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The Doctrine of Christian Perfection in the Theology of Daniel Steele

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THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION IN THE THEOLOGY
OF DANIEL STEELE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the annals of church history there have been many clergymen faithful to the preaching of the Biblical doctrine of holiness. Of this group, certain ones have excelled and stood forth as being especially gifted and used to proclaim God's message of full salvation. One such person, so gifted and so used, was Daniel Steele, a Methodist pastor, evangelist and university professor. Along with his many preaching and teaching duties, he wrote prolifically, leaving a great wealth of high quality literature in the field of holiness. Though many of his works have been out of print for many years, many old copies remain in circulation and some of his books are being reprinted. This fact witnesses to the importance and relevancy of Steele's contribution to the promotion of the doctrine of Christian Perfection, both for his day and the present.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. This study had a threefold objective, (1) to set forth Steele's position on the doctrines with which he dealt in his writings; (2) to find, if possible, the central doctrine upon which his theology is based; and (3) to systematize Steele's theology on the basis of this central doctrine.

II. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Steele stands out as one of the leading scholars of his day and a champion of the Wesleyan-Arminian theological position. His writings are read and quoted by many clergymen and his influence lives on by this means to the present, though he died in 1914. He wrote widely in the field of Christian doctrine, yet not endeavoring to systematize his own works. No one else has ever presented Steele's position and ideas on the doctrines with which he was concerned. By so doing it is hoped that it will be helpful to all who read this work to have a better understanding of Steele's works. The scholarship revealed in his writings makes them of lasting value and warrants a study of this nature, hence the justification of this study.

III. SOURCE MATERIAL

The primary source material consisted of the actual writings of Steele. His books are listed as follows: A Defense of Christian Perfection; Antinomianism Revived; Difficulties Removed From the Way of Holiness; Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles; Half Hours With Saint Paul; Jesus Exultant; Love Enthroned; Milestone Papers; Steele's Answers; and The Gospel of the Comforter. Also, much use was made of the periodical, The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness in which Steele conducted a weekly question and answer section and frequently a separate article. These articles appeared in the periodical for the approximate years of 1872-1912. The writer has had access to

most all of the periodicals for this period of years. The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness was published monthly for the approximate years of 1872-1880 and bi-monthly for the approximate years of 1880-1890. From 1890 on, it was published weekly. Steele had at least one article in most every issue and sometimes two.

Steele co-authored two books. They are Binney's Theological Compend Improved and The People's New Testament. The contents of these books have been read, but have not been included in the report, as it is difficult to differentiate Steele's material from that of Amos Binney, the co-author.

IV. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

In order to provide a proper setting, a study was made of the period of time in which Steele ministered. This part of the study was limited to (1) a brief biographical sketch of Steele's life; (2) a review of the history of the Methodist church; (3) a brief history of the doctrine of Christian perfection of which Steele was an ardent promoter and a review of the various trends and movements of theological thought during the period of 1820-1900. This information appears in chapter two.

The report includes a thorough study of all the obtainable writings of Steele. They were all read at least twice. The first reading served to locate and record where his articles were found in the periodicals and gave an over-all view of his writings. From this

reading the central doctrine around which his theology was structured was determined. The second reading consisted of selecting the material of relevancy to the study and the taking of appropriate notes. This material was then analyzed and classified into the body of the thesis proper.

Chapter three contains Steele's idea of God. His teachings about the three persons of the Trinity have been included in this chapter. In chapter four the teaching of Steele in regard to sin and man was discussed. Sin was seen to be an inward tendency as well as an outward act in man, therefore needing the atoning work provided by God through Jesus Christ. Man was seen to be a created free moral agent and the recipient of God's provision of redemption. Chapter five contains the experience of Christian perfection itself as it is effected in the lives of those who believe in Christ. Chapter six reports Steele's teaching relative to the church and the part it held in the preparation of the believer for heaven. Also, in chapter six Steele's views as to the doctrine of last things were included concluding the presentation of Steele's thought. This is followed by the writer's summary and conclusions in chapter seven.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DANIEL STEELE

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DANIEL STEELE

I. BIOGRAPHY OF DANIEL STEELE

Daniel Steele was born October 5, 1824 at Windham, New York.¹ Nothing is known of his boyhood days; however he was converted to Christ at the age of seventeen, at which time he began his long Christian pilgrimage.²

Steele graduated from Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut in 1848 with a Bachelor of Arts degree.³ It was while there, in his junior year, that he received university honors along with two other students. One of the other students was B. T. Roberts, later to become founder of the Free Methodist Church. The occasion for the award was the "Junior Exhibition" orations. Steele's was selected as one of the three outstanding ones presented; his topic was "The Moral, the Perfection of the Intellectual".⁴ Following his graduation he continued at Wesleyan University as an instructor from 1848-1850 and worked toward his Master's degree, which he received in 1851. In 1868 he received a Doctor's degree from the same institution.⁵

¹Albert Nelson Marquis, Who's Who In America (Chicago: A. N. Marquis and Company, 1914), VIII, p. 2223.

²C. J. Fowler and G. A. McLaughlin, editors, "Dr. Daniel Steele," Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, New Series XXX (July 4, 1912), 8.

³Marquis, loc. cit.

⁴Leslie R. Marston, From Age to Age A Living Witness (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1960), p. 174.

⁵Marquis, loc. cit.

Steele was married to Harriet Binney August 8, 1850. She was the daughter of Reverend Amos Binney with whom Steele co-authored two books.⁶

In the same year he was married, Steele was ordained into the Methodist Episcopal ministry. He served the following charges during his life:

Fitchburg, 1850, Leonminster, 1851-2, Lynn, 1854-5, Boston, 1856-7, Malden, 1858-9, Springfield, 1860-1, . . . Boston, 1872, Auburndale, 1873-4, Lynn, 1875-8, Salem, 1878-9, Peabody, 1880-3, Reading, 1884-7, Boston, 1886-8.⁷

Steele entered into the experience of entire sanctification on November 17, 1870.⁸ From this time forward he championed this doctrine in all of his educational, administrative and literary work.⁹

In 1871 he was elected to be the first president of Syracuse University and served in this capacity for only a brief time. After a number of years in the pastorate, he became professor of New Testament Greek at Boston University in 1884. From 1886 to 1889 he taught systematic theology in addition to New Testament Greek at the same institution.¹⁰

The following is a list of the published books of Steele:¹¹

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Daniel Steele, Milestone Papers (Minneapolis 20, Minn.: Bethany Fellowship, n.d.), p. 241.

⁹Timothy L. Smith, Ph.D., Called Unto Holiness (Kansas City, Mo.: Nazarene Publishing House, 1963), p. 19.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Marquis, loc. cit.

Commentary on Joshua -- 1873
Binney's Theological Compend Improved -- 1874
Love Enthroned -- 1875
Milestone Papers -- 1878
Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers -- 1891
Half Hours With Saint Paul -- 1895
Defense of Christian Perfection -- 1896
Gospel of the Comforter -- 1897
Jesus Exultant -- 1899
Antinomianism Revived -- 1899
Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles -- 1901
Steele's Answers -- 1912

In addition to the books he wrote, Steele contributed regularly to periodical literature. On May 27, 1897 he began conducting a "question box" that appeared in the Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, weekly.¹² He continued this article through the early part of 1912.

Sometime during the year of 1880, Steele suffered an illness that stopped his work for a time. It was brought on by overwork and exhaustion. From this experience he gives a word of caution to others who may be tempted to do the same. It reveals also his ability and willingness to learn from past mistakes.

The experience of love made perfect is an impulse to incessant work; not as some vainly say, an inclination to the lounge and rocking chair. My error should be a beacon to others. I felt that I could not rest, but must be constantly proclaiming with voice and type this full salvation. After eight years of vacationless speaking, public Bible readings and writing sermons, tracts, commentaries and books, some of which are published and others in manuscript, I find I was driving at such a speed that my axles were ablaze, and my chariot in danger of being consumed before I had reached the goal. It is good to be zealous, but not wise to let the zeal of the Lord's house eat us up, yet this

¹²Steele, "Our Question Box," Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, New Series XV (May 27, 1897), 8.

is better than rest. But there is a medium between these extremes. It's the business of sanctified common sense to find this middle way and walk therein.¹³

It was not in the character of Steele to shirk duties which were unpleasant nor that he disliked. Being led by the Spirit to a certain task, he set himself to the accomplishment of it. For example, some of his writings exposed the errors and false teachings of contemporary clergymen. He found no real pleasure in such writing, but felt led to do it for the cause of Christ. Always, however, he endeavored to do it in the spirit of Christian love, never in a derogatory manner.¹⁴

Steele labored constantly under great burden of soul to see souls saved and entirely sanctified. This is plainly revealed from his testimony after eight years of the sanctified life.

I long to see sinners convicted and converted under every sermon. My desire for the salvation of sinners is at times so intense that I could willingly die to save a soul. Yet while some are saved there is no general sweep of converting power . . . The recruiting officer's work is more showy and noisy, and for that reason he seems to be doing more for the salvation of the republic. May the Lord Jesus help me to do the work which is most needful for His army, and be content to have my less obtrusive usefulness undervalued by men, so long as it is prized by the great Captain.¹⁵

In the closing years of his life, Steele was unable to see well enough to read. He was compelled by physical feebleness to spend half

¹³Steele, "Ten Years In Canaan," Advocate of Christian Holiness, (December, 1880), 266.

¹⁴Steele, Defense of Christian Perfection (Cincinnati: Cranston and Curtiss, 1896), pp. 5-8; Steele, Antinomianism Revived (Boston, Mass.: McDonald, Gill and Co., 1887), pp. 29, 30.

¹⁵Steele, "Eight Years on the Witness Stand," Advocate of Christian Holiness, (April, 1879), 75.

of his twenty four hours each day in bed. He kept his mind and spiritual life fresh by quoting to himself scripture passages, devout hymns and spending many hours in prayer each day.¹⁶ His victorious spirit is revealed in a letter sent to his annual conference when he was eighty-seven years old.

Dear Sons and Brethren: The past year--the seventieth of my Christian pilgrimage--is the most blessed of my life, notwithstanding the increasing feebleness. If John's wish for his beloved Gaius, that above all things he might prosper and be in health even as his soul prospered, were fulfilled in my case, I should be as robust as any athlete.¹⁷

Steele passed from this life September 2, 1914, being nearly ninety years of age.¹⁸

II. THE TIMES OF STEELE

From the beginning to the end of his church life Steele remained a member of the Methodist Church. He was faithful to its historic doctrines, especially to the proclamation of the doctrine of Christian perfection that characterized early Methodism. It seemed proper in this chapter to give a brief history of the Methodist Church during the period of Steele's active ministry and a brief survey of the trend of the church to depart from the doctrine of Christian perfection.

History of Methodism, 1820-1900. Since Steele was a notable

¹⁶G.A. McLaughlin and C. J. Fowler, editors, loc. cit.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Albert Nelson Marquis, op. cit., X p. 2572.

educator, it would be well to look at Methodism's endeavors in this area. The great college building era for the Methodist Episcopal Church was the twenty year period between 1820 and 1840.¹⁹ Methodism's first permanent educational institutions were seminaries. The first one established was Wesleyan Academy at Newmarket, New Hampshire in 1817. This institution relocated at Wilbraham, Massachusetts in 1825.²⁰ Cazenovia was established by the Genesee Conference in 1824.²¹

During the 1830's Wesleyan University was founded.²² It was here that Steele attended and received both his Bachelor of Arts and Masters degree. He also taught at Wesleyan University.²³ Other Methodist institutions founded in the 1830's were "Randolph Macon College, Virginia; Dickinson and Allegheny Colleges in Pennsylvania; McKendree College in Illinois; Indiana Asbury University in Indiana; Emory College in Georgia; and Emory and Henry College in southwestern Virginia."²⁴

¹⁹William Warren Sweet, Methodism In American History (Chicago: The Methodist Book Concern, 1933), p. 211.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Marquis, loc. cit.

²⁴Sweet, loc. cit.

The period from 1840 to the Civil War also saw the rising of many important Methodist institutions. Most important in the North were Ohio Wesleyan University, 1844; Northwestern University, 1851; Iowa Wesleyan, 1854 and Baker University, 1858. In the South the major educational institutions established were Duke University, in 1851; Wafford College, Spartansburg, South Carolina, 1854; and Central College, Fayette, Missouri, 1855.²⁵

Church schism. Steele was ordained to the Methodist ministry in 1850.²⁶ It was at this period the slavery issue was facing the church and had already caused the schism bringing into existence the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Methodist Episcopal Church North. The division took place June 17, 1845.²⁷ Though not an ordained minister at that time, Steele was no doubt aware of the issues bringing about the split.

Methodism and the Civil War. Probably no other war involved and effected the churches as did the Civil War. Methodism was no exception. The slavery issue was the cause for the split between Northern and Southern branches of the Methodist church. The long argument over slavery had served to prepare the churches to take a definite stand in

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Marquis, loc. cit.

²⁷Sweet, op. cit., pp. 252, 253.

the section they found themselves when the Civil War began.²⁸ In the churches of both the North and the South, religion was crowded by patriotism.²⁹ Many ministers were active in recruiting men to fight. Some of them were the first to sign up and serve as chaplains.³⁰

The Methodist Episcopal Church South suffered more from the four years war than did the North. In membership there was a loss of over 100,000 and a loss or decrease of 342 ministers. Their publishing house had been seized by federal authorities and their property damaged. Communications between the home land and missionaries to China were cut off and Indian missions in the South were virtually destroyed.³¹

Both branches of the church kept up publication during the war, reaching a total circulation of at least 400,000 weekly. The two outstanding non-official papers of the North were Zion's Herald of Boston and The Methodist of New York. The Western Christian Advocate and The Central were papers published by the Methodist Episcopal Church South.³²

The development of contributions to charities increased on a large scale during the Civil War period. All benevolent enterprises of the Methodist Church reported a steady and notable increase. Comparison of giving shows a better than double the amount of increase between

²⁸Ibid., p. 278.

²⁹Ibid., p. 283.

³⁰Ibid., p. 285.

³¹Ibid., p. 289.

³²Ibid., pp. 290, 291.

1860 and 1865. This is attributed to the great emphasis on patriotism.³³

Period of reconstruction, 1865-1880. Though the war was over there was still much friction between the two bodies of Methodism. Emotions were deeply involved and tension still existed that could not be eliminated in a short period. Attention was given by both churches to the reconstruction of the Methodist Church in the South.³⁴ In the North there was some discussion about reuniting the two bodies as the cause for division no longer existed. Pro and con arguments were voiced from each side.³⁵

The activity of the Church North in the South served to stimulate the Southern Church in the rehabilitation of their disordered and depleted churches. By 1869 there had been ten new Annual Conferences formed. Improvements were made in church polity. Both churches gave attention to the education and the provision of religious facilities for the Negro.³⁶

In the five year period following the Civil War three educational institutions were established by Methodists in the North, Drew Theological Seminary, 1867; Boston University, 1869 and Syracuse University, 1870.³⁷ Steele became the first president of Syracuse University

³³Ibid., p. 297.

³⁴Ibid., p. 305.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 305-307.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 308-312.

³⁷Ibid., p. 318.

and spent several years as a professor at Boston University.³⁸

The years of reconstruction were years of moral collapse in business and government. Men of low standards were in public office and large businesses used the public for their own financial benefit. This was prevalent across the country. Even dishonest business practices were present in the church. Certain clergymen of the Methodist Book Concern fell into the pit of gaining dishonest profits for themselves. When discovered, it stirred up controversy in the church until the situation was rectified.³⁹

The period of reconstruction was also a period of foreign missionary expansion for the Methodist Church. Work was begun in Italy with headquarters at Rome in 1872. A work in Mexico was begun by Doctor and Mrs. William Butler in 1873. Methodist work in Japan was started in the same year by Robert S. Maclay. These were missions of the Church North. The Church South was also extending itself to the foreign field. In 1874 it entered Brazil and the work grew to be a conference by 1886. It began a work in Mexico in 1873 and it also became a conference in 1886. Other missions were established: Japan, 1886; Korea, 1897; Cuba, 1898, and in Africa in 1914.⁴⁰

Methodism in 1880-1900. By 1880 the Methodist Church was evenly distributed throughout the land. Institutions of learning had been established in every area numbering eleven theological seminaries,

³⁸Marquis, loc. cit.

³⁹Sweet, op. cit., pp. 319-324.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 329-331.

forty-four colleges and universities and one hundred thirty seminaries and women's schools. The Methodist Missionary Society had been established maintaining both home and foreign missions.⁴¹

In spite of Methodism's great advancement and growth, many were becoming concerned about changes in spiritual emphasis they observed taking place. Methodism was becoming more of a mechanism than a living organism. It was becoming more and more wealthy which contributed to its downward trend.⁴²

In this period of the eighteen eighties and nineties strong protests were heard as the church became more and more dominated by men of wealth and controlled by secular methods. The complaints were the "heart religion" was disappearing. Services were becoming more formal and preaching less fervid. Many rose up in protest against this trend.⁴³

In spite of the trends cited above, many organizations of Methodism had their beginnings in the period from 1880-1900. The Women's Home Missionary Society was formed in 1880. It eventually assisted the needy and destitute women in all sections of the land. Also, the Epworth League came to be an accepted organization for Methodist youth for purposes of fellowship and religious training.⁴⁴

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 333-334.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 335-337.

⁴³Ibid., p. 341.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 345-350.

It was during this period that there was a reaction against the extreme individualism that had previously characterized Methodism. It moved from a heavy emphasis upon individual salvation to reforms in the social and industrial world. The social teachings of the Bible were studied and reinterpreted. As a result the "institutional" church came into being. Those of the conservative mind voiced strong opposition, feeling that the church was neglecting its rightful purpose of preaching salvation to the individual.⁴⁵

Steele was very much aware of these movements and changes in his church. Though grieved at the direction the church was going, he never left it but continued his membership and faithfulness to the Methodist Church until his death. He believed that the church could be saved from the course it was taking by a personal pentecost in the heart of every one of its members. This is revealed in a letter written by Steele in his 87th year to the New England Annual Conference of which he was a member. This letter is quoted in part.

I am deeply interested in the spiritual prosperity of our Methodism, whose church policy just now is like the "ship driven by a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon," in uncharted seas, when the crew and passengers are proposing to cast out, with their own hands, the tackling of the ship to keep her afloat. Now, I believe, or rather I realize, that there is available an abundant supply of oil to calm the boisterous waves, thus preventing the loss of anything valuable in our polity. It may be needless to say that I refer to the fullness of the Holy Spirit, available to all the members of our church.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 357-361.

⁴⁶G.A. McLaughlin and C. J. Fowler, loc. cit.

The Doctrine of Christian Perfection in Methodism, 1820-1900.

Steele was an ardent advocate of the doctrine of Christian perfection. All of his writings were aimed at promoting this doctrine. In order to see Steele in his own age, it was necessary to review the progress of this doctrine in Methodism during the nineteenth century. From the beginning, the characteristic emphasis of Methodism was the doctrine of Christian perfection. This emphasis continued as it was transplanted to America in the period 1768-1784.⁴⁷ However, Timothy Smith in his book, Revivalism and Social Reform, points out that even at this early stage in American Methodism, the doctrine did not occupy a chief place in Methodist preaching, although it was accepted.⁴⁸ Even so, there was a renewed emphasis of Christian perfection as a vital and experiential factor during the Second Great Awakening in the early 1800's.⁴⁹

In the years following the Second Great Awakening the doctrine suffered a decline. Evidence of this is seen in the action of the conference of 1812 when they voted to remove the Doctrinal Tracts, consisting of Wesley's Plain Account of Christian Perfection, from future editions of the Discipline. Though this was not intended to produce such an effect, nevertheless, this served to place the doctrine of Christian perfection in a less authoritative status. As a result,

⁴⁷Marston op. cit., p. 124.

⁴⁸Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 115.

⁴⁹Marston, op. cit., p. 135.

in two generations many ministers were beginning to round out their doctrinal views.⁵⁰

During the two decades of 1820-1840, Christian perfection was an acknowledged but neglected doctrine of the church.⁵¹ However, some men of real influence for the promotion of the doctrine in this period brought about a quickening in the late thirties. Timothy Merritt published a volume in 1825, entitled, The Christian's Manual, A Treatise on Christian Perfection.⁵² Likewise, Nathan Bangs, head of the Methodist Book Concern, published some helpful literature. Among these were Adam Clarke's, Commentary on the Old and New Testament and Richard Watson's, Institutes. Both of these works were of great influence to the promotion of Christian perfection during this period.⁵³

In 1839 Timothy Merritt started a publication called, A Guide to Christian Perfection.⁵⁴ Also the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness was begun in 1835 in New York by Phoebe Palmer. This organization was wonderfully used to bring many into the blessing of entire sanctification.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ John Leland Peters, Christian Perfection and American Methodism (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 98.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 100.

⁵² Ibid., p. 101.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 101-103.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 36.

⁵⁵ Smith, op. cit., p. 116.

This meeting was a tremendous influence for the cause of holiness. In addition, Nathan Bangs was also very influential in bringing renewed interest in the doctrine. He both professed and preached entire sanctification, giving his full support to the cause. As a result, by 1840 the work of Merritt, Bangs and Phoebe Palmer began to show definite results in renewing the interest in the doctrine of Christian perfection throughout Methodism and even more widely.⁵⁶

In the 1840's a revival took place among the Methodists of Ireland and England that served to further stimulate the interest in the doctrine of Christian perfection in American Methodism. Two clergymen, E. S. Janes and L. L. Hamline, elected to the bishopric at this time were both strong advocates of entire sanctification.⁵⁷ They were influential in bringing many people into this blessing.

Not surprisingly, considerable opposition was aroused by the resurgence of interest in Christian perfection. As a result, a doctrinal controversy followed that lasted up to about 1853 when it was overshadowed by the slavery problem.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, interest in and advocacy of Christian perfection continued to mount in these years under the influence of men like Nathan Bangs, George O. Peck, Abel Stevens, Wilbur Fisk, Stephen Olin and R. S. Foster.⁵⁹

⁵⁶Peters, op. cit., pp. 113, 114.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 116, 117.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 121-124.

⁵⁹Smith, op. cit., pp. 119-121.

Pre-war and Civil War years. In spite of gathering storm clouds during the pre-war years, the revival continued. By many it was viewed with great alarm; others ignored it. The Church South did not give the doctrine as much attention as did the Church North because the Church South was occupied with issues that had arisen from the separation. However, they still agreed with and accepted the view of Wesley without question.⁶⁰

During the war the preaching of Christian perfection was greatly diminished. Patriotism became the main consideration in churches of both North and South.⁶¹

Almost immediately after the Civil War closed, many Methodist clergymen voiced with concern the desperate need for revival of the teaching of Christian perfection and the experiencing of it in the heart by church members. Out of this concern a group of Methodist preachers met weekly in New York to seek out ways of stirring new interest in the doctrine. The idea of a holiness camp meeting was proposed and met with acceptance and encouragement. Thus July, 1867, The National Association for the Promotion of Holiness was formally organized at Vineland, New Jersey.⁶²

What was begun in Vineland took hold all across the country. The camp meeting became national in scope and was greatly

⁶⁰Peters, op. cit., pp. 130, 131.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 132.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 133, 134.

used of God in reaching souls in saving and sanctifying power. By 1887 the National Association reported that it had held sixty-seven national camp meetings and eleven tabernacle meetings distributed through sixteen states.⁶³

But adverse reaction to such a movement was heard almost immediately. The leaders of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness were accused of "come-outism." The association retorted that it was not a matter of "come-outism," but "crush-outism" in the Methodist Church. The association discouraged the people from leaving the Methodist Church as much as possible. They wanted to serve the people of the church and be a part of the church, but were not always allowed to do so. In spite of all they could do, many did leave and come out from Methodism, which greatly hindered the movement, setting it in a bad light.⁶⁴

The association was aware that the Methodist Church was growing more and more modern and formal. Opposition toward the holiness associations continued to mount.⁶⁵ As Methodism accepted more and more modernistic views, there was a growing estrangement between the two bodies. The result was that in the eighties and nineties, many new religious bodies were started. Since the doctrine of Christian

⁶³Ibid., pp. 135-138.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 139-144.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 146-147.

the doctrine became less and less a distinctive of Methodism, as had been characteristic in the many years previous.⁷¹

III. STEELE'S PROPOSED REMEDY FOR METHODISM

Steele did all that he could to keep the doctrine of Christian perfection alive and central in American Methodism. Perhaps his greatest contribution and influence to this cause was wielded during the time he was professor of Systematic Theology at Boston University. Also, his articles appearing in the Christian Advocate, as well as his own published works were instrumental in maintaining the doctrine to a considerable degree.⁷²

Steele believed the answer to the downward trend of Methodism, which would set her back on the right course, was a return to the teaching and individual experiencing of heart holiness. Near the close of his life he wrote the following regarding the problems that faced Methodism:

This baptism of the Spirit would . . . preserve the purity of our doctrine, for the Holy Spirit is the conservator of orthodoxy. It would restore our rate of increase, which has been declining for several years. It would recover the lost weapon with which we once conquered the world . . . even the word of our testimony. The joy of the Holy Spirit would dispel the disciplinary difficulty about spiritually harmful amusements, restore our social means of grace, and set all our people to singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, in sacred temples, free to all because of their obedience to the only command in the passive voice: "Be filled with the

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 160-167.

⁷²Ibid., p. 165.

Spirit." This would cause our depleted and indebted missionary treasuries to overflow and enable us to multiply laborers in the foreign field.⁷³

In another of his writings Steele said:

I wish I had power to reach every Methodist on the round earth. I would say, cease living on the heroism of your fathers, quit glorying in numbers, sacrificing to statistics and burning incense to the general minutes; down upon your knees and seek and find for yourself the secret of the power of the fathers, a clean heart and the endowment of power from on high, then arise and unfurl the banner of salvation free and full. . . Then in double-quick time charge upon the hosts of sin and conquer the world for Christ.⁷⁴

IV. THE CENTRAL IDEA IN STEELE'S THEOLOGY

The deep conviction of Steele that the experiencing of Christian perfection was so essential to Methodism was, no doubt, a factor in the great wealth of material that came from his pen on the doctrine. The doctrine of Christian perfection is given predominant attention in his thinking. All of his writings were read at least twice, some three times or more. On the basis of the study of these writings, Steele's theme was found to be centered upon the doctrine of Christian perfection. He considered other doctrines as important and definitely related to this experience effected by God in the heart of man.

The first evidence that the primary emphasis of his theology was centered in the doctrine of Christian perfection is Steele's testimony after eight years of the sanctified life.

⁷³G. A. McLaughlin and C. J. Fowler, loc. cit.

⁷⁴Daniel Steele, S.T.D., Gospel of the Comforter (Rochester, Penn.: Reprinted by Rev. H. E. Schmul, 1960), pp. 289, 290.

I have tried to be silent, but find an inward fire which must flame forth. My mind is irresistably drawn to one subject, the greatness and completeness of Christ as Savior, through the mission of the Paraclete, the believer's Helper, Teacher, Monitor and Sanctifier. It is a burden to be stigmatized as a hobbyist for the constant employment of my pen on one theme when a tempting variety lies before me. But believing that Christ demands this sacrifice, I cheerfully turn away from all other themes and consent to be dead unto them that I may be intensely alive in every fibre of my being to that perfect love of God which casteth out all fear, testifying to the exceeding greatness of Christ's power to every one that believeth; and to the continued efficacy of the Holy Spirit to purify perfectly and keep constantly all who trust in Him.⁷⁵

In the second place, two important statements made by Steele in his works reveal the supremacy of place he gave to the doctrine of Christian perfection. The first of these is found in the prologue to his book, Half Hours With Saint Paul, where he states:

Moreover, it should be noted that this volume is in no sense an exhaustive treatise on the many-sided character of the apostle to the Gentiles. The incidents in his remarkable life, the historic setting and purpose of his epistles, have been omitted. Our attention has been directed to only one aspect of his character--his personal relation to evangelical perfection, and his instructions respecting holiness of heart and life. In clearing away erroneous interpretations and in vindication of Paul's right to the title of saint in its highest sense, a holy man without consciousness of sin, we have necessarily been polemical and iterative.⁷⁶

The other important statement is found in the preface to his book, Love Enthroned. There Steele justified its publication by saying:

Another book on the higher Christian life! . . . The very fact that persons who hate hobbies become, when thus annointed of the Holy Ghost, men of one idea and henceforth push this specialty with tongue and pen as if in the grasp of an all-absorbing passion ought to demonstrate to doubters that there is here a great Gospel

⁷⁵Steele, "Eight Years on the Witness Stand," Advocate of Christian Holiness (April, 1879), 74.

⁷⁶Steele, Half Hours With Saint Paul (Rochester, Pa.: Rev. H. E. Schmul, n.d.), prologue.

truth struggling to reveal itself to the church.⁷⁷

In the third place, the doctrine of Christian perfection is further seen to be central in Steele's thinking by observing the titles of his books and articles with direct reference to the doctrine. Of the books the following could be mentioned: A Defense of Christian Perfection, Love Enthroned, The Gospel of the Comforter, and Jesus Exultant. As for articles, only a few titles can be named, as they are very numerous, but the following are representative: "To Seekers of Full Salvation," "The Dove Descending and Abiding," "Personal Pentecosts," "The Spirit Without Measure," "The Three Perfections," "Kept By The Power of God Through Faith," "Sanctification at a Jump," "Perfection," "Water-marks in the Scriptural Proof of Entire Sanctification," "Regeneration and Sanctification," "Ten Years in Canaan," and "The Law of the Spirit."

The fourth evidence of the centrality of Christian perfection in Steele's thought is seen by the frequent testimony he gave to the experience of perfect love in his own heart. This he did through articles submitted to The Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness and through the "Question and Answer Box" which he conducted for the same periodical. Three of these testimonies are included in his book, Milestone Papers.⁷⁸ In the preface to this same work he writes:

. . . the writer's published testimonies to the power of Christ to save unto the uttermost have been blessed of the Holy Spirit to the strengthening of their faith and the uplifting of their spiritual

⁷⁷Steele, Love Enthroned (Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1876), preface.

⁷⁸Steele, Milestone Papers, pp. 213-223; 241-256.

life, it would be not only an act of disloyalty to the law of duty, but a painful deprivation of privilege, should he be constrained by a false modesty to forbear standing any longer as a witness, and testifying to the wonders of redeeming love more and more fully unfolded in his experience during the seven past years.⁷⁹

Finally, the strong emphasis that Steele gave to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit also contributes to the fact of Christian perfection being central in his thought. Two representative statements follow:

. . . We must believe in the Holy Ghost as the indispensable agent in the production of spiritual life, both in its incipency and in its FULLNESS. There is a sense in which He is now the most important active factor in the production of Christian character.⁸⁰

The entire eradication of the propensity to sin is by the direct and instantaneous act of the Holy Spirit responsive to a special act of faith in Christ claiming the full heritage of the believer.⁸¹

Because of the Holy Spirit's abundant power to cleanse the penitent soul of all sin, Steele believed that this doctrine should be proclaimed to all who would hear. Therefore, Steele devoted his time, energy and talents to the accomplishment of this end.

V. SUMMARY

During Steele's day there was real growth and expansion for the Methodist Church, but there were also some problems faced in this period of history that had lasting effect on Methodism. The slavery issue brought schism to the church and forced adjustments to be made. Great advances were made in education in Steele's day. Also, the period of

⁷⁹Ibid., preface.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 122.

⁸¹Steele, The Gospel Of The Comforter, p. 99.

financial prosperity and social mindedness of the late eighteen hundreds brought about some definite changes in the preaching and polity of the Methodist Church. In doctrinal matters the trend was away from the historical and traditional position to a more modern one.

The doctrine of Christian perfection suffered decline in the Methodist Church during Steele's time. In the eighteen twenties and thirties the doctrine was acknowledged and accepted as the standard for believers. The eighteen forties brought a renewed interest in the doctrine. This interest continued through the close of the nineteenth century, but mostly apart from Methodism. Methodism tended to drift further away from the teaching of Christian perfection, though there were still holiness people within the church.

Steele maintained a great love for the Methodist church and did all within his ability to hold it to its traditional theological position. He believed the answer for Methodism's need was a revival of the church by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. His writings bear the theme of Christian perfection, which is related and intertwined with the other doctrines of the Bible. The following chapters have been based upon this finding.

THE SOURCE AND PROVISION OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

CHAPTER III

THE SOURCE AND PROVISION OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

The study of this chapter dealt with Steele's doctrine of God. His viewpoint on each of the persons of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit was studied. In the preface of his book, Half Hours With Saint Paul, Steele stated that one of his purposes for writing the book was to show:

that the salvation which God has provided in the mediation of his Son, and the gift of his Spirit, reaches man's deepest need, delivering the persevering believer from the guilt of sin, the love of sin and the pollution of sin.¹

To Steele the doctrine of the Trinity was the most practical truth in the Bible. He did not endeavor to illustrate the doctrine by anything from nature for all attempts to do so were defective. He realized and accepted the Trinity as a Bible doctrine and taught that a belief in the Trinity was the only way to a blessed Christian experience.²

Steele sums up his belief in the Trinity in the following words:

The best statement of the Scriptures about God is that He is one in nature with a threefoldness which we call personality, that He has a Son who is not a creature, whose existence is grounded not in the divine will as our existence is, but His being is grounded in the divine nature so that He has all the attributes of God. . .

¹Daniel Steele, Half Hours With Saint Paul, (Rev. H. E. Schmul, Rochester, Pa.), preface.

²Steele, "Our Question Box," Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, New Series XIX (September 26, 1901), 6.

The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, having their nature; the Father is self-existent. The Son's being is grounded in the Father, and the Spirit's existence rests on the Father and the Son from whom He proceeds.³

The three members of the Godhead are co-equal in their divinity, power and glory.⁴ "God reveals Himself to all men through His Son; He communicates Himself in the Holy Spirit to all who believe in the Son."⁵

I. GOD, THE FATHER

Steele's teaching concerning God was found interspersed in the material dealing with the person and work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Consequently, he emphasized the matters that had to do with God's evangelical work. He did not write specifically or at length in any one book or article on the doctrine of God.

The being of God. Steele had the following to say relative to the being of God. "He is purely spiritual, without body and parts, His essential being will never be anything by invisible."⁶ When asked the question, "What is God's eternal being?", Steele replied:

I do not know the mystery of God's eternal existence as the first cause, an absolute cause, a self-existent Being, a cause uncaused. This human reason cannot construe because it is unthinkable."⁷

³Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter (Rochester, Penn.: Reprinted by Rev. H. E. Schmul, 1960), p. 24.

⁴Steele, "Our Question Box," (May 30, 1901), 6.

⁵Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter, pp. 24, 25.

⁶Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVII (November 9, 1899), 6.

⁷Ibid., New Series XXIII (June 8, 1905), 6.

He contended that the existence of God is assumed by the Bible and must be accepted by faith on the part of the believer.

The Attributes of God. Steele did not write a lot about God's attributes, however, he believed the attributes of God to be absolute, without change. He is perfect in all of His being, thus His attributes are without attainment to a higher quality. God is a being unmixed in His character. In Him there is nothing contrary to His holiness, love, truth, and justice.⁹

God is love in His essential being. Love is the "basis of all God's moral attributes; the very substance and substratum of His being."¹⁰ His love is absolutely free and spontaneous and is expressed through the giving of His Son to redeem mankind.

Steele believed that while God foreknows all things and events, His foreknowledge is not causative. The act does not ~~come~~ about from the foreknowledge, but foreknowledge takes form from the act. God can foresee the act of a free moral agent an indefinite period of time before it takes place, yet it is just as free as it would have been had He not known it.¹¹

II. GOD, THE SON

The Eternal Word. Steele held that the sonship of Christ did not

⁹Steele, Difficulties Removed From the Way of Holiness (London: S. W. Partridge and Company, n.d.), p.43.

¹⁰Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter, p. 25.

¹¹Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVII (March 1, 1900), 6.

begin at His birth in Bethlehem, but has been from all eternity. He was the Son of God before the world was ever created. He was from eternity, not created, but existent as the Father has always been.¹²

The Incarnation of Christ. Steele viewed the incarnation of Christ as basic and essential to the teaching of Christ. In becoming incarnate Christ laid aside the glory He had with the Father or His manifestation of equality with the Father to become a man.¹³ He did not take upon Himself fallen human nature in coming in the flesh, but normal human nature. His supernatural, miraculous birth rendered Him free from inherited depravity.¹⁴ He submitted and limited Himself to humanity, suffering all its ills, never using His omnipotence or other divine attributes to save Himself from them. This was for the purpose of becoming the world's Redeemer.¹⁵

Steele believed that "the promise of the incarnation was included in the creation of man and would have taken place even if man had not sinned."¹⁶ The incarnation was not an afterthought with God, but was intended to be from eternity. Man was so created as to need a mediator

¹²Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter, pp. 23, 24.

¹³Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XV (September 2, 1897), 6.

¹⁴Ibid., New Series XVII (April 13, 1899), 6.

¹⁵Ibid., New Series XXIII (March 16, 1905), 6; Ibid., New Series XVI (January 27, 1898), 6; Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles (Chicago: Christian Witness Company, 1908), pp. 173, 174.

¹⁶Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVI (December 22, 1898), 6.

through whom his fellowship with God could be sustained and perfected. Steele listed four reasons for this position. (1) Unfallen men were in need of a mediator bearing their own likeness in order to obtain to the highest spiritual development. (2) Since the Son is the mediator to the material realm it is logical to expect His mediation to extend to the spiritual realm. (3) It seems reasonable that the incarnation ~~should be~~ the absolute and eternal purpose of God. (4) If the incarnation was not intended from eternity, we are forced to the conclusion that man gains a great advantage by wickedness.¹⁷

The divine and human natures of Christ. Steele, very plainly taught that Christ was both human and divine. As the Messiah, the Son of God was divine in the highest sense.¹⁸ Christ's human nature was begotten of the Holy Spirit. The stream of evil tendency in Mary was miraculously arrested so that Christ was born without sin.¹⁹

The two natures are so blended together as to make up one personality. His human nature remained unchanged in its union with the divine. The two natures joined together in one person were never to be divided. He did not lay aside His human nature at death. As both human and divine, He suffered, died, rose again and ascended to heaven.²⁰

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., New Series XV (July 29, 1897), 8.

¹⁹Ibid., (November 27, 1897), 6.

²⁰Steele, "The Dove Descending and Abiding," Advocate of Christian Holiness, IV (May, 1874), 243.

The person and work of Christ. Christ is equal in essence to the Father.²⁵ He manifests the moral attributes of the Father providing the way that these same attributes may be found in man, in kind not in degree.²⁶

Christ's title of the Only-begotten Son denotes a unique sonship. It is an existence unshared, which is grounded in God's nature.²⁷

Steele was careful to point out that the righteousness and obedience of Christ was personal. Christ's obedience to the will of the Father belongs to Him alone and is not transferable to another. Antinomians taught that Christ's righteousness was imputed to the believer, thus excusing the believer from personal obedience. Steele rejected this teaching as non-scriptural and gave himself to the undermining of it.²⁸

Steele outlined Christ's work as threefold. He came (1) to save sinners, (2) to give His life a ransom for many, and (3) to impart abundant spiritual life.²⁹

The qualification of Christ's office of Priest is seen in the union of the divine and human natures in one person. In this consideration,

²⁵Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles, p. 7.

²⁶Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVI (April 21, 1898), 6.

²⁷Steele, Half Hours With Saint Paul, p. 105.

²⁸Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XV (July 22, 1897), 8; Ibid., New Series XXI (June 4, 1903), 6.

²⁹Ibid., New Series XVII (April 6, 1899), 6.

His qualification began when He was baptized by the Holy Spirit.

If we consider his fitness for this office, the union of the two natures in one person, we may say that it began in the incarnation; if we consider his completed qualification, we would say that it was when he was baptized with the Holy Spirit; but if we regard his great offering, once for all, his blood, it would be natural to say that his high priestly office began at his ascension.³⁰

Since His ascension, He is sitting at the right hand of the Father interceding on behalf of the believer.³¹

Steele recognized Christ's office as King. In fulfilling this office Christ rules over the believer supplying all spiritual needs in answer to prayer.³²

Christ abolished the ceremonial law, but not the moral law. Steele maintained that "moral obligations are grounded in the nature of things, human conscience and the moral attributes of God, thus the moral law cannot be abrogated."³³ In doing away with the ceremonial law the way was opened to plead the blood of Christ for forgiveness and cleansing from sin as over against pleading the perfect keeping of the law for acceptance with God.³⁴

The atonement of Christ. Steele held to the governmental theory

³⁰Ibid., New Series XVI (March 17, 1898), 6.

³¹Ibid., New Series XXVI (April 9, 1908), 6; Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles, p. 29.

³²Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXVI (April 9, 1908), 6.

³³Ibid., New Series XV (September 2, 1897), 6.

³⁴Ibid., New Series XVI (April 7, 1898), 6.

of the atonement. In the scheme of redemption God did not act as a Judge but as a Governor.³⁵ If He acted as Judge, the penalty would be exact, distributive and rendering to each his exact due. The atonement of Christ takes the place of the penalty that is due the penitent believer.³⁶

Steele held that the suffering and death of Christ were not punishment upon Christ. The suffering and death of Christ were to all who are saved vicarious, sufficiently answering the saved sinner's punishment.³⁷ The death of Christ was satisfactory to God as the protector and executive of the law. His death demonstrates God's righteousness as a moral Governor. The conditions that prevented pardon have been overcome by Christ's death on the cross. Pardon is now offered to all who accept it by faith. Only those will be punished who have not faith or the spirit of faith and righteousness. The death of Christ is a substitute for the punishment of all except those who persist till death in the spirit of disobedience.³⁸

Steele listed the benefits of the atonement under the categories of unconditional benefits and salvation benefits. The unconditional benefits of the atonement include the ability to repent and believe and

³⁵Ibid., New Series IX (May 28, 1891), 6.

³⁶Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles, pp. 6, 7.

³⁷Steele, "Dr. Reddy's Dilemma," Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, New Series IX (May 28, 1891), 7.

³⁸Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles, p. 107; Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVI (June 12, 1898), 6; Ibid., (May 25, 1899), 6; Steele, Antinomianism Revived (Boston: McDonald, Gill and Company, 1887), pp. 128, 129.

the resurrection of the body. The salvation benefits are the forgiveness of sins, the new birth and eternal life. These are limited to the believer conditioned upon faith in Christ.³⁹

Steele believed there were definite advantages to the moral government theory. He has listed them as follows:

1. It can be preached without mental reservations.
2. It does not conflict with intuitive, self-evident truth and avoids the irrational idea that Christ was literally made sin and became a curse.
3. It is founded upon the just and consistent views of divine character.
4. It satisfies the Protector of divine law forbearing to inflict the penalty which was threatened.
5. It is Biblical, harmonizing with all statements and including all facts, ascribing a peculiar moral efficacy to the work of Christ, investing the cross with a peculiar moral influence over men, while its necessity lies in the Godward direction.
6. It affords a basis for the salvation of such pious pagans as live up to their best light.
7. It lays no foundation for universalism. It is objectively universal in its provision, but subjectively limited as a realization by a failure of free agents to fulfill its conditions.⁴⁰

III. GOD, THE HOLY SPIRIT

Personality and deity of the Holy Spirit. Steele gave great emphasis and honor to the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. He believed the Holy Spirit to be a person, rather than a thing or impersonal influence. His belief in the personality of the Spirit was based upon the following facts: (1) When the Holy Spirit is spoken of

³⁹Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XIX (July 25, 1901), 6.

⁴⁰Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles, pp. 224-228.

in the Scriptures personal pronouns are used and most often it is the masculine personal pronouns of "he and him." (2) The verbs ascribed to the Holy Spirit's activity support His personality. He "teaches, comforts, guides, sanctifies, testifies, glorifies, and distributes gifts as he wills." (3) The personality of the Spirit is seen in the requirement of faith, the only door through which God enters the soul. The individual must grasp by faith the person of the Holy Spirit and believe Him to do a thorough work of cleansing in the heart.⁴¹

The personality of the Holy Spirit is further seen in that He may be grieved. The Holy Spirit is the most sensitive person of the God-head. The slighting of any of His offices by believers grieves Him.⁴²

The Holy Spirit is divine. He is eternal and omnipresent. He is one with God in His nature and consubstantial so that there can be no distinction made between God and the Holy Spirit. The fact that personal acts are attributed to Him and that the Holy Spirit is included in the baptismal formula speaks of the divinity of the Holy Spirit.⁴³

Names of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is referred to by different names throughout the Scriptures. Steele listed the different

⁴¹Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter, pp. 26-30; 233-236; Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXIII (May 18, 1905), 6.

⁴²Daniel Steele, Love Enthroned (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1875), pp. 165, 166.

⁴³Daniel Steele, "Personal Pentecosts," Advocate of Bible Holiness, V (September, 1874), 49; Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXIII (May 18, 1905), 6; Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter, p. 13.

titles found for the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament the names "Spirit" and "Holy Spirit" were used. In the New Testament the following were used: "the Paraclete," "Spirit of grace," "Spirit of supplication," "Spirit of revelation," "Spirit of wisdom," "Spirit of adoption," "Spirit of Christ," "Spirit of God," and "Spirit of truth."⁴⁴

Offices and work of the Holy Spirit. Steele felt the title, "The Executive of the Godhead," best expressed in a concise way, all the offices of the Holy Spirit. The Godhead is seen to be like the three departments of government. The law is given by the Father -- legislative branch. Mercy and judgment are committed to the Son -- judicial branch. The executive of both the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit -- the executive branch. Through the person of the Holy Spirit the Father and Son's work is accomplished in the hearts of men.⁴⁵ Therefore, Steele felt the title, "Executive of the Godhead," most proper in expressing the Holy Spirit's work.

Steele believed that the Holy Spirit, being eternal and consubstantial with the Father and Son, has always been in the world, although His work has not always been the same in the hearts of men. "His essential presence had always been among men, but his official presence on the earth was not till Jesus was glorified."⁴⁶ The official work is of

⁴⁴Steele, Gospel of the Comforter, p. 12.

⁴⁵Steele, Milestone Papers (Minneapolis, Minn: Bethany Fellowship, n.d.), p. 121.

⁴⁶Steele, "Personal Pentecosts," Advocate of Christian Holiness, V (September, 1874), 49.

such marked contrast to that of the essential, "that he is spoken of as a new gift which had no existence among men before."⁴⁷ Steele maintained that in Old Testament times the Holy Spirit used the truths of natural religion as a tool for His work; in New Testament times He has the Gospel of Jesus Christ as His instrument.⁴⁸ In the Old Testament dispensation the work and gifts of the Spirit were usually outward, such as skill, strength and prophecy, but in the New Testament dispensation, the Spirit's gift of Himself is of the nature of grace whereby He illumines, strengthens, assures and sheds abroad God's love in the heart entirely sanctifying those who believe in Christ.⁴⁹

Steele noted the distinction between the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament dispensation as over against that of the New Testament dispensation. He noted the following differences: (1) The Holy Spirit's conviction of sin seemingly was not so strong as it is under the New Testament. (2) Conversion was more of a moral change wrought by the will of the penitent, than of a new creation. (3) There was no assurance of acceptance with God under the old dispensation. (4) Old Testament piety was characterized by bondage rather than by freedom. (5) There was no permanent state of reconciliation. (6) There was no conscious indwelling of the Holy Spirit. (7) Entire

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXVIII (June 9, 1910), 6.

⁴⁹Ibid., New Series XV (May 27, 1897), 8; Ibid., New Series XXII (January 14, 1904), 6; Ibid., New Series XXIII (March 30, 1905), 6.

sanctification, except in a ceremonial sense, was not enjoyed by Old Testament saints.⁵⁰

It is the office of the Holy Spirit to apply and vitalize truth that God has previously revealed and is recorded in the Bible.⁵¹ He glorifies Christ by "attesting His perfect power to save from the guilt of sin through faith in His blood, shed as a conditional substitute for the punishment of sin."⁵² He reveals Christ within the believer and illumines the soul to receive light. It is the Spirit's place to purify, strengthen, to open "the fountain of gladness," to admonish and to guide. Steele believed that the Holy Spirit's first and most important office "is to make us holy and to conserve inward and outward purity."⁵³ It is for this reason He is called the Holy Spirit.

Steele believed the Holy Spirit witnessed to the believer in a direct way of every work of grace performed in the believer. He accepted John Wesley's definition of the witness of the Spirit as his own, "an inward impression on the souls of believers, whereby the Spirit of God directly testifies to their spirit that they are children of God."⁵⁴ Steele held that the Spirit alone reveals to the believing soul the assurance of pardon and entire sanctification and of a call to the ministry.

⁵⁰Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter, pp. 36-38.

⁵¹Daniel Steele, Jesus Exultant (Chicago: Christian Witness Company, 1899), p. 20.

⁵²Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter, p. 56.

⁵³Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVI (October 20, 1898), 6; Ibid., New Series XX (February 27, 1902), 6.

⁵⁴Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter, p. 117.

This sort of fact is not revealed in the Bible, but only by the Holy Spirit's indwelling and ministry to the believer.⁵⁵

Steele taught that the believer may know for a certain that He is a child of God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to reveal to the believer the act of forgiveness in its reality. This aspect of the Spirit's work is known as the "Spirit of Adoption."⁵⁶

None of the Old Testament characters nor the New Testament disciples before Pentecost had the special privilege of sonship to God with the witness of the Spirit. This is a privilege of the believer in Christ which is not equalled by anything God did for any of the Old Testament saints in response to their love and obedience.⁵⁷

The gifts of the Spirit are enumerated in I Corinthians, the twelfth chapter, and denote extraordinary gifts bestowed sovereignly by the Spirit. Some individuals have special gifts by which they are able to serve God and the church in an unusual way. Steele pointed out that gifts do not always correspond with an individual's measure of grace. The gift may exist apart from grace. He gave an example as being that of miracle working faith. One may have this gift, yet not have saving faith. Saving faith, to Steele, was more important to

⁵⁵Daniel Steele, A Defense of Christian Perfection (Cincinnati: Granston and Curtis, 1890), pp. 66, 129.

⁵⁶Steele, "Regeneration and Sanctification," Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, New Series IX (January 22, 1891), 2; Steele, Love Enthroned, p. 163.

⁵⁷Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVI (March 3, 1898), 6.

possess than miracle working faith or any other gift of the Spirit.⁵⁸
 One is not to seek for a gift not designed for him, but is to seek
 to employ the gift of which he is possessed.⁵⁹

IV. SUMMARY

This chapter presented Steele's doctrine of the three persons of the Godhead, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father was seen to be the self-existent member of the Godhead, a Being of unmi~~x~~ed holiness, love and other virtuous attributes that make up His character. In relation to God Steele emphasized, primarily, the matters that had to do with God's evangelical work. The Son was seen to be divine in nature, as was the Father, yet possessing human nature also. It was the mission of Christ to give His life as a ransom and become the Savior of those who repent and believe in Him. Thus the way was provided for man's reconciliation to God. The Holy Spirit was seen to be the executive of the Godhead, ~~pro~~ceeding from the Father and the Son, revealing the things of the Father and the Son to the souls of men. It was seen that the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ and witness directly to the believer's heart of Christ's power to save. The Spirit's most important work is that of creating and conserving holiness in the hearts of men.

⁵⁸Ibid., New Series XVIII (March 22, 1900), 6; Ibid., New Series XXIII (May 18, 1905), 6.

⁵⁹Daniel Steele, "Spiritual Dynamics," Advocate of Christian Holiness, IV (June, 1874), 266.

THE DEMAND FOR AND OBJECT OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION IN MAN

Adam and Eve were created holy as they came from the hand of God. There was no tendency toward sin in their constitution at that time. They were tempted and yielded to the temptation to violate God's command.⁴ Thus sin entered the human race.

The twofoldness of sin. Steele saw sin to be of a twofold nature. Sin was seen as (1) an act of violating a known will of God. This sin is personal and attended by guilt. Sin was also seen as (2) a state, the depraved state from which acts of sin flow or tend to flow. This sin is racial and not attended by guilt. Guilt attends sin as a state when the person becomes aware of the cure through Christ and prefers the malady to the cure.⁵

Sin as an act. Every man is the cause of his own sin. Satan is not the cause of man's sin but the occasion, even as other persons may be the occasion of one's sin. Sin is a quality of a moral agent, not a substance, neither material nor spiritual.⁶

Man's duty is threefold, to God, to men, and to self. In the performance of duty man may sin in any one or all of these forms. There is the failure to do that which is required, which is the sin of omission and the doing of that which is forbidden, which is the sin

⁴Ibid., New Series XV (November 4, 1897), 6.

⁵Daniel Steele, "The Evangelists By the Sea," Advocate of Christian Holiness (January, 1877), 2; Steele, "Our Question Box," Ibid., New Series XVIII (March 15, 1900), 6.

⁶Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXI (May 7, 1903), 6.

of commission. Steele saw sin to be basically selfishness, a selfish failure in that which is known to be a duty. The climax of sin is reached when the sinner rejects Christ's claim upon his life and fails to seek forgiveness and cleansing from sin.⁷

Sin brings with it some natural consequences. By this Steele meant every sin leaves a scar and a diminished capacity for spiritual enjoyment. The natural consequences of sin continue after justification. The atonement does not cover the natural consequences of sin.⁸

To some extent Steele felt that the expression, "sins of ignorance," is a contradiction in terms. For to him sin always implied an act of conscious wrong doing. He clarified what he meant by the expression by pointing out the difference between wrong and guilt:

If a man having availed himself of all knowledge within his reach commits a wrong act, thinking it to be right, he cannot be guilty of a sin in its proper sense. This implies that there is a difference between wrong and guilt, and between right and innocence. Right and wrong exist independent of my perception and will, but guilt and innocence depend on my knowledge and volition. In philosophical terms right and wrong are objective, while guilt and innocence are subjective. Does God in Christian ethics require objective? We infer from a typical significance of Hebrews 9:7 where the high priest annually offered blood "for the ignorances of the people" that God requires objective righteousness, and in the atonement of his Son he has made provision for moral defects flowing from human infirmity.⁹

⁷Daniel Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles (Chicago: Christian Witness Company, 1901), pp. 69, 70.

⁸Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVI (April 21, 1898), 6.

⁹Ibid., (August 18, 1898), 6; Ibid., (August 25, 1898), 6; Ibid., (November 17, 1898), 6.

nature inherent within him as there is in his descendents. By Adam's willful transgression human nature was damaged. It inflicted a universal wound; as a result all born into the world after him are born with a sinful nature.¹² This nature is the propensity or tendency toward sin. It always leads downward, never upward.¹³

Steele believed that inbred sin is not a thing, an essence or an entity. It is a quality of unregenerate man's moral being. By nature inbred sin is inclined the wrong way and strengthened in the wrong way by wrong acts. It is not sin entailing guilt. Thus the person is not responsible for this tendency to sin until he recognizes its presence and refuses the remedy of cure through Christ. The deliberate rejection of the cure when it is known, brings guilt and condemnation to the soul.¹⁴

Steele believed the doctrine of inherited depravity was plainly taught in the Scripture. He listed the following texts as being the more explicit in their teaching: Gen. 5:3; 6:3; 6:5, 6; 8:4; Job 14:4; 15:14; 25:4; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Mt. 7:11; Jn. 3:6; 8:23; Rm. 5:12-21; 7:17, 18, 23; 8:7 and Eph. 2:3.¹⁵

Steele used different terms to designate sin as a state. Others

¹²Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XV (July 1, 1897), 8.

¹³Ibid., (May 27, 1897), 6.

¹⁴Ibid., New Series XVI (October 13, 1898), 6; Ibid., New Series XXI (January 15, 1903), 6.

¹⁵Ibid., New Series XVII (January 26, 1899), 6; Ibid., New Series XXVI (November 24, 1904), 6.

that he used apart from inbred sin were "the old man," "the flesh," "depravity," and "evil proclivity."¹⁶

The term "old man," is not to be understood literally, but metaphorically. It is the personality before regeneration that dominated and controlled conduct and the depravity and corruption that had spread itself over the whole man. After the new birth the old man is subdued and controlled, but still existent and fighting for supremacy. In the experience of entire sanctification the old man is crucified.¹⁷

Steele carefully pointed out that the term "flesh" is not always synonymous with sin. Many have made the error that they are synonymous and it has led them to the false position that man **cannot** be delivered from all sin in this life. Out of several different meanings of the term in the Bible only one has the meaning of sin. Paul uses it in the sense of sin.¹⁸ He used "flesh" generally as denoting man's nature which has a hereditary proclivity toward sin. The removal of the proclivity toward sin by the work of the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification is called "the crucifixion" of the flesh.¹⁹

Steele believed that sin may be destroyed primarily on the

¹⁶Ibid., New Series XVI (April 21, 1898), 6.

¹⁷Ibid., New Series XVII (March 30, 1899), 6.

¹⁸Daniel Steele, Half Hours With Saint Paul (Rochester, Pa.: Rev. H. E. Schmul, n.d.), p. 146.

¹⁹Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles, p. 48; Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVI (August 11, 1898), 6.

basis of the following evidences gleaned from a study of the Greek New Testament:

- (1) The absence of all terms, expressive of mere repression.
- (2) The use in Paul's epistles of "crucify," "cleanse," "destroy," "abolish," "circumcision without hands," and "mortify or kill" suggest a complete deliverance from sin in this present life.
- (3) If this is not the doctrine of the New Testament, Christ's mission is a stupendous failure because he does not destroy the works of the devil and perfect holiness is impossible, either in this world or that to come.²⁰

II. THE OBJECT - MAN

The created state of man. Steele believed that Adam was as perfect as God could have made him at creation. Man was perfect in his physical organism, mental structure and moral sense. His appetites were in subjection to a will, holy in all of its moral choices. There was no bent toward sin in his nature, moving him to step over the boundary into sin. His affections were fixed on God giving a strong upward gravitation. It was possible for him to sin because of his finiteness. The fact of his finiteness made walking by faith a necessity. Man was adapted to the law of perfect obedience and could have fulfilled it.²¹

The fallen state of man. Since Adam sinned, the image of God in man was marred and the moral balance of each individual of the race

²⁰Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXII (July 21, 1904), 6.

²¹Steele, "The Three Perfections," Advocate of Christian Holiness, V (May 1875), 241.

disturbed.²² As a result of Adam's sin, every child born into the world inherits a sinful nature.²³ Steele believed that as a result of the fall, man is depraved in nature, but not so much so that he is fixed in wickedness. He can respond to God and be saved. His conscience makes known his duty. Steele believed that depraved man has a natural hunger for the law of God, though he may refuse to conform to it. Steele stated his position in the following way:

Man has sensibilities capable of admiring the moral beauty of Christ, and a free will which has the gracious ability to elect his yoke. Yea, even the worst of men have an aesthetic delight in the law of God while rejecting its sway.²⁴

The image of God in man. Though man is fallen, Steele held that man still has a likeness to God. This likeness is both natural and moral. The natural likeness to God is seen in man's personality and intelligence. The moral likeness exists when man possesses qualities like God's moral attributes of love, holiness, justice, wisdom and truth.²⁵ Man retained his moral reason from before the fall. He has the capacity to judge rightly in regard to all principles of unchangeable morality. In this, fallen man is in the image of God. Man's moral reason is connected with God's moral image.²⁶

²²Ibid.

²³Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XV (May 27, 1897), 8.

²⁴Daniel Steele, Jesus Exultant (Chicago: The Christian Witness Company, 1904), pp. 14, 15.

²⁵Ibid., p. 42.

²⁶Daniel Steele, "Dr. Reddy's Dilemma," Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, New Series IX (May 28, 1891), 6.

The free moral agency of man. Man is a free and responsible personality. He is the sole cause of his own moral actions and creator of his own character by the choices he makes.²⁷ As long as man is in this life, he is a free agent. No experience in grace renders one beyond the possibility of falling. He always possesses the power of will and contrary choice. Man's love to God must always be spontaneous and free.²⁸

What man is. Steele believed man to be a "spiritual intelligence acting through a material organism." Yet he hesitated to designate them spiritual, for the term "spiritual" is properly used to describe those born of the Holy Spirit, led by Him and are heavenly minded. Such is not the case of unregenerate man. Therefore, man is categorized under the animal classification, though highly superior to others because of his mental and moral capability.²⁹

Immortality of man. Man is an immortal being. Steele believed all human souls are of God's creation and shall exist through eternity.³⁰ Steele felt it necessary to distinguish between immortality and eternal

²⁷Daniel Steele, Love Enthroned (Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1876), pp. 59, 60; Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXVII (October 14, 1901), 6.

²⁸Steele, "Dr. Reddy's Dilemma," loc. cit.; Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXIII (April 27, 1905), 6.

²⁹Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XIX (August 15, 1901), 6; Ibid., New Series XXIII (April 27, 1905), 6.

³⁰Ibid., New Series XVI (October 27, 1898), 6; Ibid., New Series XXI (December 31, 1903), 6.

life. All souls are immortal, but not all have eternal life.

Immortality denotes conscious existence, while eternal life denotes conscious existence with added elements of bliss and pleasantness.³¹

The soul and spirit of man. To Steele, the soul of man is kind of a border line between pure spirit and the body.³²

The soul is the animal life; the spirit is the higher element by which man receives God and communes with Him. Death separates the animal soul from the spirit, which returns to God who gave it.³³

It is the soul that is the lower element of man, the seat of the passions and desires that man has in common with animals.³⁴

The spirit is the highest and most distinctive part of man. It is the moral and responsible personality wherein man is able to commune with God. In the unregenerate, the spirit is subordinated to the animal soul.³⁵ By nature, man's spirit is polluted by sin. Satan influences this element of man, bringing pride, malignity, disobedience and all forms of sin. It was Steele's firm belief that man's spirit could be completely cleansed of all defilement through justification and entire sanctification.³⁶

³¹Ibid., New Series XXIII (March 23, 1905), 6.

³²Daniel Steele, Difficulties Removed From the Way of Holiness (London: S. W. Partridge and Co., n.d.), p. 52.

³³Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVIII (December 27, 1900), 6.

³⁴Ibid., XIX (January 3, 1901), 6; Ibid., (August 29, 1901), 6.

³⁵Ibid., New Series XIX (January 3, 1901), 6.

³⁶Steele, Difficulties Removed From the Way of Holiness, p. 53.

The worth of man. To Steele, man is the supreme order of all created life on earth. The fact that Christ came in the flesh in the likeness of man, fully God and fully man denotes man of the most glorious and exalted order. Man was made in the image of God and still retains that image, though marred by the fall.³⁷ Man's superiority is seen, in that by this image of God he has rational powers for the perception of truth and the ability to make choices between right and wrong. From these choices man's character is developed, good or bad according to the choices made. God has put within the power of man the ability to determine his own destiny, either happiness or remorse.³⁸

The fact of atonement magnifies the importance of man to a greater extent than the incarnation. The ransom price for sinful man was the blood of God's only Son. God looked upon man as redeemable, though marred by sin. He loved man enough to send His Son to die for him. Christ loved man enough to willingly lay down His life that man might be saved. Thus salvation is available to all men upon the condition of faith in Christ for forgiveness and cleansing from sin.³⁹

III. SUMMARY

This chapter presented Steele's doctrine of sin and man. Steele saw sin to have originated in created free moral agents. In man sin

³⁷Steele, Milestone Papers, pp. 3, 4.

³⁸Steele, Jesus Exultant, pp. 324, 325.

³⁹Ibid., p. 329.

took on a two-fold nature, actual, consisting of willful acts of disobedience and inbred, consisting of an evil tendency within man. Sin marred God's holy creation making needful a redemptive cure. Steele believed there was complete cleansing from all sin, by Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Man was seen to be a being created in the image of God, setting him above all other creatures. This image became marred through man's disobedience and sin, yet God saw value and worth in man and considered him redeemable. Thus man was the object of God's special favor and blessing.

CHAPTER V

THE OBTAINING OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

In the third chapter, Steele's doctrines of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit were presented showing the work of the Trinity in providing man's salvation. In chapter four, Steele's doctrine of sin was presented showing the need of salvation and his doctrine of man, man being the recipient of God's salvation. The study of this chapter has moved on to deal with the experience of salvation as Steele believed God intended man to know it.

I. FAITH

Steele placed much emphasis upon faith, as it holds an essential place in man's obtaining of each state of grace in Christ.

The grounds for faith. Steele felt that to believe, one must first have an object for his faith. He believed Jesus was this object. Through Christ, the benefits of God's presence are appropriated by faith.¹ The study of the character and teaching of Jesus Christ is the way to find saving faith. One is to yield his will to Christ completely and trust Him only for salvation.² True faith must be

¹Daniel Steele, "To Seekers of Full Salvation," Advocate of Christian Holiness, IV (April, 1874), 217, 218.

²Daniel Steele, "Our Question Box," Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, New Series XIX (May 9, 1901), 6.

based on the promises of God found in the Gospels, the miracles of Christ, His sinless life, and the effects of His gospel in human hearts.³

Repentance and faith. To Steele, faith includes repentance. He emphasized genuine repentance because he saw it in the Scripture to be a vital doctrine. Repentance was the indispensable prerequisite to saving faith.⁴ Restitution, as much as is possible, must be made for repentance to be genuine.⁵ Many try to find substitutes for repentance, because repentance is never pleasant, yet none of these substitutes fulfill the Scriptural conditions of salvation.⁶ Steele believed that saving faith has its root in genuine repentance of sin, bringing joyful obedience, followed by a life of holiness.⁷

Saving faith. Steele maintained that all people with sane minds have the ability to exercise saving faith after there is a knowledge of the New Testament under the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The exercise of this ability is the individual's own act; he can believe

³Ibid., New Series XV (April 15, 1897), 8; Steele, "To Seekers of Full Salvation," loc. cit.

⁴Daniel Steele, A Defense of Christian Perfection (Cincinnati: Cranston and Curtiss), p. 125.

⁵Daniel Steele, Antinomianism Revived (Boston, Mass.: McDonald, Gill and Company, 1887), pp. 98, 99.

⁶Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XX (July 17, 1902), 6; Daniel Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles (Chicago: Christian Witness Company, 1908), p. 15.

⁷Steele, Antinomianism Revived, pp. 100, 101.

or he can refuse to believe.⁸ In Steele's words:

The exercise of that power in appropriating that Savior is my own responsible act, just as repentance is my own act. Neither of these acts would be possible without the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit.⁹

Faith is the gateway by which God enters the life of the believer. It must be a faith in "the Son of God, Jesus Christ, in His offices of Prophet or Teacher, Priest and King, and in the Holy Ghost, as our regenerator, spirit of adoption and sanctifier."¹⁰ Saving faith to Steele, "is appropriating the general promises and making them one's own by asserting the right to them in the name of Christ."¹¹ There is a full reliance upon Christ for salvation and genuine repentance of sin bringing to the individual an assurance of acceptance with God for faith to be saving faith.¹²

Steele believed strongly that an individual seeking for the forgiveness of sins or for heart purity should not claim the blessing without the inward witness of the Holy Spirit.

God is a satisfying portion. He earnestly desires to satisfy you. He is standing at the door of your heart laden with a feast to

⁸Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XV (July 5, 1897), 6; Ibid., (August 4, 1898), 6; Ibid., New Series XVII (August 24, 1899), 6.

⁹Ibid., New Series XVI (January 27, 1898), 6.

¹⁰Daniel Steele, "Faith For Definite Blessings," Advocate of Christian Holiness (March, 1873), 199, 200.

¹¹Daniel Steele, "My Rights In Christ," Ibid., VI (October, 1875), 74.

¹²Steele, "Faith For Definite Blessings," loc. cit.

share with you ever more. By faith open the door, draw back the bolt of unbelief and admit him. Casting away every other hope and plea, receive Christ as your present and all-sufficient Savior by an all surrendering trust . . . You are to trust God to save for Christ's sake, till you know by the Spirit's testimony that you are saved.¹³

Only this assurance given by the Holy Spirit can deliver the believer from all doubt and disallusion as to his experience.¹⁴

Faith as a gift. Steele was often asked about the gift of faith. He recognized it as one of the nine extraordinary gifts of the Spirit enumerated in I Cor. 12:8-11. This type of faith is not necessarily saving faith. The person with the gift of faith is enabled to ask for things for which he has not a specific promise. In Steele's words, "It is a conviction wrought by the Spirit that in answer to prayer God will bestow some desired blessing, as deliverance in trouble or healing in sickness."¹⁵ Because he felt the gift of faith much abused and existent apart from saving faith, Steele did not advocate this type.¹⁶

The true sense in which Steele felt faith was a gift of God was the God-endued faculty in man that lays hold of and believes in the invisible. The evidences on which saving faith rests are the gifts of God, which are the Bible and Jesus Christ. The penitent attitude aided

¹³Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXI (February 12, 1903), 6.

¹⁴Ibid., New Series XVII (April 20, 1899), 6; Ibid., (November 29, 1903), 6.

¹⁵Ibid., New Series XIX (May 9, 1901), 6.

¹⁶Ibid., New Series XVII (May 4, 1899), 6.

by the grace of God is a gift, but the act of believing is the individual's. In this sense, Steele felt that faith was a gift of God. Steele preferred the term, "grace of faith" for it is grounded in love.¹⁷

The penitent attitude of soul requisite to saving trust in Him is the gift of God through the spirit of grace. But the decisive and pivotal act of the will is our own, not God's, when we enthrone Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord.¹⁸

Faith for preservation. Just as faith is an indispensable essential for the soul's experience of justification and entire sanctification, Steele felt that an all trusting faith was essential to keep one in the blessing of heart purity. This is a faith that manifests itself in obedience to all the known will of God on the part of the believer.¹⁹ To abide in the state of perfect love to which one has come by faith, there must be a continual walking in faith minding the same things one did when he entered this state.²⁰

From a study of the Greek verb tenses of the New Testament, Steele pointed out that the conditions of an ultimate salvation are continuous, extending through man's probation. A single act of faith does not bring one into a "paid-up, non-forfeitable" experience assuring the possessor of eternal life. An ultimate and final salvation depends

¹⁷Ibid., New Series XXI (October 1, 1903), 6.

¹⁸Ibid., New Series XXII (September 29, 1904), 6.

¹⁹Daniel Steele, "Kept By the Power of God Through Faith," Advocate of Christian Holiness (May, 1877), 88, 89; Daniel Steele, "The Keeping Power of Christ," Ibid., (August, 1877), 170.

²⁰Daniel Steele, "The Obedience of Faith," Ibid. V (May, 1875), 76.

on a persevering faith. Steele believed faith to be a habit of mind entered at justification. To keep the blessing, one must continue daily in the attitude and spirit of faith.²¹

Unconditional benefits for infants. Steele believed faith in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit to purify was the condition of individual salvation. Only those in whom the capacity for faith was lacking were excepted from this requirement. Such persons include infants, insane persons and those who have not heard of Christ.

Where the capacity for believing is lacking, faith is not required for salvation. Steele believed that the evil entailed without their volition was removed without their volition. They must be cleansed from inherited depravity before entrance into heaven. Therefore the Holy Spirit removes the bent toward sin, unconditionally for infants who have no probation.²² Such ones are incapable of incurring guilt and condemnation. Steele argued that if they have no condemnation they must be justified for there is no state in between.²³

Steele believed the salvation of infants to be based upon the following three truths: (1) The justice of God, as infants have done nothing for which they can be condemned. (2) The divine love as

²¹Daniel Steele, Milestone Papers (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship, n.d.), pp. 46-51.

²²Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVII (January 26, 1899), 6.

²³Ibid., New Series XXI (March 12, 1903), 6; Ibid., New Series XXV (January 24, 1907), 6.

displayed in the gift of the Son of God for the redemption of the human race, and (3) Christ's declaration that, "of such is the kingdom of heaven."²⁴

Unconditional benefits of the atonement are also extended to two other groups: (1) those who have never heard of Christ, yet have the spirit of faith or the disposition to believe on Christ if He were presented, and (2) those who have the purpose of righteousness or the disposition to keep God's perfect law if it were revealed.²⁵

II. JUSTIFICATION

What it is. Steele believed that justification is

. . . an act which takes place in the mind of the Moral Governor of the universe, whereby He removes guilt or severs the link between sin and punishment and accounts the penitent believer in Christ as if he had not sinned.²⁶

Thus Steele felt it to be a work done for the believer, placing him in proper relation to God's law by forgiveness of confessed guilt and faith in Christ.²⁷

Conditions to be met. Steele held that God justifies only those who fulfill the conditions of repentance for sin and faith in

²⁴Ibid., New Series XVII (August 17, 1899), 6; Ibid., New Series XX (October 16, 1902), 6.

²⁵Ibid., (September 9, 1902), 6; Ibid., New Series XXI (January 22, 1903), 6.

²⁶Daniel Steele, Love Enthroned (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1875), p. 23.

²⁷Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XX (June 26, 1902), 6.

Jesus Christ.²⁸ Repentance includes the forsaking of all sin.

"All known sin must be surrendered as a preliminary to saving faith and assured forgiveness."²⁹

Adoption. In Steele's words, "Adoption is the incorporation of a person into the family of God, with the investiture of all the prerogatives of sonship and rights of heirship."³⁰ Adoption takes place the same time as justification and "is attested by a special message from God to the believer's consciousness."³¹ As Jesus was assured of His sonship by the Father's repeated utterance, "Thou art my beloved Son," so does the believer in Christ hear the attestation of his adoption, causing him to cry, "Abba, Father."³²

Justification may be lost. Steele believed the blessing of justification or pardon for sin could be lost by again turning to willful sin.³³ "Guilt destroys justification."³⁴ A course of willful sin is not compatible with continued sonship or likeness to God. A

²⁸Ibid., New Series XXIV (June 14, 1906), 6.

²⁹Daniel Steele, "Buying and Selling the Truth," Advocate of Bible Holiness (July, 1882), 204.

³⁰Steele, Love Enthroned, p. 25.

³¹Ibid.

³²Steele, Milestone Papers, p. 11.

³³Steele, "Buying and Selling the Truth," p. 204.

³⁴Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XIX (January 17, 1901), 6.

man cannot be knowingly committing sin and still be a true child of God. This would be a moral contradiction. Persistence in sinning forfeits sonship or similarity to God.³⁵

Entitlement to heaven, Steele maintained that justification entitles the believer to a place in heaven. Though he is not fully fit because of inbred sin, justification gives him a title. However, a truly justified soul will be seeking after heart holiness, therefore, the work will be performed in that person's heart at death if he doesn't experience it before.³⁶ Steele stated his position on this point with the following words:

Every truly regenerate soul, even before he has obtained perfect purity, has the principle of holiness, spoken of as necessary to see the Lord, which is love toward God inspired by the Holy Spirit, and he longs for the perfection of that principle, which is perfect love. If he has failed to obtain this most precious pearl before death it is not because he hates it for that would be hatred to God and the destruction of the spiritual life, but because of ignorance of his privilege through prejudice of education, or by reason of some unfortunate presentation of the doctrine, or some unlovely professed exemplification of the experience, or some misinterpreted scriptural text. Should such a person die while in this imperfect spiritual state, yet with an aspiration after Christian perfection what would become of him? It is evident that hell is not the appropriate place for this spiritual babe who has the witness of the Spirit crying, "Abba, Father." We have no scripture for limbo or purgatory between heaven and hell for imperfectly prepared souls. Probation after death is not revealed in the Bible. The only other place for one born of the Spirit,

³⁵Daniel Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles (Chicago: Christian Witness Company, 1901), p. 74.

³⁶Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XX (February 13, 1902), 6.

coming to completion in entire sanctification.⁴¹ Steele believed a regenerated person is a partaker of the divine nature in a metaphorical sense, denoting a moral likeness to God. "They have Christian love, holiness, justice and ~~truth~~ and have a nature like God's nature."⁴² The regenerated person after justification is not sinning, however, the bent to sin is still present, though greatly weakened and exists until entire sanctification.⁴³

The second aspect of regeneration, Steele taught, was the "perfect recovery of the moral image of God."

This is not like the quickening into life by the instantaneous touch of the Spirit, the Lord of Life. It is a process involving the element of time, days, weeks, months and years perchance, before the image is fully recovered.⁴⁴

Steele referred to this second aspect of regeneration as entire sanctification.

Entire sanctification is the finishing stroke of regeneration used in its large sense. The complete recovery of the image of God in man comes through the Holy Spirit who communicates God. . . This communication of God has its beginning in the inspiration of spiritual life by a supernatural awakening of love in the penitent believer, and its perfection when it becomes pure and unmingled, the last taint of sin being removed by the incoming of the sanctifier in all His fullness.⁴⁵

The interval between justification and entire sanctification is a period of progressive sanctification. In Steele's words, the

⁴¹Daniel Steele, "Water-marks in the Scriptural Proofs of Entire Sanctification," Advocate of Bible Holiness (March 1882), 77.

⁴²Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXII (April 14, 1904), 6.

⁴³Ibid., (May 12, 1904), 6.

⁴⁴Steele, "Regeneration and Entire Sanctification," loc. cit.

⁴⁵Ibid.

restoration "is progressive in the reconstruction of character, but instantaneous in the inspiration of life."⁴⁶

IV. ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

Steele had a deep conviction that Scripture taught that God was holy and intends that man should be holy, also. The holiness in man must be the same as the holiness of God. The difference lying in degree not in kind. All the moral attributes of God differ not in kind, but in degree from the moral attributes of man. Steele maintained that it was the privilege of every believer to be holy, living a life free from sin and wholly devoted to Christ.⁴⁷

Steele's definition. Steele believed entire sanctification to be:

that state of serene rest, that unbroken peace, that repose in the blood of Christ, that unwavering trust in God, that deliverance from fleshly desire, and that eradication of inbred sin which comes only from being "filled with all the fullness of God."⁴⁸

Terms used. Steele used a number of different terms to designate the experience of entire sanctification. Among them were, "perfect love," "Christian perfection," "heart holiness," "the anointing," "the fullness," "the abiding," "the indwelling," "the constant

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Steele, A Defense of Christian Perfection, pp. 22, 28.

⁴⁸Steele, "The Dove Descending and Abiding," Advocate of Christian Holiness IV (May, 1874), p. 243.

communion," "the sealing," and "the earnest of the Holy Spirit." These terms he believed to be expressive as the equivalent to entire sanctification.⁴⁹ He also, saw terms in Scripture that he believed were expressive of this experience. He listed a few as follows: "loving God with all the heart," "circumcision of the heart," "purity of heart," "dead to sin," "cleansing from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," "sanctify wholly," "the blood cleanseth from all sin," "be ye perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect," "perfect love casteth out fear," and "perfecting holiness." Seeing no other valid interpretations for these scriptural expressions than heart holiness, he felt obligated and committed to the preaching of entire sanctification.⁵⁰

Steele preferred the term. "Christian perfection," in designating the experience of entire sanctification. He believed that:

The term perfection is the best word in the English language for expressing that state of spiritual wholeness into which the soul has entered, when the last inward foe is conquered, when the last distracting force is harmonized with the mighty love of Christ, and every crevice of the nature is filled with love, and every energy employed in the delightful service of the adorable Savior, and the soul is . . . "dead indeed unto sin."⁵¹

Christian perfection has been the subject of much abuse in Christian circles causing many to shy away from the use of the title. Steele, himself, shunned the use of the term until the Lord spoke to him about

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 242.

⁵⁰Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVII (December 28, 1899), 6; Daniel Steele, Half Hours With Saint Paul (Rochester, Pa.: Rev. H. E. Schmul, n.d.), p. 6.

⁵¹Steele, Milestone Papers, p. 21.

it. Since that time he used it unashamedly. Steele named three false ideas of perfection that brought it into disrepute. (1) The idea that it can be obtained by separation from society, as the Oneida Perfectionists and Roman Catholic monasteries and nunneries advocated. (2) Others have taught the experience as an ideal, but unattainable; it should be striven for, yet never expect to reach it. (3) Still others have taught perfection by works, which is not supported by Scripture. The Christian perfection Steele believed the Bible taught and advocated was that of the heart made perfect in love. All antagonisms to God's perfect will are done away when the soul loves God supremely.⁵² It should be pointed out that Steele did not teach an absolute perfection, which belongs only to God, but evangelical perfection. Steele explained what he meant by evangelical perfection:

Every faculty may be energized, every capacity be filled, every particle and fibre of being be pervaded with the love of Christ, so that the totality of our nature may be subsidized in the delightful employment of love attesting itself by obedience, rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks.⁵³ . . . Evangelical perfection . . . is not to be rejected as unattainable, since it consists in loving God with all the heart through the aid of the Divine Comforter who originates this love and brings it to perfection in the persevering believer.⁵⁴

⁵²Daniel Steele, "Steele's Sermon at Douglas," Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, New Series IV (August 19, 1886), 2.

⁵³Daniel Steele, "The Three Perfections," Advocate of Christian Holiness V (May, 1875), 242.

⁵⁴Daniel Steele, "Perfection," Ibid., (November, 1879), 243, 244.

Entire sanctification as a second blessing experience. Steele held that entire sanctification is a second definite blessing. He realized that the word "second" is not explicitly used in Scripture, but in several passages of Scripture a second work of grace is implied. He listed the main passages as: II Cor. 7:1; I Peter 1:15; I Thess. 5:23 and Luke 1:74, 75.⁵⁵

Steele held to the position of a second blessing experience for the following three reasons: (1) God is able to entirely sanctify at the time of justification, but power alone can not purify a responsible soul. The power of God to regenerate or purify must be appropriated by the soul for this definite purpose. At the time of justification, the penitent seeker thinks only of forgiveness. He has the ability to believe God for that blessing. He later becomes aware of an evil tendency still in his heart and upon learning of the promises of the cleansing of it in the Bible, he is able to believe God for this blessing.⁵⁶ (2) In the Scripture, holiness is not presented as an object of future hope, but there are ample provisions for its attainment in the present life only. Death itself never justifies or sanctifies. (3) Through a personal study of the Bible, Steele observed that the only perfect work done in man was entire sanctification. Justification, adoption and regeneration were inadequate for a victorious,

⁵⁵Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXVI (November 19, 1908), 6.

⁵⁶Ibid., New Series XVI (February 17, 1898), 6.

the one to the other," Steele points out that the Apostle Paul asserts in this verse that,

even in the regenerate there is a warfare between two opposing principles; and the aim of the epistle is to end the contest by the complete ascendancy of the Spirit and the extinction of the flesh or evil nature.⁶⁰

On I Cor. 3:1 that speaks of the Corinthian people as carnal and babes in Christ, Steele said that the Paul is speaking of this people's state and not their acts. Their old nature was still influencing them and showing itself. Thus, there was need of a further work of God's grace making them perfectly holy. He believed this to be a strong verse that spoke against the theory of the sinful tendency being destroyed at justification.⁶¹

An instantaneous work. Steele believed the experience of entire sanctification to be an instantaneous work of grace wrought by the Holy Spirit in answer to faith and should be preached as such.

When a definite point is presented to the believer as attainable immediately, all the energies of the soul are aroused and concentrated. . . . There is a target set up to fire at. Faith, as an act, a voluntary venture upon the promise -- puts forth its highest energies and achieves its greatest victories.⁶²

Steele taught that sanctification is a gradual work of the Holy Spirit up to a point where He gives depravity an instantaneous final stroke in answer to the believers faith.⁶³ From a study of the Greek

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 48.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Steele, "The Dove Descending and Abiding," IV (May 1874), 241; Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles, p. 16.

⁶³Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XIX (November 7, 1901), 6.

tenses, Steele found that when the Scriptures speak of the work of purification of the believer's soul by the Holy Spirit, the aorist tense verb is almost uniformly used. The aorist tense indicates an act done momentarily and done once for all. In the light of this study Steele concluded that both the new birth and entire sanctification are works of grace instantaneously wrought in the soul of those who look to Christ repenting of sin.⁶⁴

Eradication of the sinful nature. Steele observed in the writings of the Apostle Paul and other of the epistles, words or phrases that expressed a very thorough work of the Spirit in cleansing the heart from all sin. One such phrase was found in Col. 2:11, "putting off the body of the flesh." This phrase as studied from the Greek affirmed to Steele that it meant a complete and eternal separation of depravity from the soul. Steele said:

If this does not mean the complete and eternal separation of depravity, like the perpetual effect of cutting off and casting away the foreskin, then it is impossible to express the idea of entire cleansing in any human language.⁶⁵

I Thess. 5:23, Steele believed was another verse that implied eradication of the sinful nature. This prayer of the Apostle Paul, was a prayer that this work be done in each believer, now and in the

⁶⁴Steele, Milestone Papers, pp. 51-72; Steele, A Defense of Christian Perfection, p. 85.

⁶⁵Steele, Half Hours With Saint Paul, pp. 88, 89.

present life, not at death. God is the one who will perform it in answer to prayer.⁶⁶

Also, Heb. 7:25, the expression, "he is able to save to the uttermost," Steele believed implied complete cleansing from all sin. He pointed out that the word, "uttermost," means "all to the end, completely, perfectly, in every, in all respects."⁶⁷

Many other Scriptures, Steele felt, supported the doctrine of eradication. He listed some, though without expounding them: I Cor. 7:1; Rn. 5:20; 6:6, 18, 22; 8:1-9; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; I Jn. 1:7, 9.⁶⁸

The relationship of entire sanctification to justification. Steele realized many were in confusion about the distinction between justification and entire sanctification. To him, justification, which he used interchangeably with regeneration, was holiness begun and entire sanctification was holiness completed.⁶⁹ The difference was only in degree, as a part to a whole. Justification is the beginning of the destruction of evil tendencies in the heart and entire sanctification is the end. There is a difference in degree between initial love and perfect love, so likewise, the difference between justification and entire sanctification is the degree to which the heart has been

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid. p. 91.

⁶⁸Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVIII (April 5, 1900), 6.

⁶⁹Ibid., New Series XVII (August 10, 1899), 6.

purified.⁷⁰

The outward life of the justified person will be just as correct as that of the entirely sanctified. Steele stated:

There are not two different moral laws, an inferior law for a lower state of grace, and a superior requirement for those who are on a higher spiritual plane. . . . Those in whom the Holy Spirit has perfected holiness are externally the same.⁷¹

Evidences of entire sanctification, Steele taught that one can definitely know that he has the blessing of heart holiness. There are certain things that will characterize the life of one entirely sanctified. Most important, Steele believed that one must have the direct witness of the Spirit to the completeness of His work in purifying the heart. In addition, Steele believed other evidences would be present. (1) There would be easy victory over sin. There is victory in the justified state, but victory should be easier because the sinful nature is absent. (2) There would be a sense of oneness with Christ. To Steele this seemed to be the primary distinction between justification and entire sanctification. In the justified state there was a sense of duality, division and distraction from Christ. (3) There would be full contentment with providential circumstances and no fear of future ill. (4) There would be a great desire to tell others of the love of Christ and bring them to know Christ in all of His fullness. (5) There would be

⁷⁰Ibid., New Series XXIV (October 18, 1906), 6; Ibid., New Series XVIII (January 4, 1900), 6.

⁷¹Ibid., New Series XVII (May 11, 1899), 6.

increased beneficence; the purse is consecrated to the advancement of Christ's kingdom. (6) There would be a great new insight into the Bible and a hunger after it. (7) Christian activity would be no longer a duty but a delight. (8) Humility would be greatly increased. (9) There would be an abiding faith, not one that's spasmodic and intermittent, (10) Joy and power are present. The joy may be intermittent, but it will predominate. (11) There would be a vivid recollection of the successive steps that brought that person into the blessing.⁷²

The relation of the Holy Spirit to entire sanctification. The experience of entire sanctification, to Steele, is not an unaided personal achievement. It is a work wrought in the believer by the person of the Holy Spirit. It is the believer's place to present himself wholly to God in full repentance and faith and the Holy Spirit does the cleansing.⁷³ The Holy Spirit is not called holy to designate a distinct quality over the Father and the Son. No member of the Godhead is any more holy than the other. The adjective, holy, points rather to the specific office of the Spirit of making men holy.⁷⁴

It is the Holy Spirit that indwells the believer as Christ's

⁷²Steele, Love Enthroned, pp. 185-191, 260-267.

⁷³Steele, "The Revision and Holiness," Advocate of Bible Holiness (June, 1882), 172.

⁷⁴Daniel Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter (Rochester, Penn.: Rev. H. E. Schmul, 1960), p. 13.

representative. The Holy Spirit,

makes his abode in the believer's consciousness, rectifying his will, purifying his affections, illuminating his understanding and pervading every atom of his body and filling every capacity of his spirit, making him a particle of Christ's body, through which currents of his life over flow.⁷⁵

It is the Holy Spirit that witnesses to the penitent sinner that he is a child of God having come in repentance asking forgiveness. It is also the Holy Spirit that witnesses to the believer when a complete work of cleansing has been done bringing that one into the experience of entire sanctification. That person is no longer in doubt about his experience with God, but has a conscious assurance in his soul that all is well.⁷⁶

Our doctrine of assurance is grounded on the direct witness of the Spirit and not on the Word, as some assert, for it cannot certify the fact of my adoption. It is the office of the Spirit to give assurance to this fact by crying in our hearts . . . "Abba, Father."⁷⁷

Growth in grace and maturity. Some have proposed that entire sanctification would render one beyond need of growth in the Christian life. Steele was careful to point out that spiritual growth is much more rapid after entire sanctification than it was before.

Christian experience universally attests that spiritual growth is far more rapid after entire sanctification than before. The

⁷⁵Daniel Steele, "The Higher Life Prayer," Advocate of Christian Holiness IV (February, 1874), 170; Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XIX (September 19, 1901), 6.

⁷⁶Steele, The Gospel of the Comforter, pp. 118-125.

⁷⁷Ibid. p. 124.

most noted instance of a perfected soul growing in grace is that of the child Jesus, who "increased in favor with God and man."⁷⁸

There is growth beginning from the time the soul completely trusts Christ for forgiveness of sins. There must be growth, but this growth would never accomplish the annihilation of inherited sin. Only the Holy Spirit can purify the sin and corruption that is revealed by growth in grace.⁷⁹ The experience of heart purity is basic to a Christian's robust and ever expanding Christian life, because the source of feebleness and decay has been removed.⁸⁰

Some people have confused Christian maturity and Christian perfection making them synonymous. Steele taught that they were not synonymous. Maturity is a process involving time and can't be gained instantaneously, whereas, entire sanctification is an instantaneous work of the Spirit purifying the heart.⁸¹

V. SUMMARY

This chapter presented Steele's views on the doctrine of salvation. Faith was seen to be the essential factor in man's obtaining the experience of both justification and entire sanctification. This is the

⁷⁸Daniel Steele, "Sanctification at a Jump," Advocate of Christian Holiness (August, 1878), 190.

⁷⁹Steele, Love Enthroned, pp. 331-332.

⁸⁰Steele, A Defense of Christian Perfection, pp. 94, 95.

⁸¹Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XVII (July 13, 1899), 6.

individual's part in his salvation; he must exercise faith. God comes to the soul in the person of the Holy Spirit and performs His work in answer to the believer's faith.

Steele believed that two works of grace were necessary to recover the moral image of God in man which was lost in the fall. These works of grace were justification and entire sanctification. Justification changed the believer's relationship to God and entire sanctification changes the individual inwardly, purifying the heart of all inbred sin. Both works, he saw to be instantaneous experiences and obtainable in this present life by faith.

Regeneration began at justification and is simultaneous with it. At justification the soul is born from above and has the seed of divine love implanted in it. This inward work of the Holy Spirit is called regeneration. Regeneration is completed when the heart is cleansed from all sin and the believer is made perfect in love.

STEELE'S VIEWS ON THE CHURCH,
MEANS OF GRACE, AND LAST THINGS

CHAPTER VI

STEELE'S VIEWS ON THE CHURCH, MEANS OF GRACE, AND LAST THINGS

The study of this chapter included Steele's views on the doctrine of the Church, means of grace, and last things with reference to their relationship to his doctrine of Christian perfection.

I. THE CHURCH

The Church invisible. Every true believer in Christ is a part of the invisible Church.¹ Steele observed that in Scripture certain metaphors were used to represent the Church. The Church, as a body of believers, is spoken of as the mystical body of Christ of which Christ is the head.² In some places the Church is referred to as the bride and Christ as the bridegroom, who will come for His bride at God's chosen time.³

The Church and the kingdom of God are synonymous in Steele's thinking. They are used interchangeably throughout the New Testament.⁴ The kingdom of God was initially established on the

¹Daniel Steele, Half Hours With Saint John's Epistles (Chicago: Christian Witness Company, 1901), p. 169.

²Daniel Steele, "Our Question Box," Christian Witness and Advocate of Bible Holiness, New Series XXVIII (September 29, 1910), 6.

³Ibid., New Series XXI (January 22, 1903), 6.

⁴Daniel Steele, Antinomianism Revived (Boston, Mass.: McDonald Gill and Company, 1887), p. 246.

day of Pentecost. "It is invisible. All who submit to Christ are it's subjects."⁵ Into this kingdom no one enters of necessity, but of their own free will. The law of the kingdom is righteousness.⁶ "All who love righteousness love God, its perfect embodiment, and belong to this kingdom. Hence, it is purely spiritual with an ethical basis."⁷ Steele believed that the church would be developed by preaching and will develop gradually until it's ultimate triumph.⁸

The Church visible. Steele believed the visible church to be a congregation of faithful men in which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments properly administered.⁹ According to New Testament teaching, Steele believed that any believer indwelt by the Holy Spirit may baptize and administer communion.¹⁰

A company of believers in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, whether anyone of them has been ordained or not is a New Testament Church, in which anyone may baptize and administer the Lord's Supper.¹¹

Steele felt it was up to each individual church to choose their

⁵Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXI (July 7, 1904), 6.

⁶Daniel Steele, Jesus Exultant (Chicago: Christian Witness Company, 1904), pp. 118, 119.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Steele, Antinomianism Revived, loc. cit.

⁹Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XV (December 9, 1897), 6.

¹⁰Ibid., New Series XX (May 22, 1902), 6.

¹¹Ibid.

particular administrative policy.¹²

The "church" or ecclesia is an assembly of those who love and obey the Lord Jesus Christ, observe their own religious rites, hold their own meetings for the promotion of their own spirituality and for the conversion of sinners and the discipling of all nations and who manage their own affairs according to regulations prescribed for the body for order's sake.¹³

Steele held that a church existed wherever the Spirit of the Lord was present amongst believers. "Where the Spirit is there is the church."¹⁴ He viewed it as a place where the Spirit of the Lord is poured out in conviction and conversion of sinners.¹⁵

No form of church government was ordained by Christ. This was the prerogative of the Apostles. Steele maintained that any form of church government that promoted aggressive evangelism, the piety and purity of believers and was guided by the Holy Spirit, was of divine authority.¹⁶ Steele taught that it was God's desire to have a holy visible church. He realized the only way that this would be possible was that, "the Holy Spirit dwelling in holy hearts should provide over the visible organization."¹⁷ It was the mission of the Holy Spirit to

¹²Ibid., New Series XXV (April 11, 1907), 6.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Steele, loc. cit., (May 22, 1902).

¹⁵Ibid., New Series XVIII (February 8, 1900), 6.

¹⁶Ibid., New Series XXVI (September 17, 1908), 6; Ibid., (February 13, 1908), 6. Ibid., New Series XVII (February 2, 1899), 6.

¹⁷Daniel Steele, Gospel of the Comforter (Rochester, Penn.: Rev. H. E. Schmul, 1960), pp. 227-231.

preside over the church organization by means of persons filled with the Holy Spirit. This was why he looked upon it as necessary that Spirit filled people fill the positions of leadership in the church.¹⁸

Steele recognized that the visible church was not faultless; many discrepancies could be found. In spite of this, he believed the church to be an institution raised up of God in which God works to draw believers close to Him and sinners into the fold.¹⁹

II. THE MEANS OF GRACE

Steele taught that there are certain things that can and should be observed by believers in Christ that would serve to strengthen their faith. These are fasting, tithing, Bible reading and church attendance.

Fasting. Steele felt that the practice of fasting should not be made mandatory to members of the church. He maintained that fasting was an Old Testament precept and is no longer a requirement for evangelical Christians. Christ's law of love has done away with the Levitical practice. "Only the moral precepts of the Old Testament are required by Christ, whose royal law of love has abolished the Levitical

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Steele, "our Question Box," (December 9, 1897).

law."²⁰ Steele believed that fasting was out of harmony with a joyful gospel, he pointed out that when Christ was in the tomb, His followers had reason to fast, but not before, when He was with them nor afterward when He was risen from the dead.²¹

Steele testified that he personally, received no benefit from fasting.²² However, he did not discount the value it might have for others. To be of most value, he felt it must stem from a condition of heart. When a person's soul is hungry after God, it is profitable to discontinue eating and other body wants for a time that one may give himself to prayer, self examination and meditation.²³ In Steele's words, "Let all persons fast who have a spiritual conflict so severe or a burden of soul so heavy as to make them forget their meals."²⁴ To Steele, this was true fasting and the only kind that should be encouraged.

Tithing. Steele looked upon tithing very much the same as he did on fasting. He felt that a Christian is not under obligation to pay the tithe. On the basis of I Corinthians 15:2, every person is to

²⁰Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXIV (May 24, 1906), 6.

²¹Daniel Steele, "Dr. Steele on Fasting," New Series IX (January 3, 1891), 6.

²²Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XXVIII (August 11, 1910), 6.

²³Ibid., New Series XV (March 11, 1897), 6.

²⁴Ibid., New Series XVI (February 17, 1898), 6.

give as he is prospered of the Lord, whether it be less or more than the tithe. "The portion of his income to be given to God is left to each one as a part of his spiritual discipline."²⁵ Some can give more than the tithe, others cannot give their tithe and still have adequate to live on.²⁶ Like fasting, Steele, believed tithing to be an Old Testament precept and was annulled by Christ. If one emphasized tithing as a duty from it's Old Testament basis, he felt it only logical and right to emphasize and enforce circumcision, keeping of the feasts and worship in Jerusalem. Tithing must not be taught as a duty.²⁷

The work of the church must be carried on by the voluntary, systematic giving of the people of the church. If such giving was encouraged and taught the people, Steele believed the church and charitable needs would be adequately supplied.²⁸

Bible reading and church attendance. To Steele, Bible reading, prayer and church attendance were essentials necessary to the spiritual strengthening and advancement of the soul. He advised that, "if you must neglect any means of grace, be sure that it is not the ordinary meetings of the church, the preached word, the class, the prayer meeting and the

²⁵Ibid., New Series XVI (December 19, 1901), 6.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., New Series XVI (November 24, 1898), 6.

²⁸Ibid., New Series XVII (November 30, 1899), 6.

Sunday School."²⁹ There will be a hunger in the life of each Christian to read the Bible above all other reading material, and a corresponding desire to be in attendance at the scheduled services of the church.³⁰

Steele looked upon prayer as very important to the believer's spiritual advancement. Prayer is to reach beyond duty or drudgery and become a joy and delight. The baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the soul brings one out from the drudgery of prayer into the joy of prayer.³¹

III. LAST THINGS

Steele was called upon through the question and answer column he conducted, to give his viewpoints on matters pertaining to things to come. The study of this chapter dealt with Steele's answers to questions pertaining to the doctrine of last things.

Christ's second coming and judgment. Steele advocated that from the beginning to end the New Testament teaches that Christ is coming a second time to raise the dead and judge all mankind. Mt. 25:31-46 and Rev. 20:11-15 are the two basic and most outstanding scripture texts that he listed in support of this belief.³²

Steele believed the second coming of Christ marks the end of the world. At this time there will be a general resurrection of the dead,

²⁹Daniel Steele, Love Enthroned (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1875), pp. 396-398.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Steele, Half Hours With Saint Paul, pp. 26, 27

³²Steele, "Our Question Box," New Series XV (September 9, 1897), 6.

in which both the just and the unjust are involved. He held to only one resurrection.

I believe in one general resurrection of both the evil and the good, Dan. 12:2; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15. The first resurrection mentioned in Rev. 20:6 is probably the triumph of the cause for which the martyrs died.³³

To Steele, the first resurrection is a spiritual, not a literal one. Immediately following the resurrection the judgment will take place. Steele, also held to one public judgment of all men.³⁴ This judgment will include believers as well as unbelievers, where all offenses against God's government shall be publicly confessed. Even those forgiven of sins will remember and confess them publicly, though they are not remembered against them, for they have been cleansed by the blood of Christ. The purpose of the judgment is to show to all moral intelligences the justness of the administration of the Son of God and the greatness of God's mercy.³⁵

The Millenium. Steele held to the post-millennial view of Christ's return. Before Christ returns the Gospel of Christ will have world wide acceptance. This is to be brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit through the church. Peace and freedom will prevail throughout as the human race will have reached it's climax. Steele said, " I believe the

³³Ibid., New Series XVII (November 2, 1899), 6.

³⁴Ibid., New Series XVIII (October 25, 1900), 6; Ibid., New Series XIX (January 31, 1901), 6.

³⁵Ibid., New Series XVI (January 13, 1898, 6; Ibid., New Series XVII (August 24, 1899), 6; Ibid., New Series XIX (January 31, 1901), 6; Ibid., New Series XXVI (May 28, 1908), 6.

world is steadily growing better. With my knowledge of history I cannot be a pessimist."³⁶ However, he did not believe that all would be saved. Some would reject Christ and be lost, but these would be a minority.

I teach that the whole world will be evangelized by such agencies as are now in use and the mass of humanity will become believers in Christ to the salvation of their souls, and that righteousness will then cover the face of the earth as waters cover the face of the deep. As there are islands in the sea, so there will be some men who will resist the mighty tidal waves of salvation which will roll over the continents.³⁷

Steele believed the saints will reign with Christ, not on earth, but in heaven. On the basis of Revelation 5:10, he believed the saints are presently reigning on earth.³⁸

The Intermediate State of the Dead. Steele believed that the Scripture taught that the righteous dead are in a state of conscious happiness awaiting their full reward at the resurrection and glorification of their bodies.³⁹ The wicked dead are in a state of consciousness, but in continual torments. Those who have died in a state of rejection and unbelief are in a condition of conscious imprisonment, awaiting final judgment.⁴⁰

³⁶Ibid., New Series XVI (November 24, 1898), 6.

³⁷Ibid., New Series XVIII (December 27, 1900), 6.

³⁸Ibid., New Series XVII (February 1899), 6; Ibid., New Series XIX (December 12, 1901), 6.

³⁹Ibid., New Series XVI (January 27, 1898), 6; Ibid., New Series XVI (October 20, 1898), 6.

⁴⁰Ibid., New Series XVI (August 4, 1898), 6; Ibid., New Series XIX (September 26, 1901), 6.

Steele listed the following passages of scripture as supporting his belief in the intermediate state of consciousness: Eccl. 12:7; Lk. 23:43; 20:37, 38; 23:46; Acts 7:49; Lk. 15:19-31; II Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:21-24; II Peter 2:9; Rev. 6:9-11; 14:13, and Rm. 8:38, 39.⁴¹

Eternal punishment. To Steele, the fact of eternal punishment was a very clear teaching in the Bible. He allowed that the terms used to portray eternal punishment may be material emblems for indescribable remorse. If the fire of hell be figurative it does not lessen the suffering. Steele himself believed the fire to be figurative and those in hell to be in eternal remorse.⁴²

Steele was often asked about the annihilation of the wicked. From his study of the Bible, he made the following observation: "It is utterly foreign to the Bible to speak of annihilation of anything, and much more of a free moral intelligence."⁴³ The Bible speaks much of the eternal punishment of Satan and his angels, those who have taken on his image, Steele observed, but not of the annihilation of them.⁴⁴

Steele listed the following scripture texts giving proof to the doctrine of eternal punishment: Mt. 12:32; 25:46; 26:24; Mk. 3:29; 9:43;

⁴¹Ibid., New Series XVI (September 29, 1898), 6; Ibid., New Series XXVI (May 14, 1908), 6.

⁴²Ibid., New Series XVII (February 16, 1899), 6.

⁴³Ibid., New Series XVI (September 29, 1898), 6.

⁴⁴Ibid., New Series XIX (March 14, 1901), 6.

Rev. 14:11 and 20:10.⁴⁵

IV. SUMMARY

Steele viewed the church as being both invisible and visible. The Church invisible is made up strictly of believers who have been purified in heart by faith in Jesus Christ. It is the mystical body of Christ, of which Christ, Himself is the head. The Church invisible and the kingdom of God were seen to be the same.

The church visible is made up of all the congregations of believers who meet together to worship for their own spiritual benefit and to bring sinners to Christ. It may vary in systems of government from church to church, but the one essential for it to be a church was that the Holy Spirit must be present in the convicting and converting of sinners.

Steele held that the church practiced and advocated certain means of grace that would be instrumental in strengthening the believer's faith. These must not be made mandatory upon anyone, but should be practiced as the believer desires and feels led of the Holy Spirit. While they were not obligatory, he strongly urged that they should not be neglected.

On the basis of the clear teaching of the Bible, Steele believed that Christ will come a second time. At His coming, the dead shall be raised; the judgment shall follow and each shall be given his due reward. The righteous shall enter into life eternal and the wicked into eternal punishment.

⁴⁵Ibid., New Series XIX (March 7, 1901), 6; Ibid., New Series XXIV (June 21, 1906), 6.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

It was stated in the first chapter that this report included a study of all of Steele's obtainable writings. All of his writings were read at least twice, some three times or more. On the basis of the study of these writings, Steele's theme was found to be centered upon the doctrine of Christian perfection. Thus, the doctrines with which he was concerned were presented in their relationship to the doctrine of Christian perfection.

Chapter two presented a historical survey of the Methodist Church during Steele's active church life, 1820 to the early 1900's. It also presented a historical survey of the doctrine of Christian perfection for this same period of time. It was seen that the Methodist Church drifted away from the preachment of the doctrine of Christian perfection. Steele observed this trend and believed the doctrine of Christian perfection to be vital to the spiritual life and growth of Methodism. He gave himself to the proclamation of it as the solution to Methodism's shortcomings. Christian perfection was seen to be the doctrine that was predominant in Steele's thinking. His theology was systematized around this doctrine.

The third chapter presented Steele's teaching relative to the three persons of the Godhead. Through the work of the Father, Son and

which the Scripture speaks of as the body of Christ and the bride of Christ. The church visible was the means whereby believers were organized for the purposes of worship and propogation. Included with the doctrine of the church was Steele's teaching in regard to different means of grace, such as fasting, tithing, Bible reading, church attendance and prayer. The participation willingly and faithfully in these things served to strengthen the believer's faith and benefit him spiritually.

Steele did not write a lot in the area of last things. Only as he was called upon to do so, did he offer his views. The fact of Christ's coming again to judge all men and to give them their just reward was, to Steele, plainly taught by Scripture. The teaching of eternal punishment for the wicked and eternal life for the believers in Christ was also maintained from Scripture. In the light of these truths, Steele advocated that it behooved everyone to give heed to the right relationship to God that is available to all by faith in Jesus Christ.

II. CONCLUSIONS

In the introductory chapter the problem of this study was stated as follows; This study had a threefold objective, (1) to set forth Steele's position on the doctrines with which he dealt in his writings; (2) to find, if possible, the central doctrine upon which his theology is based; and (3) to systematize Steele's theology on the basis of this central doctrine. On the basis of the study that has been presented, the following statements express the solution to that problem:

1. Steele's doctrinal position is in general agreement with evangelical Christendom. He believed in the Trinity, creation and fall of man, the state of natural man as being sinful, the need for blood atonement, the grace of justification, regeneration and sanctification, the Church as both invisible and visible, and the return of Christ to judge the world. Thus he is at one with the Reformers in general and Wesley in particular.

2. Although Steele gave at least some attention to all the cardinal doctrines, he placed the doctrine of Christian perfection at the center of his thinking. Thus his writings tend to be a theology of Christian perfection.

3. In systematizing his theology on the basis of Christian perfection being its central idea, Steele not only gave a major proportion of his attention in writing to this doctrine, but also tended to put strong emphasis upon the subjective change in man that takes place at the time of his salvation.

4. The emphasis of Steele upon this one doctrine has both advantages and disadvantages. It has the virtue of making one doctrine serve a central purpose, thus giving the idea of coherence and intertwining relationships. It also gave opportunity to deal at length with every facet of God's scheme of redemption. On the other hand, such an emphasis has the defect of slighting some doctrines and of omitting others almost entirely. For instance, little is said by Steele about the doctrine of God, though in certain places his ideas of God came out as he expounded his beliefs. Again, little is said about the pre-

incarnate Christ, which lack would tend to weaken Christology.

5. A strong note of optimism regarding God's ability to save man from sin runs throughout Steele's writings. This was due, in part, to his emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. The ultimate issue of Steele's optimism led to belief in the ushering in of the millenium by the propogation of the Gospel. Whether or not one accepts his belief in this matter, the wholesome optimism of Steele's outlook is a refreshing change from the pessimism of unbelief.

6. The doctrine of Christian perfection takes on added respectability as Steele presented it for he combined a very intelligent mind with a worshipful heart. This combination served to make the doctrine more favorably accepted on the part of all acquainted with his works.

7. Throughout all of his presentation of doctrine, Steele was concerned that it was based upon Scripture. While he was Wesleyan in his doctrinal position, his writings have established him more firmly as being Biblically oriented. He was not without the authority of Scripture in the position he maintained.

8. Steele succeeded in making the doctrine logically meaningful by clearly distinguishing the difference between absolute perfection, which belongs only to God and Christian or evangelical perfection that may be enjoyed by all who repent of sin and exercise faith in Jesus Christ.

9. While it has not been true to any completely successful degree in church history, Steele saw Christian perfection as being an anti-

dote to the advances of modernism. To some extent, though it is difficult to measure, it has served to this end and holds the potential for fully accomplishing this task.

Stated in one sentence, the conclusion of the entire matter is as follows: The theological thought of Daniel Steele had its integrating center in the doctrine of Christian perfection, from which its inner unity, potency, and the harmony of its several parts took its rise, and secured its dynamic for an effectual salvation of man for both the present and the future.

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