

of these new disciples—men like the Wesleys, Robert Strawbridge, George Whitefield, Francis Asbury, Nathaniel Perigau, Thomas Coke, Philip Gatch and all the others. And also, there was something Christ-like in the courage, zeal and determination in these men who sought to breathe new life and new spirit into the Church of Christ. They, as we, were born in a sinful and troubled world, and they sought its redemption in a return to the simple teachings of the beginning—to the unadorned doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount.

Perhaps it would be well if we, too, turned to the past for guidance—we who are being swept forward with such swiftness that we hardly have time to look back over our shoulders. The evil of our era, one reads and hears almost every day, is its uncertainty and its instability. It has been called, among other things, “The Age of Anxiety.” Its materialism, its false values, its lack of purpose are deplored by men who have the wisdom to understand it and the conscience to be concerned about it. We see about us crime, delinquency, poverty, conflict and turmoil. And all this in surroundings of so much material abundance that mankind no longer should have to struggle against nature for his livelihood. One would think that a race of men so blessed would be occupied only with refining body, mind and spirit and learning to live with one another in peace and happiness. But this we do not find. We find, instead, not enough happiness and not enough peace. And men are tormented by fear, hatred and anxiety.

If the root of our illness lies in materialism, false values and want of aim, then the remedy should be easy to prescribe. We can cast out materialism and replace it with things of the spirit. We can substitute true values for spurious ones. We can set our minds on worthwhile goals and direct our efforts toward their achievement. But simple prescription, unfortunately, is not enough. Men, somehow, must be brought to understand, in their own souls, that spiritual values are higher than material values and that if they move through life aimlessly they are headed for chaos.

Maybe we need more of the kind of preaching and exhorting that were practiced by our Methodist forebears to inject these plain truths into the minds of people. Maybe a little fire and brimstone would shock us into a realization of the error of our ways. Certainly I think that we must amend our lives, in both thought and deed, if we expect to retain the fruits of our heritage and proceed on the road to civilization that has been so carefully laid out by those who went on before us. As I told Methodists in Salisbury three weeks ago, this we can best do, I think, by turning back to the simple philosophy and faith of our