holiness Movement as having been "side-tracked."

Once the "Sinai Gospel" had produced the desired state of conviction, the preacher would move on to the "Calvary Gospel." The preacher would disclose a graphic, emotional portrayal of the death of Jesus Christ and thereby move the audience to seek salvation at the mourner's bench. Godbey's emotional style can be gleaned from his statements on the "Calvary Gospel," in which he portrays the preacher standing "on the crimson hill of Golgotha and with solemn wails and breaking heart, preach the dying love of Jesus to the souls crushed by the thunder-bolts of Sinai." This colloquial style sermon was a "word picture" constructed to evoke a strong, sentimental response in the congregation. "Sinai Gospel" and "Calvary Gospel" were aspects of revivalistic preaching which were intended to arouse powerful emotions and call for a response to the message. By producing strong contrasting emotional responses, "conviction" from the "Sinai Gospel" and the joy of hearing the merciful forgiveness and love of Jesus in the "Calvary Gospel," the evangelist prepared the congregation for an unambiguous mass response. This type of homiletics was streamlined for a specific task—to stimulate response to revivalistic preaching and produce conversion experiences. Such preaching was highly specialized and thus suited for the particular circumstances of a protracted meeting. It was a projection of Godbey's personality and career-orientation—a fixation on "soul-winning."

However, Godbey's "spiritual geography" has other homiletical mountains than Sinai and Calvary. After describing the conversion experience as a "tremendous explosion" which resulted from the Holy Spirit igniting a "dynamite cartridge" with "a spark from Heaven's altar," which "blow(s) the pilgrim all the way out of the devil's kingdom into the kingdom of God," Godbey states that "it is now pertinent for the preacher to change pulpits again." The holiness preacher's task was to urge Christians into the experience

38 Godbey, God's Gospel Preacher, 12.
of entire sanctification as soon as possible. Godbey resorted to the imagery of Zion as symbolic of the preaching of entire sanctification to believers.

Therefore, leaving Calvary he climbs Mt. Zion, the highest in all the Holy City. There he preaches to the disciples in the upper room the fundamental truth of hereditary depravity in all its Satanic similitude, received from the devil through the fall and transmitted to every son and daughter of the race. . . . The minister of Christ now heroically preaches the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, assuring his hearers that when Jesus baptizes them, the blessed Agent of the Trinity will administer the cleansing blood to the expurgation of this inbred depravity.

Godbey again characterizes the experience to be received as an “explosion” set off by a “dynamite cartridge” set off by the Holy Spirit, which blows the pilgrim out of the “howling wilderness” into the “land of corn and wine.” This conflation of imagery from *The Pilgrim’s Progress* with biblical imagery reinforces the description of Christian life as a movement from “experience” to “experience,” a pattern which followed the *ordo salutis* described by the Holiness Movement. By taking imagery familiar to his hearers, and reconstructing this imagery to conform to this *ordo salutis*, Godbey could make a common-sense appeal for his audience to respond and receive this pattern as normative for Christians.

Godbey has one more homiletical mountain to climb. He was a promoter of premillennial eschatology within the Holiness Movement, and as a matter of course, he has a mountain which symbolizes the preaching of the Second Coming. Mount Olivet is his imagery for the preaching of the Lord’s return to sanctified believers. As a holiness premillennialist, Godbey asserted that only the “bridehood,” which consisted of Christians who had experienced entire sanctification, would be taken up in the “Rapture,” the translation of saints into heaven prior to the period of “tribulation.” Godbey’s mountain-to-mountain experience is not strictly in conformity with his practice, since he frequently preached the rapture of the “sanctified only” as an incentive for receiving the experience of entire sanctification. As a further incentive, using such texts as Revelation 20:6, Godbey taught that God would rule the world through “the instrumentality of His transfigured saints” in the coming kingdom. God would use these saints to evangelize the entire world during the millennium—everyone who had survived the “tribulation” would be converted by the preaching of the sanctified.

Through this mountain imagery as well as other means, Godbey filled his sermons and books with incentives for his audiences to respond to the message of holiness revivalism, obtaining the experiences of conversion and entire sanctification as preparation for heaven. According to this “spiritual geography,” preaching should be primarily concerned with getting as many

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people as possible into these experiences, conforming to the Holiness Movement's *ordo salutis*. According to Godbey’s publications, holiness revivalism of the early twentieth century was a theology reduced to the obtaining of these two experiences, conversion and entire sanctification. This theology reflected the temper of its exponents—evangelists who moved from place to place with unmitigated restlessness. Godbey was always on the move, circling the globe four times in his old age, anxious to get as many people converted and sanctified as he could persuade. The temper of the Holiness Movement in the early 20th century could have been characterized as a religious factory, tuned for the mass production of saints. The movement urged people to obtain two “works of grace,” conversion and entire sanctification, in rapid succession. Holiness revivalism also reflected the temper of the times—at the turn of the century, millennial expectations fueled interest in the Second Coming of Christ and stimulated concern for preparedness. Holiness evangelists like Godbey raised expectations for the Second Coming and offered experiences which assured preparedness for heaven. “Girdling the globe” and “blowing the silver trumpet” these evangelists reflected the hurried pace and intense excitement of the infant movement. One of the best representatives of the formative period of the Holiness Movement, Godbey deserves an honored place in the annals of American Methodism for his substantial role.

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