

The Inskips: Union in Holiness

by Lawrence E. Breeze

The "holiness movement" occupies a commanding place among the many revivalist experiences that swept through nineteenth century American religion. The precise means of achieving "holiness" might be a matter for occasional dispute among its proponents, but its meaning was never in doubt. "Holiness" carried the Christian beyond the conversion experience to an attainment of a purified life, freed of a bent toward sin and completely attuned to the will of God. With roots in pre-Civil War revivalism, "holiness" became a "crusade" in the immediate post war era. A group of determined men and women set about to establish its central importance to the Christian experience.

Although the resulting crusade began with interdenominational support and emphasis, in its organized form it quickly became a Methodist institution. Two factors helped make this the case. For one thing, the basic thrust of John Wesley's message on scriptural holiness exerted a powerful pull in the direction of "holiness." Such Wesleyan practices as the class meeting proved ideally suited to the promotion of "holiness"; and Wesley provided a terminology, such as "perfect love" and "entire sanctification," that became a salient part of the "holiness" vocabulary. Secondly, for a whole generation Methodists filled leadership roles in the movement. Only with the passing of this group and the emergence of striking changes, both within American society and the Methodist Church, did the bonds between "holiness" and Methodism begin to loosen.

One of the most influential and best known of these leaders was John S. Inskip. Not long ago readers of *Methodist History* were reminded of his role in the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness.¹ Less well remembered perhaps is the fact that Inskip formed part of a remarkable husband-wife team that labored together in the service of the Lord for some forty-seven years.

Acquaintances often remarked upon the unusual closeness of John and Martha Inskip.² Those who knew them best considered that although they had esteem and deep affection for each other from the beginning, this had been quickened and intensified by

¹ J. Wesley Corbin, "Christian Perfection and the Evangelical Association through 1875," *Methodist History*, VII, No. 2 (January, 1969).

² Eleuthera I. D. Pepper, "Truly a Prince and a great man has fallen in Israel!" in *Memorial of Rev. John S. Inskip* (Philadelphia: National Publishing Association for the Promotion of Holiness, 1885), p. 8. Pepper edited this work to which several of Inskip's associates contributed.

the grace of "entire sanctification" which both experienced in the twenty-eighth year of their marriage.³ As a result their lives, inseparably linked together in holy love and holy labor, radiated a kind of joyous fulfillment that can scarcely be comprehended in an age with the stress upon a search for self-satisfaction and individual identity. This paper will present a sketch of highlights of their ministerial work together, and then give attention to Mrs. Inskip's efforts, after the death of her husband, to continue the work they had long shared.

Born in Huntingdon, England, in 1816, John Swannell Inskip came with his parents to the United States when he was four years of age. Residing first in Wilmington, Delaware, the family later moved to Chester County, Pennsylvania. Shortly before his sixteenth birthday, young Inskip experienced conversion and three years later he was licensed as a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church.⁴ The next year, 1836, he was admitted on trial in the Philadelphia Conference and appointed to serve the Cecil circuit in Maryland.

It was to be a fateful appointment, for the young preacher met and married Miss Martha Jane Foster, a native of Cecil County, Maryland. She had been converted at a camp meeting in 1829 at the age of ten and thereupon united with the Methodist Episcopal Church. Both were firmly convinced that their meeting, an introduction by a preacher who was a mutual acquaintance, was no mere chance. One obstacle appeared to stand in the way of early marriage. Established practice dictated that young preachers should not marry until they had traveled for a number of years. But the General Conference had recently removed this as a formal restriction, and on November 1, 1836, and in the first year of his ministry, Inskip married the woman "to whom, under God, more than any one else," he was to write nearly thirty years later, "I owe my ministerial success, as well as my domestic bliss."⁵ Interestingly enough, this was not to be the last time the couple would break with some of the established practices of the church. In this instance most, but not all, of his ministerial brethren approved of his action, and, looking back later, a close acquaintance was to proclaim that from the moment of their marriage the two must be considered as

³ William McDonald and John E. Searles, *"I Am, O Lord, Wholly and Forever Thine." The Life of Rev. John S. Inskip* (Boston: MacDonald and Gill, 1885), p. 45. On what would have been the forty-eighth anniversary of their marriage, November 1, 1884, Mrs. Inskip confided in her diary: "Never were hearts more united as ours, indeed I think there never was one as 'happy as we'." The author is indebted to the late J. R. Cordell, Sr., of Jacksonville, Florida, for an opportunity to examine the unpublished diary of Mrs. Inskip which she began keeping in 1881.

⁴ John S. Inskip, "A Brief Synopsis of My Life" in Pepper, *Memorial of Rev. John S. Inskip*, p. 13. Inskip had written this sketch of his life in 1865.

⁵ *Ibid.*

one. "The life of the one is the life of the other," wrote William McDonald "and their labors and successes must be regarded as inseparable."

As for Inskip, he never doubted that God meant it to be:

I have ever been [a] firm believer in the sentiment that there's a Divinity above who shapes our destiny, and directs our steps. "Matches are made in heaven," was a motto in use formerly, and perhaps was more true then than it is now. I fully believed it at the time, and as it appertained to myself, I have never since doubted it for one moment.⁷

Inskip soon demonstrated a special gift in the realm of evangelism. The considerable number of conversions attained in his early appointments in the Philadelphia Conference (as examples, over 500 at Nottingham, 100 at Easton, and 300 at Kensington)⁸ and a growing demand for his services in revival meetings combined to reveal a portent of the great camp-meeting orator of later years. Inskip possessed physical and mental characteristics well-suited to the successful orator. He was a man of great physical strength, stoutly built, and with a large head set upon a short neck. Under ordinary circumstances his high-pitched voice hardly seemed appropriate to a public speaker. But when fired with excitement, his voice took on loud and clarion tones that carried to the outer limits of even the largest camp meeting, an obvious asset in the days before the public address system. He was not a learned man and his appeal was not to the intellect but to the emotion. Physical strength, a tremendous voice, and uninhibited emotion blended to form a magnetic power that lifted and infused a congregation with the speaker's own mood.⁹

Both of the Inskips were easily and deeply moved by anything they took to be morally wrong. Their church, for instance, became the site of the first meeting (1844) of Protestants opposed to what they considered Catholic interference with the use of the Bible in the Philadelphia public schools.¹⁰ Of much greater concern to the Inskips this same year was news from the General Conference, meeting in New York, of the impending rupture of the Methodist Episcopal Church over slavery. This caused Inskip, a fiery and outspoken anti-slavery man, great anguish and he was convinced it meant chaos for both church and country.¹¹

⁶ McDonald and Searles, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁸ Inskip, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

⁹ For observations of a long-time acquaintance see J. M. Buckley, *New York Christian Advocate* reprinted in Pepper, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁰ McDonald and Searles, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

Of great significance for their future relationship to the "holiness movement" was the frequently felt need of the Inskips for a revival of the spirit of the Lord in their own souls. He, in particular, worried that he was not free from the temptation to sin. In the midst of his concern over slavery and church (1844) he confided in his journal: "The responsibility of my station requires me to be a more holy and active Christian." ¹² Along with his fellow ministers, Inskip looked forward to the time of appointments with lively interest, not unnatural in an itinerant ministry. In 1844, he became disgusted with the behavior of some men who, while professing a search for divine direction, seemed to rely more on human maneuvers to gain their new appointments. The experience caused him to search his own motives and in some anxiety he wrote:

I do most sincerely pray that God may deliver us from all selfish and impure motives, that in all things we may seek the glory of God and the good of the church. But it is an easy matter to be deceived. My own heart, likely, is as full of selfishness as any other. Oh, for a clean heart! ¹³

Another journal entry a few months later (July, 1845) again reflects this anxiety:

Too frequently I become careless about my own moral improvement. What a poor, unworthy, and unfaithful creature I am! I make many new resolves, but oh, how few do I fully keep! My mind, as I advance in years, becomes more and more burdened with a consciousness of my insufficiency. ¹⁴

Eventually, of course, he would find peace of mind in "entire sanctification."

In 1845, Inskip transferred to the Ohio Conference, and for the next half dozen years he served appointments there, beginning with Ninth Street in Cincinnati, January, 1846. Earlier his parents had moved to Cincinnati and that fact, plus the generous reception accorded him when invited to preach at a camp meeting during a visit to his parents, induced him to ask for the transfer. ¹⁵

The Ohio years constituted a busy and eventful chapter in the lives of the Inskips. When the Cincinnati Preacher's Meeting was organized in the fall of 1846, he became its first president. She threw herself so completely into the new appointment that soon they gave up housekeeping for a boarding house in order to have

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57; Inskip in Pepper, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

more time for church work.¹⁶ Her special contribution came, and long remained, in the realm of children's and youth work. Under her guidance Ninth Street organized the first Sunday school infant department west of the Allegheny Mountains.¹⁷

But the Ohio years were frequently turbulent. The war with Mexico divided opinion in Ohio as elsewhere, and the impetuous Inskip soon rushed in to join the dissenters. As he saw it, war would not have occurred had Henry Clay been elected to the presidency. Convinced that United States conduct under President Polk had been oppressive and intolerant toward Mexico, John Inskip was not one to remain quiet. A thunderous anti-war sermon at Wesley Chapel, Dayton, a new appointment in 1847, brought a flood of criticism. Newspapers attacked him with charges of "Toryism in the pulpit."¹⁸

The excitement gradually subsided, however, and the Inskips began to experience a most satisfying ministry at Dayton. A revival literally brought new life to the church, some 250 conversions were recorded, and a building program was launched. With the completion of the new building in 1848, Inskip again became the focal point of some excitement. Although some eastern churches, especially in New England, permitted men and women to sit together, western churches opposed it as a violation of the *Discipline* requirement that men and women sit apart. Undaunted, Inskip introduced the practice to Dayton. This "promiscuous sitting," as it was called, caused uneasiness in some quarters and provoked opposition from others, including the presiding elder.¹⁹ The Inskips felt it only right and proper that families sit together in God's house. Still Inskip went to the annual conference with some anxiety. His fears appeared groundless, however, and he interpreted conference action on "promiscuous sitting" to mean that Dayton had been excepted from the prohibition. Furthermore, the conference praised the work of the Inskips:

Resolved, that Bro. J. S. and Sister M. J. Inskip have by their amiability, Christian deportment, and persuasive manners, endeared themselves to the congregation, and have our entire approval of their conduct, as also our warmest thanks for their labor of love in the cause of their Master.²⁰

Inskip's work in Ohio continued to be fruitful, especially in revivals, as he received dozens of converts at each meeting. On one

¹⁶ McDonald and Searles, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 75.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

occasion, in Urbana, a converted brewer immediately went out and sold his brewery.²¹ In 1850, the conference assigned Inskip to a small and struggling church in Springfield where the congregation had been unable to complete a building. Mrs. Inskip proved remarkably successful at raising money for the project. Later in the year she took a trip east, partly for reasons of health, and partly to raise additional funds for the church. During her absence, her normally ebullient husband became melancholy, and he wrote: "How miserable I would be if she were taken from me."²²

The trustees at Springfield came to believe that families should sit together, and they resolved to introduce "promiscuous sitting." Inskip hailed the action as forward looking, but some in his congregation opposed it, and other members of the conference began to agitate against him. In 1851, he completed a book, *Methodism Explained and Defended*, and in a chapter on "Discipline" he interpreted the rule in question as advisory rather than mandatory.²³ Soon afterward the annual conference, meeting in Springfield, took up the matter of "promiscuous sitting." Some members, already unhappy with Inskip, were further offended by his book which they insisted was an attack upon the conference. When it came time to judge his character, one of his fellow ministers read a condemnation of him and a majority found him guilty. After considerable debate as to his punishment, the conference finally "admonished" him of error and passed his character.²⁴ The future did not look promising as he was assigned a small charge at Troy, a dilapidated church, and a salary inadequate to meet family needs and keep their young son in boarding school. Undaunted, the Inskips proceeded to win the hearts of the congregation. He converted 200 souls, and she supplemented their income by opening a school.²⁵

Meantime Inskip appealed his case to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, meeting in Boston, 1852. His appeal, along with numerous other appeals and petitions from the

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

²³ John S. Inskip, *Methodism Explained and Defended* (Cincinnati: H. S. and J. Applegate, [1851], 1860), pp. 67 ff. Inskip identified portions of the discipline as involving fundamental points of doctrine that in effect constituted the "law of the church" and therefore not subject to change. But other portions of the discipline had always been regarded as advisory and thus either observed or disregarded according to the circumstances and discretion of a particular congregation. He drew upon the experience of early Methodism to show that the rule on sitting had arisen to meet a "particular exigency," the needs of an "uncultivated state of society." Even Wesley had tolerated an occasional exception to the rule, "and now, that a different state of society has obtained, and the relative position of Methodism has changed" a directive that had always been advisory was obviously obsolete.

²⁴ McDonald and Searles, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-106.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

annual conferences, took up an inordinate amount of time and helped underscore the need for some form of judicial review procedure.²⁶ Throughout this controversy Mrs. Inskip remained a source of strength. In an effort to encourage her husband, yet restrain his temper and sometimes impulsive action, she wrote urging him to pray for grace, to "keep cool" and act in a "gentlemanly way," but stand firm "as the Rock of Gibraltar."

If I ever thought you would be like some I could name—afraid to speak out your sentiments—I really would be ashamed to own you. But I thank God, you are not one of this kind. All things will work together for your good, if you will only continue in the same spirit that you have manifested from the beginning.²⁷

He prepared his case well and spoke from a lengthy manuscript with such effect that the General Conference voted to reverse the action of the Ohio Conference. As the Conference neared its end, Peter Cartwright and others succeeded in striking from the *Discipline* the prohibition against men and women sitting together.²⁸

Although Inskip returned to Troy vindicated and the congregation requested his re-appointment, the climate of opinion in the Ohio Conference induced him to seek a more liberal eastern conference. Consequently he transferred to the New York East Conference, 1852. With an initial appointment at Madison Street Church in New York City, he spent the next decade serving pastorates in that area and conducting numerous successful revival meetings.²⁹ One note of personal sadness marred the happiness of these years. Early in 1859 the Inskip's only child died, leaving a young widow and infant son. Mrs. Inskip found some consolation, however, in the firm conviction that their son "died in the triumph of a living faith."³⁰

In the late 1850's the Methodist Episcopal Church struggled mightily with the question of its position on slavery. Debate was often heated, and sometimes the controversy threatened a further splintering of Methodism.³¹ John Inskip became a vigorous proponent of the views of the Anti-slavery Society of the New York East Conference. Totally opposed to any compromise with evil, he felt that Methodists spoke out too feebly. The General Conference

²⁶ Arthur E. Jones, Jr., "The Years of Disagreement, 1844-61" in *The History of American Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), II, p. 186.

²⁷ McDonald and Searles, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

²⁸ Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

²⁹ McDonald and Searles, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-120; Inskip in Pepper, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

³⁰ Unpublished diary of Mrs. Inskip, entry on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of her son's death, March 1, 1884.

³¹ Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-202.

of 1860, meeting in Buffalo, proved disappointing and he considered it strong on noise but scant in action.³²

Not long afterward the Southern states began to secede from the Union and the nation experienced the chaos long predicted by Inskip. A few weeks after the fall of Fort Sumter he entered the Union army (May, 1861) as a chaplain. That summer he was at Bull Run. For the next nine months his regiment remained encamped near Washington while first Irwin McDowell and then George McClellan organized and drilled the Army of the Potomac. Shortly after the rout at Bull Run, Mrs. Inskip had joined her husband at camp. Initially she helped with the wounded. She remained with her husband throughout the fall and winter helping promote the temporal comfort and the spiritual well-being of his regiment. Inskip's military career came to an end during the summer of 1862, when failing health forced his resignation from the chaplaincy.³³

Before the end of the Civil War the lives of the Inskips underwent a profound change as both received "entire sanctification." Both believed that through God's grace they had been purified by a "second blessing" and henceforth could lead new lives founded upon Christ's example and teaching. As with other Methodists, they had long pondered the meaning and significance of John Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection or holiness. In early life each had accepted Christ as a personal savior. Apparently the conversion experience satisfied them that through the righteousness of Christ they had received God's justification and thus had been redeemed of their sins. But in good Wesleyan fashion they regarded this as merely the beginning of their path to salvation.

As indicated earlier, Inskip frequently worried that while he had received justification, forgiveness of sins and regeneration, he had not gained sanctification. That is, aware of his own frailties he knew that too often he fell short of the perfect love demanded by Christ's two great commandments, Matthew 22:37-39. It mattered not to Inskip whether the spiritual state that permitted unqualified observance of these commandments was designated "sanctification," "perfection," "holiness," or some other term. The important thing was that a person with a state of mind and heart prepared to obey these commandments possessed a state of "true holiness."³⁴ In *Methodism Explained and Defended* he described the doctrine of holiness as peculiar to Methodism in that "we teach the possibility of man's attaining a state of grace in the present life, in which he will be free from sin."³⁵ Several times

³² McDonald and Searles, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-144; Inskip in Pepper, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

³⁴ Inskip, *Methodism Explored and Defended*, p. 61.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

Inskip appeared to feel that he had come close to experiencing this state of grace. But each time he returned to an awareness of being vulnerable to sin. In short, at the time of his chaplaincy with the Northern army, Inskip still sought, and his wife likewise, that "second work of grace" as espoused by John Wesley in his much discussed doctrine of entire sanctification.

The realities of war intensified and confirmed the Inskips in their search for a higher experience and the purity of perfect love. He threw himself with renewed zeal into the work of a pastorate in Brooklyn, 1864. She went to a camp meeting at Sing Sing filled with hope and faith that God would lead her to perfect love. On August 19, 1864, she rejoiced in the fulfillment of her faith with the experience of entire sanctification and the beginning of a new life.³⁶

At first her husband reacted with some skepticism. Perhaps, as a close associate suggested, he was "mortified" that Mrs. Inskip should obtain sanctification while he still sought it.³⁷ Perhaps he was not yet ready to accept the position that one instantaneously experienced Christian perfection by faith, a position long associated with Mrs. Phoebe Palmer, a prominent laywoman whose home in New York was the site of the well-known "Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness." Still Inskip had never considered it of great consequence to spend time arguing whether a state of "true holiness" could be obtained instantaneously or progressively. "Holiness is more a matter of experience and practice," he wrote, "than of theory and discussion."³⁸ This being the case, the change wrought in the life of Mrs. Inskip soon impressed him with the genuineness of her experience. He became convinced that it was in harmony with the word of God. Before long he felt a transformation within himself. Later he wrote, "Mrs. Inskip and I both attained (no, we received) the blessing of entire sanctification."³⁹ Henceforth he felt assured of his salvation. Temptation no longer troubled him, for now he had the power to resist it. At the top of each page in his journal he recorded these words, "*I am, O Lord, wholly and forever Thine!*"⁴⁰ Gradually the old impetuosity, the quick temper, the impatience with opposing views, gave way to greater self-control, tolerance toward others, and a gentleness of spirit that offered outward testimony to an inward transformation.

The belief in entire sanctification not only drew John and Martha Inskip closer to God, it seemed to fuse their lives into a remarkable oneness of spirit and purpose almost as though they had become a single entity.

³⁶ McDonald and Searles, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Inskip, *Methodism Explained and Defended*, p. 61.

³⁹ Inskip in Pepper, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴⁰ McDonald and Searles, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

The Inskips felt moved to offer frequent and public testimony to their experience. Soon they allied with Mrs. Palmer in her advocacy of special meetings for the promotion of Christian perfection. At the same time Inskip rejected the idea, attributed to Mrs. Palmer by some of her critics, that mere belief in the possession of sanctification sufficed to bring it. "In saying we are sanctified through faith," he declared, "it is not meant that we must believe we *are* sanctified in order *to be* sanctified. This is absurd." ⁴¹

In the summer of 1867 Inskip joined with William B. Osborn, presiding elder of the South Jersey Conference, in arranging for a "national camp meeting" at Vineland, New Jersey, for the purpose of arousing the Methodist Church and spreading the doctrine of holiness.⁴² The success of this venture, in which many professed a "second blessing," led to the formation of the National Camp Meeting Association for the promotion of Holiness, and John S. Inskip was chosen as its president. Under his aggressive and dynamic leadership, ably assisted by Alfred Cookman and William McDonald, the Association drew thousands of people to its annual meetings. Soon it became necessary to schedule additional meetings. At one of the regional meetings some people came in wagons a distance of 200 miles and one man, unable to afford a railway ticket, walked a hundred miles.⁴³

The "holiness movement" could have become a divisive force in Methodism, but the constructive leadership of Inskip and his associates prevented this.⁴⁴ They restrained the more radical and emotional tendencies of some followers and insured the continued friendliness of numerous bishops, both North and South. John and Martha Inskip believed most emphatically that the Methodist Church afforded the best instrument for the promotion of holiness.

In addition to his work as president of the Association and serving an appointment in the Baltimore Conference (1869-71), Inskip received numerous calls to serve as an evangelist. Convinced that God had called him to special work and that this necessitated a wider field than a regular pastorate, he took a supernumerary relation without appointment in 1871. With Mrs. Inskip at his side he began his evangelistic career on the Pacific Coast in a tour that

⁴¹ John Leland Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 113. In *Methodism Explained and Defended* he had said the best way to seek this great blessing was in "earnest and believing prayer," p. 62.

⁴² Timothy L. Smith, "The Theology and Practices of Methodism, 1876-1919" in *The History of American Methodism*, II, p. 612. At this time Inskip held a pastorate at the Greene Street Church in New York City and served as chairman of the Methodist preachers' meeting of that city.

⁴³ McDonald and Searles, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

⁴⁴ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 615.

carried them over 7,000 miles, involved over 150 public meetings, and produced hundreds of conversions and entire sanctification for many.

California presented a major challenge to the Inskips, for the churches there were reported to be in a low spiritual condition and worldliness ran rampant in the state. At the very first meeting in Sacramento rowdies pushed into the crowded tent and began interrupting and mocking the speakers. But Inskip demonstrated his masterful ability to control a vast crowd. Using a combination of firmness and kindness, he subdued the roughnecks and went on to conduct a successful crusade in the city.⁴⁵ Sacramento held special significance for Mrs. Inskip, because during the course of the crusade she was reunited with a long lost and wayward brother, Charles Foster.

The real test came in San Francisco, described to the Inskips as "the hardest spot in California."⁴⁶ Rough elements tried to disrupt the first meeting and could not be reached with reason and kindness. Inskip then displayed a toughness toward evil that could hardly have been expected by those who scorned his religion as synonymous with weakness. Turning to the audience, he asked for volunteers to help enforce the California law protecting religious assemblies. When several dozen men promptly stood up, the toughs were effectively squelched. By the time the Inskips moved on to Salt Lake City, the holiness movement had brought new life to many churches in California.

In the ensuing years Inskip presided over several national camp meetings and in between conducted numerous evangelistic meetings. Although hampered by ill-health, throat and lung trouble complicated by frequent colds, Mrs. Inskip accompanied her husband to most of these meetings and often conducted services of her own. In the mid-1870's they, along with William McDonald, responded to an invitation to bring the holiness message to Canada. And at the end of the decade they made their first evangelistic venture into the South with meetings in Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia. This was to be the region in which Mrs. Inskip would perform some of her most important work following the death of her husband.

On more than one occasion the Association received calls from the British Isles and other distant points. At first the leaders did not consider it feasible to meet this "Macedonian call." But when an old acquaintance wrote to Inskip from India, March 1, 1879, proposing an "around-the-world evangelistic tour with the tabernacle," plans were set in motion to send Inskip, McDonald, J. A.

⁴⁵ McDonald and Searles, *op. cit.*, pp. 226, 231.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

Wood, and their wives on such a tour.⁴⁷ Inskip had some initial reservations about his part in such an undertaking. He was beginning to feel the physical strain of a rigorous schedule, but more than that he was concerned about his wife's health. When he discussed the matter with her, however, she seemed to sense the divine hand in it and said emphatically, "'We shall go.'" ⁴⁸

Late in June, 1880, the party left New York for Liverpool. Thus Inskip returned to the land of his birth and the ancestral home of Methodism. Meetings were held in several different cities, but it seemed especially fitting to the evangelists that they carried the "gospel of full salvation" to Leeds, since it was here that the British Methodist Conference, in 1769 and under John Wesley's leadership, made the decision that sent Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore to America as missionaries.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, the climate proved detrimental to Mrs. Inskip's health and she required considerable medical treatment during their stay in England.

In mid-October, 1880, the evangelists left England bound for Bombay. Mrs. Inskip recovered her health sufficiently to play an active role in the holiness crusade in India. She took the initiative in organizing special meetings for children in Bombay, Allahabad, and Calcutta. At the latter place some girls from a missionary-established school were converted, and in subsequent years several became missionaries among their own people.⁵⁰ Upon leaving India the party split forces, with the McDonalds and Woods returning to England and the Inskips departing for Australia by way of Ceylon. Following more than two months intensive evangelistic activity in Australia the Inskips returned, exhausted but elated, to the United States and arrived at their home in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, in early summer, 1881.

Scarcely pausing to rest, the Inskips launched a new round of activities. Both attended a national camp meeting at Round Lake, New York, and then while he conducted a second meeting at Warsaw, Indiana, she remained in Ocean Grove and led some children's meetings.

In early autumn, 1881, they moved to Philadelphia in order to be near his work with *The Christian Standard*, which he had edited for several years. Both recognized the need for rest and a curtailment of activities. Although expecting to confine their evangelistic labor to the Philadelphia area, they acknowledged themselves in the hands of the Lord "to be used by him in any way and anywhere." ⁵¹

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 308. Author of the letter was W. B. Osborn, who had gone to India to become the presiding elder of the Bombay District, South India Conference.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

⁵⁰ *The Christian Standard*, July, 1886.

⁵¹ Mrs. Inskip's diary, October 4, 1881.

In moving to Philadelphia, Mrs. Inskip was especially thrilled to be near their grandson, John E. Inskip, soon to be married to Miss Emma S. Flock of Lansingburg, New York.⁵²

Inskip continued to respond to the many calls for assistance. By mid-year 1882 a grueling schedule of travel and meetings had left him physically broken and mentally exhausted, and they sought rest and quiet on a small farm in Chester County, Pennsylvania. For several months Mrs. Inskip, in addition to caring for her husband, continued his work in the church and at the office of the *Standard*.⁵³ By mid-summer 1883 he had recovered sufficiently for both to play active roles in the national camp meeting at Pitman Grove, New Jersey. His opening sermon, "Holiness to the Lord," provided the keynote for the meeting, and convinced his wife that he had received a "fresh anointing for the work."⁵⁴

Prudence demanded either retirement or a long period of rest and inactivity, but neither of the Inskips was so constituted. As long as there were sermons to be preached, papers to be published, sinners to be saved, and listeners eager to hear the "holiness" message, they plunged joyfully into the work. In the midst of plans to respond to an invitation from a church in Boston, he suffered a paralytic stroke, October 23, 1883.

For the next several weeks Mrs. Inskip watched and prayed day and night over her husband in his helpless state. Gradually he recovered enough to walk. She marveled that while he could not speak, he could sing and frequently broke forth with an appropriate favorite, such as "I'm Trusting Lord in Thee."⁵⁵ Both found sustenance in their religion. She prayed repeatedly that God's will be done:

All I want to know is God's will. If it will glorify "*Him*" more to have my husband afflicted to show how grace can triumph under this *very, very* great affliction, "*Amen and Amen.*" Dear Lord I only ask complete submission and physical strength to be able to nurse my dear one. The Lord wonderfully sustain *both of us*.⁵⁶

For his part Inskip accepted his lot with such calm resignation that it deeply impressed all who saw him. His communication through song proved especially touching, and one of his physicians remarked that he gained strength every time he visited the patient.⁵⁷

⁵² *Ibid.*, October, 1882.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, August, 1883.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, November 22, 1883.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, December 25, 1883.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, March 3, 1884; J. E. Searles, a member of the Board of Directors of the National Publishing Association, wrote to Mrs. Inskip, March 4, saying: "His cheer-

Early in the new year he suffered a relapse, and at the end of the first week in March seemed to sense that the end was near. As he sang his last hymn on earth, "Sweet By and By," he clasped his wife close to him, took her hand in his, raised them and shouted his last words, "*Victory, Triumph, Triumph.*"⁵⁸ Soon afterward he lapsed into unconsciousness and a few hours later quietly passed away, March 7, 1884. In her moment of sorrow and loneliness the widow sought strength in Jesus and found comfort in recalling the full and happy life she and her husband had enjoyed together, "We truly lived for *each other*, and '*work for God.*'"⁵⁹

With the passing of John Inskip the holiness movement lost one of its most dynamic leaders. This magnetic preacher had brought thousands of people to the altar as they sought pardon and purity. One colleague considered him the chief attraction at the national camp meetings and another thought God would have to call several people to do the work accomplished by this "one, wonderful, many-sided man."⁶⁰

As for Mrs. Inskip, her "Earthly light" had gone out, leaving only her joy in Christ.⁶¹ She prayed that God might direct her in all things. And as she received numerous requests to hold consecration (altar) services, to conduct children's meetings, and to take a role in the national camp meeting, it seemed clear that God meant part of her husband's mantle to fall on her.⁶²

In meeting her commitments Mrs. Inskip appeared in many churches and camp grounds that had been served by her husband. There was mingled joy and sadness on these occasions. In many places she still sensed the strong presence of John Inskip. Most meetings ended in triumph with moving altar experiences as people knelt in prayer and sought heart purity. But in a few instances

ful, happy state of mind is a comfort to us all,'" quoted in Pepper, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10; Mrs. Lidie H. Kenner, writing in the *Ocean Grove Record*, reprinted in Pepper, *op. cit.*, p. 31, noted that several people referred to the visits as a "high privilege" because it "seemed so near heaven" to be there with Brother Inskip who "was always on the mountain top of ecstatic vision." The Inskip's grandson repented of his sins a few days after his grandfather's death and said that the patient and holy triumph of his grandfather had made a great impression on him. To Mrs. Inskip this was an answer to her prayers and evidence that her husband's suffering and death had brought forth some good, diary, March 15, 1884.

⁵⁸ Diary, March 6-7, 1884. They had returned to Ocean Grove late in 1883.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, March 9, 1884. Last rites were held in Asbury Methodist Church, New York City, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery in that city. According to *The New York Times*, March 12, 1884, p. 8, approximately one hundred of his fellow clergymen came to pay their last respects.

⁶⁰ Pepper, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 45. The two men alluded to were E. M. Levy and Pepper.

⁶¹ Diary, April 14, 1884.

⁶² *Ibid.*, November 1, 1886.

Mrs. Inskip was left with a troubled feeling that times and the church were moving in a perilous direction. Some preachers tried to reach others without ever experiencing that "endowment of power" so basic to the holiness people. Instead of preaching "salvation sermons" some ministers hailed education as the great antidote to the growing skepticism of the times. After hearing one such sermon, near her childhood home in Maryland, Mrs. Inskip confided in her diary:

My prayer was "Dear Lord." Show the "*Ministers*" and *Members* of our "beloved church," where their strength lay. *Not in education* (which is good in its place) but *inward* and *outward holiness*. The Endowment of real *spiritual power*.⁶³

Though often lonely, Mrs. Inskip kept busy in the months following her husband's death. When pressed with care and in need of assurance, she often dreamed of her late husband. As she saw it, this was God's means of strengthening her. In one such dream her husband appeared with unusual lifelike clarity. He placed his arms around her and as they knelt together he began to pray:

Lord give "*my dear wife*" grace and strength and faith and patience and endurance and wisdom and every qualification necessary to endure the great trial she has been called to pass through and is now passing through. Give Thyself more precious to her and wonderfully sustain and comfort her.⁶⁴

A few months after her husband's death Mrs. Inskip sold her country home and moved to Ocean Grove. At the same time her grandson, who with his wife and two young sons had resided with her, moved to Troy, New York, to join his father-in-law in business. In Ocean Grove she made her home with a Mrs. Thorne, who had purchased the old Inskip property and converted it into a boarding house. Mrs. Inskip had scarcely settled in before the local minister appointed her to take charge of two church classes—one adult, the other a children's class. She met the latter after school, opened the services with singing, studied a portion of scripture, then capped the meeting with testimony, prayer, and more singing.⁶⁵ The adult meeting frequently attracted visitors from other denominations.

In addition to her work in Ocean Grove, Mrs. Inskip filled numerous other engagements during 1885, including a young people's

⁶³ *Ibid.*, June 15, 1884. Near the end of 1884, she helped conduct a revival meeting in New York and she noted that it was a "hard field of labor," for the love of many appeared to have grown cold, entries of December 1 and December 10, 1884.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, August 17, 1884.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, January 23, 1885.

meeting in Augusta, Georgia, and a lengthy revival meeting in Wilmington, Delaware. She returned to Ocean Grove soon after the beginning of the new year, 1886, hoping to rest quietly through the winter. But it was not to be. A "mission" church in nearby West Grove had attempted a revival without noticeable success. They had hoped to reach the unchurched, the Sabbath-breakers, and the drunkards. Mrs. Inskip was prevailed upon to lend her assistance and she soon turned it into an old fashioned revival. Though weary at the outset, she seemed to gain in strength as the meetings progressed and scores of people were converted. One observer likened it to an "inundation" reminiscent of revivals forty years earlier.⁶⁶ And it reminded another of the work of her late husband:

At each service all the seats and every inch of standing room have been occupied; platform, altar and choir have been all full, while on Sabbath nights especially, hundreds leave unable to gain admission. . . . The revival has changed the face of the whole community and the wilderness rejoices and blossoms as the rose. The continuance of Mrs. Inskip's health and strength through all this protracted strain upon her, is very remarkable. In the midst of it all she is fresh and vigorous, and exultingly joyful, reminding us of her ascended husband in the fore-front of a National Camp-meeting, leading the sacramental hosts to victory.⁶⁷

Among the other activities of Mrs. Inskip during these years was the fulfillment of a pledge made upon her return from India. She had promised to raise \$10,000 for a building for the Calcutta Girl's School, a sum to be matched by the British Government. She completed the task in July, 1886, when she received a check for \$100 from a man in Boston along with this note: "May heaven abundantly reward you for all your pains-taking and self-denying work in this and so many other directions."⁶⁸

In the winter of 1886-87, Mrs. Inskip turned her attention to a new field when she joined some Ocean Grove friends near Jacksonville, Florida. In the 1880's this area began to expand in population and to experience significant growth in trade, industry, and the development of orange groves. At the same time it benefited from the increasing desire of northerners to seek a milder clime. Pablo Beach, now Jacksonville Beach, gained recognition as one of the finest beaches in the world. Jacksonville was well-served

⁶⁶ *Ocean Grove Record*, February, 1886.

⁶⁷ *The Christian Standard*, February, 1886.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, August, 1886. The donor was Jacob Sleeper. At a later date she raised a scholarship in memory of her husband for the Boy's School at Lucknow, India, *Christian Advocate*, November 29, 1888. Mrs. Inskip had a special feeling for India and it seems likely (from sentiments expressed in her diary) that had she been younger and in better health, she would have worked in the mission field there.

by railroads, river steamers, and ocean lines. The area of Arlington, across the St. Johns River and lying between Jacksonville and the ocean, seemed destined to share in this growth. A number of orange groves had been established there, and some northerners began to make winter homes in the area. A railroad linked Arlington to the beaches and a dock afforded steamer connections with Jacksonville. A developer, who had laid out a little village in a part of the greater Arlington area which he called Egleston Heights, had persuaded some of the Ocean Grove Methodists to settle there. It was these friends, including Mrs. Thorne, who welcomed Mrs. Inskip to Florida in December, 1886.

Arlington seemed the ideal place to gain needed rest and a renewal of physical strength. She was captivated by the beauty of the area with its orange groves, huge oak trees dripping with moss, holly hanging with red berries, and lush semi-tropical growth. But though she hoped to rest, she prayed for an opportunity to do "some little thing" for God.⁶⁹ She soon found the latter when, in the absence of a church in the immediate area, she conducted services (prayer, singing, and testimonials) in private homes. On several occasions she traveled some four miles by cart or buggy to assist at a "colard" [sic] church in an area known as Lone Star. In attending a Methodist conference at Trinity Church, Jacksonville, she met several ministers who said that her husband had been the "instrument used by God in their salvation."⁷⁰ The president of Cookman's Institute, a Methodist-sponsored school affiliated with the Freedman's Aid Society, enlisted her help with a revival at the college. Mrs. Inskip found many of the students spiritually responsive and anxious to get right with God. In future visits to the campus it would thrill her to witness both their continued spiritual growth and their determination to prepare themselves for a useful life.⁷¹

Nor did she limit her work to the Jacksonville area, for she journeyed southward to conduct revivals at Silver Spring Park and DeLand. At the latter place she met a Professor Carson of the DeLand College (now Stetson University) who described himself as "one of your boys," explaining that he had been converted at one of her children's meetings. To Mrs. Inskip's great joy she found him working among the students and pointing them to Jesus.⁷²

In the spring of 1887, Mrs. Inskip returned to her "Sweet home by the Sea," Ocean Grove. For the next several months she mixed pleasant visits with family and friends with a heavy schedule of

⁶⁹ Diary, December 13, 1886.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, January 11, 1887.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, February 27, 1888.

⁷² *Ibid.*, February 13, 1887.

meetings extending over a five-state area. She preached to an overflow crowd on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the National Camp Meeting Association.⁷³ She seemed unable to resist the steady demand for assistance with revivals and other services until exhaustion finally caught up with her. The resulting illness delayed her return to the South until mid-January, 1888.

As Mrs. Inskip arrived in Eggleston, she revealed her total dedication with these words:

I am looking to my precious savior to give me "*physical strength*," and if he does it shall be given to him in trying to bring souls to know him in his power to save, dear Jesus use me in any way for thy glory.⁷⁴

Recovery of strength came slowly but this did not deter her from working to the limit of her capacity. Even when forced to limit her role in services, she still thrilled at the opportunity of joining Florida friends at the altar and in love feasts.

Mrs. Inskip became convinced that God meant for her to construct a church in the growing Arlington area. Upon her return North for the summer she began to solicit money for that purpose. Many friends worried that her health made it unwise for her even to go South in the winter of 1888-89, much less undertake such a project. She did not share these doubts, for an intense faith told her that the hand of the Lord was surely with her.⁷⁵

Construction of the church was delayed by an outbreak of yellow fever in the late summer of 1888. This soon reached epidemic proportions and virtually isolated Jacksonville for some time. But in the meantime Mrs. Inskip rested and found other work to do. She began the journey south early in the new year stopping for visits with old friends in Augusta, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina. In the former place she was persuaded to hold several services that produced dozens of altar experiences and numerous conversions.⁷⁶ In both places she found the fruits of the joint labor with her husband nine years earlier. Organizations for the promotion of holiness had remained active with many who had entered "heart purity" in 1880 continuing in the foremost ranks.⁷⁷

By the time Mrs. Inskip reached Jacksonville the quarantine had been lifted and she immediately plunged into the building project. The last \$100 needed to complete the building and leave the church free from debt came from her own limited funds. She visited every home within a radius of several miles in order to acquaint people

⁷³ *Ibid.*, August, 1887.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, January 19, 1888.

⁷⁵ Letter to the *Christian Standard*, February 15, 1889.

⁷⁶ *Augusta Chronicle*, January 15, 1889.

⁷⁷ *Diary*, January, 1889.

with the church and especially to secure the attendance of children at the Sunday school.⁷⁸ The community responded enthusiastically and many people expressed gratitude to her for providing them with their first opportunity for a church relationship in several years. She always responded that all praise and glory should go to Jesus and that the Holy Spirit had prompted the Egleston developer, O. H. P. Champlin, to offer land for the church in the first place.⁷⁹ Friends met to share in the work of clearing ground, setting out orange and other trees, and planting roses, honeysuckle, and tropical plants. The result was a lovely setting for a beautiful church.⁸⁰

The completed structure, built on a site near what is now the campus of Jacksonville University, was dedicated March 24, 1889. Bishop Willard F. Mallalieu, who presided at the dedication service, observed the spirit of those present and considered it fitting that the community chose to name the church in honor of Mrs. Inskip's late husband. The bishop, one of the Methodist Episcopal Church leaders desirous of maintaining the link between Methodism and the holiness movement, soon urged Mrs. Inskip to repeat her church-building activities in other areas of Florida.⁸¹ Of all the churches and benevolent enterprises that might be attributed to her, however, the Inskip Memorial Church in Egleston, Florida, proved to be one of the most enduring monuments to her work.⁸²

The months following completion of the church were eventful and happy for Mrs. Inskip. In addition to the usual involvement with Methodist and holiness activities, such as church services, class meetings, love feasts, revivals, camp meetings, and children's meetings, she found time and energy to support the prohibition movement in Pennsylvania. For much of this period she enjoyed better than normal health. She was prayerfully grateful for this renewal of

⁷⁸ *Christian Standard*, April, 1889.

⁷⁹ *Diary*, December 25, 1889.

⁸⁰ *Florida Times-Union*, March 23, 1889.

⁸¹ Letter to Mrs. Inskip, March 25, 1889.

⁸² The church, eventually renamed the Arlington Methodist Church, long served as a focal point in community life and for years was the only church in the area. As the size and condition of the community fluctuated, so did the life of the church. Following World War II, Arlington became one of the fastest growing parts of burgeoning Jacksonville and the church grew with it. On the occasion of the 75th anniversary (1964) its pastor, Dr. Shuler Peele, reported a total membership of over 1,700. By this time the links with its "holiness" background could be found only among an occasional elderly member with memories and beliefs rooted in the church's early history, such as the late J. R. Cordell, Sr., who shared his thoughts and an insight into holiness thinking, as well as Mrs. Inskip's diary, with the author. Nonetheless, the founder's prayer surely had been answered: ". . . and may it be the birthplace of a multitude of precious souls is my earnest prayer," diary, March 24, 1889.

physical and spiritual strength to do the work she loved so dearly.⁸³ Considering the state of her health it had seemed unlikely she would long survive her husband. A half dozen years later it began to appear that the Lord had answered the prayers of her many friends and had given her new strength to continue working in the "vineyard."⁸⁴

In the fall of the year 1890, Mrs. Inskip's life and career appeared to enter a new phase, for she remarried. Ashley L. S. Bateman, a widower, was a native of New England who had entered the Methodist ministry and became an itinerant in Florida. In the spring of 1889 he had been appointed supply pastor to the Inskip Memorial Church. Mrs. Inskip soon perceived him to be a consecrated and thoroughly dedicated man. They worked together harmoniously not only in the Eggleston community but in mission activity in neighboring settlements that lacked church facilities.⁸⁵ Mutual friends, taking note of their compatibility and growing regard for each other, began to speculate on a possible marriage. Rumor gave way to fact when on September 2, 1890, the couple was married in Ocean Grove. It seemed symbolically fitting that the ceremony was performed at sunrise. Mrs. Inskip's grandson, other relatives, and the Champlins of Florida witnessed the service performed by John Thompson of Philadelphia, a long time friend of the Inskips.⁸⁶

When the newlyweds returned to Florida, he set about building a parsonage near the church. She readied plans to construct a new church in another Florida community. But the newly formed ministerial team was destined to be short lived. She became ill and died at their home in Eggleston Heights, December 26, 1890.⁸⁷

A look at the lives of John S. and Martha J. Inskip illustrates the remarkable work that can be accomplished by a dedicated ministerial couple. Working as a team they complemented each other perfectly. In the early years her more calm demeanor acted as a needed balance to his more impetuous nature. At the same time they were in complete agreement on the great social and religious issues of the time. From the beginning her role was not confined to that of wife, mother, and helpmate to her husband in his career. She might be called upon to play the organ or lead the singing, but she soon found her own special niche in Sunday school, class meeting, and above all else in work with children and youth. Many years later she recalled how much she loved the combination

⁸³ *Diary*, January 1, 1890.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, April, 1890.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, January 6, 1890; April 28, 1890.

⁸⁶ *Ocean Grove Record*, September 6, 1890.

⁸⁷ *Florida Times-Union*, December 27, 1890.

of household work and church work.⁸⁸ Likewise he loved his work and was a devoted family man. Even at the busiest point in his career as a leader in the National Association he found time to enjoy the company of his grandson and the latter's family. Religion evoked no stern and sober mood in the Inskips. On the contrary it generated an air of estatic hope and joyous fulfillment that, in combination with their tender love for each other, served to lift minds and spirits of all around them.

At the height of their joint ministerial career, they carried the message of Christian perfection throughout the United States and into other lands. Colleagues often considered the powerful prayers and persuasive preaching of Inskip as the main feature of the camp meetings, but they readily acknowledged the importance and effectiveness of Mrs. Inskip in leading the children's section. Together they touched and shaped the lives of thousands of people. Through their efforts old churches were given new life and new churches came to birth. And since both believed scriptural holiness to be the essence of Methodism, wherever they worked there was a close relationship between the "holiness movement" and the Methodist Church.

⁸⁸ Diary, September, 1887.