

# Wesley and Sanctification

by

Harald Lindström

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

[TITLE PAGE](#)

[PREFACE](#)

[INTRODUCTION](#)

### Problems and Previous Interpretations

*Experience in Wesley's theology:* Increasing attention now paid to the theoretical element in Wesley. His theology has been called a theology of experience. In this he both supersedes and conforms to the spirit of the Enlightenment. Bett and Workman represent the subjectivist interpretation of Wesley. Revision of this in Cell, Lee, Frost, and Schmidt.

*Wesley's theological outlook:* Early general expositions by Schneckenburger, Loofs, and McGiffert. Two interpretations: one Reformed, the other Arminian Anglican. The latter found in Leger, Piette, Rattenbury, Petri, Lee, Knox, and Impeta. The former in Cell (though Cell also gives prominence to the Arminian element), von Eicken, Scott, Schmidt, Lerch, and Lang. A third interpretation: Methodism the source of the so-called sanctification movements in Protestantism.

*Wesley and sanctification:* Defects in previous interpretations; difficult to place sanctification in correct perspective. The conception is usually undervalued. The internal context inadequately elucidated.

*The present work:* A systematic-theological study of sanctification. Primary sources.

[CHAPTER ONE](#)

## SANCTIFICATION AND THE NATURE OF MAN

### I. The State of Natural Man Determined by Original Sin

*The collective view of sin:* Wesley's conception of man helps us to understand his attitude to salvation. His conception of sin up to 1738. Wesley's clearer conception of sin accompanied by new insight into justification by faith. This conception grounded on the doctrine of original sin, which

also becomes the basis of his doctrine of justification. The condition of natural man: totally corrupt through sin and consequent guilt. The *primaevae* state and the fall of man. Original sin and Adam's sin. The meaning of original sin: loss of primitive perfection and total corruption of human nature; a subjective-psychological and an objective-judicial view; original sin as inherent corruption and as guilt. The doctrine of original sin emphasizes the idea of grace.

*The individualistic view of sin:* Stress laid on personal awareness of original sin. Original sin brings guilt, but this is imputed and not personal; the punishment is different. The individualistic view reconciled with the collective. Wesley's individualism the result of his Arminian view of election. The possibility of real choice.

## II. Original Sin and Specific Sins. Personal Sin

The relation between original and specific sins. The personal sins: inward and outward; the process of sin. Wesley's empiricism led him to attend particularly to personal sin.

## III. The Conceptions of Sin and Salvation

*The objective-judicial aspect:* Sin is guilt just as salvation is forgiveness. (Justification in Wesley's conception of salvation).

*The subjective-medical aspect:* Sin is disease just as salvation is restoration of the soul to health. (Sanctification in Wesley's conception of salvation).

## IV. Preventive Grace and Salvation

Something in man has survived the Fall but this does not make salvation easier. The doctrine of preventive grace acquires increasing importance under the influence of Arminianism. Some knowledge of God in everyone through preventive grace, which is primarily a manifestation of conscience. It is supernatural. Wesley reconciles the doctrines of original sin and preventive grace; the results of doing so.

## V. The Conception of Man in the Twenty-five Articles of 1784

The doctrine of original sin in the Twenty-nine Articles and in Wesley's abridgement. Wesley's views on this matter. The Article on free will.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ATONEMENT, JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION

#### I. Atonement

*The breach with Law in 1738:* The importance of atonement in Wesley. Law's view of salvation and atonement. Wesley's view of atonement and the effect of that view on the relation between

justification and sanctification. The implications of Wesley's breach with Law and the mystics.

*Atonement in the Thirty-nine Articles and The Homily of Salvation:* The idea of satisfaction can already be detected in the Articles. The same idea in The Homily of Salvation. Its presumption in the conception of God.

*Wesley's view of atonement:* Determined by the orthodox doctrine of satisfaction in the earliest Evangelical sermons; and subsequently. This is also seen in another controversy with Law. The difference in the conception of atonement due to a difference in the conception of God. Wesley diverges from Zinzendorf as well. Side by side with the conception of justice in his doctrine of satisfaction we find the conception of grace in his doctrine of atonement. The notion of the Atonement as a work of liberation and conquest is present but ancillary. Instead Wesley associates the idea of conquest with the work of Christ in man: the New Birth and sanctification. Wesley, however, also diverges from the orthodox view: satisfaction does not imply the active obedience of Christ in the orthodox sense. Thus the imputation of Christ's righteousness is not a factor in justification; and thus the fulfillment of the law is linked up with sanctification and not with atonement and justification.

## II. The Law

The law is not regarded as an evil power overcome by Christ in the Atonement. This law, the moral law, is an emanation of the Divine Essence. The characteristics of the law: holiness, justice, and goodness. The meaning of the Christian's freedom from the law. The three uses of the law. The third use of the law: its place in the Christian life.

## III. Justification and Sanctification

*The relation between atonement, justification, and sanctification:* The relation of the two latter to the former. Definition of justification and sanctification: a relative change and a real change. The relation between justification and sanctification in the doctrine of justification by faith: the Reformed attitude. There is nevertheless a difference as compared with Luther and a doctrine of justification determined by the idea of predestination. The latter particularly evident in the idea of repentance before faith. A synergistic tendency due to Wesley's Arminianism.

*The importance of sanctification in Wesley's view of salvation:* The relative change in justification is given logical priority, but the stress is laid on the real change in the New Birth and sanctification. A teleological tendency in the view of salvation. The emphasizing of the real change a result of Wesley's hostility to Antinomianism. Faith regarded as the means and fulfillment of the law as the end. The importance of sanctification also appears in his definition of the nature of religion and Methodism.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SANCTIFICATION AND THE ORDER OF SALVATION

#### I. General Survey of the Order of Salvation

The order of salvation takes the form of a process in which the gradual and instantaneous elements coalesce. The various meanings of salvation. The place of baptism in the order of salvation. The order of salvation in Wesley's first Evangelical period. The order of salvation subsequently.

## II. The Stages

The effects of prevenient grace. Repentance before justification and the fruits of this repentance. Justification and the New Birth. Repentance after justification and the fruits of this repentance. Christian perfection. Final justification or final salvation and glorification. Modifications and alterations.

## III. The Process of Salvation and Sanctification

A gradual development characteristic of Wesley's mode of thought. This is combined with the instantaneous approach, by which salvation is seen as an ascent by steps. This ascent by steps was the principle on which Wesley organized the Methodist societies. The means of grace and sanctification. The various meanings of sanctification and its place in the order of salvation. Sanctification is both gradual and instantaneous. The relation of sanctification to justification is dual: it must be determined with respect to both present and final justification. The consequences of this.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

#### I. The Importance and General Significance of the Idea of Perfection

This idea a typical expression of Wesley's teleological view of salvation. Various terms designating perfection. The influence of practical mysticism and the liturgical tradition of the Church of England. Agreement with practical mysticism as represented by Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, and William Law. And differences. Compared to the Reformation and Zinzendorf. Some further general features of Christian perfection and modifications.

#### II. Christian Perfection in Greater Detail

The difference between entire sanctification and new birth. Deliverance from original sin. Perfection not absolute: it is adapted to the present circumstances of man. The law subjected to adaptation. Sin similarly treated. But as well as the relative concept of perfection which determines the doctrine there is also a concept of absolute perfection and a corresponding concept of law and sin. The relation between entire sanctification and atonement. Tabulation.

#### III. Further Characteristics

Assurance of entire sanctification. Perfection and humility. Inward and outward holiness. Perfection becomes a perfecting of the personality.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CHRISTIAN LOVE

#### I. The Idea of Love in William Law

Present aims. Law's view of religion determined by the idea that through holiness man shall be qualified for eternal life. The nature of this holiness. This view reflected in his attitude to love. Neighbourly love is determined by the idea of imitation. This love is universal. It is a love of benevolence. Self-love as a legitimate form of Christian love. Legality and rationality in the idea of love and the whole conception of religion. Love to God the most proper form of man's love. Summary.

#### II. The Idea of Love in Wesley: General Characteristics

Wesley shares Law's teleological leaning; the consequences for his conception of salvation and his idea of love. The difference between them lies in Wesley's stressing of the causal view. The causal view linked up primarily with saving faith in atonement. But since salvation is seen as a process the causal approach is subordinate to the teleological. Love closely bound up with the idea of law. Rationality in the idea of law. Order and harmony in religion, and love becomes ordered love.

#### III. Love in Relation to its Objects

*Love to God:* A causal and Reformed view. Another alignment in keeping with Law and mysticism seen in the opposition between *frui* and *uti* and in the teleological approach. The teleological view persists but after 1738 is modified by a new point of departure; still, however, two main forms of love are compared: love to the Creator and love to the creature. The nature of these two kinds of love. Purity of intention as an expression of man's proper attitude to God. His fundamental teleology makes love to God dominate in the idea of love.

*Neighbourly love:* This love is given greater emphasis in 1738 but love to God is still the main principle. The motives of neighbourly love: love to God, imitation of God, the idea of the Creation. The nature and scope of this love: as in Law it is a universal benevolence. Graduation and regulation: three concentric circles. His ecumenical outlook.

*Self-love:* This idea employed to underline the importance of brotherly love. Considered a legitimate form of Christian love; the relation between neighbourly love and self-love. Ultimately self-love and neighbourly love are expressions of love to God.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SANCTIFICATION AND FINAL SALVATION

#### I. Final Salvation as a Work of God

The dual relation between justification and sanctification the result of a twofold view of salvation: present and final salvation; this expressed in the two main themes in Wesley's teaching, 'Salvation by faith alone, and 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord'. These merge in saving faith: continuing in faith the condition of final salvation. The faith active in love is meant. Entire sanctification, the condition of final salvation, a promise which God will fulfil. This view expressed in the sermon entitled Satan's Devices (1750). Final salvation, organically connected with present salvation, evangelically presented.

## II. Final Salvation and the Works of Man

Continuance in faith also dependent on the Christian himself; the importance of works in upholding and developing the Christian life. Works issuing from faith necessary to final salvation. The holiness necessary to final salvation is a condition but not a merit. Fletcher's interpretation of Wesley's position. The organic connection between present and final justification in Fletcher. Reasons for emphasizing works: Wesley's antagonism to Antinomianism. This antagonism an outcome of his Arminian view of election and of his doctrine of prevenient grace. A synergistic feature.

## III. Sanctification and Twofold Salvation

Wesley's causal and teleological outlooks manifested in his twofold view of salvation. Tensions involved in the idea of a twofold justification. The idea of sanctification dominates his view of salvation since salvation is seen as a process directed to the ultimate goal of the Christian life, final salvation.

### [BIBLIOGRAPHY](#)

---

# WESLEY AND SANCTIFICATION

A STUDY IN THE DOCTRINE  
OF SALVATION

BY

HARALD LINDSTRÖM

1946

(no copyright).



The author's dedication:

*To my Father  
and the memory*

*of my Mother*

# Wesley and Sanctification

by

**Harald Lindström**

---

## PREFACE

The first debt I must record in publishing this book is to my past and present teachers in the Theological Faculty of Upsala University. I am particularly indebted to Professor Hjalmar Lindroth, the benefit of whose instruction I have enjoyed over a long period and who has shown unflinching interest in my Wesley studies since their inception. I would like to offer him my most grateful thanks for his help and encouragement. I have profited greatly from the opportunity he gave me to present my views on Wesley for discussion in the Senior Seminar in Dogmatics; under Professor Lindroth's leadership this Seminar has been a most lively and instructive forum and I have found continuous stimulation in its activities. I also wish to express my deep gratitude to Professor Sigfrid von Engeström for his valuable guidance; and to Bishop Torsten Bohlin and Bishop Arvid Runestam, late occupants of the Chairs of Dogmatics and Ethics respectively. It was Bishop Bohlin who first awakened my serious interest in systematic theology.

I am aware of the deepest obligation to friends and fellow students for many fruitful discussions, especially to Dr. Gösta Hök, Docent in Dogmatics, and to the Rev. Lennart Akerlund, who has sacrificed much time in helping me read the proofs and in checking references.

My warm thanks are also due to my friend the Rev. Göte Bergsten, Director of the St. Luke Foundation in Stockholm, who read the MS and made many valuable suggestions. I am also indebted to Bishop Theodor Arvidson for the interest he has shown in my studies. Through his good offices this book will be published by *Nya Bokförlags Aktiebolaget*, to which Press I also extend my thanks.

I am sincerely grateful to Mr. H. S. Harvey, M.A., B.Litt., Lecturer in English at Upsala, for his careful and skilled translation of the MS.

I am greatly obliged to friends who have given me generous help in compiling the index of names and in reading proofs, particularly to Mr. David Eriksson, Fil. Lie. and to Mr. Gösta Brodin, Fil. Lie.

My warm acknowledgements are also due to all those who have lent me otherwise unobtainable books. Their kindness has been very helpful indeed at a time when wartime conditions have almost totally prevented the importation of foreign publications.

I must also tender my thanks to the British Council, which has contributed financially towards the publication in English of this book.

It remains to pay a warm tribute to my wife for help in reading the proofs and for invaluable

assistance in countless other ways.

Upsala, April 1946.

*Harald Lindström.*

---

# Wesley and Sanctification

by

**Harald Lindström**

---

## INTRODUCTION

### Problems and Previous Interpretations

John Wesley, it is claimed, "has had a wider constructive influence in the sphere of practical religion than any other man who has appeared since the sixteenth century."<sup>1</sup> Naturally, the books about him are legion. The vast majority, however, treat him historically, or from the point of view of religious psychology; comparatively few have subjected his theological position to close scrutiny.

This fact reflects the usual conception of Wesley. He was the inaugurator and leader of the Methodist revival, and it is the practical, not the theological, aspect of his contribution to religion that looms largest in the popular consciousness. And this is obviously in accord with the facts. Even his thinking is practical in its aims. The principal stress falls not on opinions and doctrines, but on cast of mind and way of life.

Yet these considerations must not lead us to overlook the importance of the theoretical foundation of Wesley's message, which unites a strongly didactic with a prophetic element. Moreover, several of his publications are devoted exclusively to the treatment of problems of central importance in theology.

Increasing attention has been paid to the theoretical element in Wesley. Stephen found him almost entirely practical.<sup>2</sup> And just as Wesley himself was not considered a speculative thinker, the movement emanating from him was thought untheoretical.<sup>3</sup> A more theoretical evaluation will be found in Eayrs, who uses the religio-philosophical approach, presenting Wesley's thought as a system based on experience.<sup>4</sup> By making everything turn on Christian experience, Wesley was able to pass beyond the proofs of the truth of religion advanced by such contemporary philosophers as Berkeley, Clarke and Butler. And Eayrs came to the conclusion that Wesley "made a notable contribution to thought in his century and for all time."<sup>5</sup> Further, in Wesley's "theological empiricism," Cell saw the fruits of constructive theological thinking.<sup>6</sup>

In its general structure Wesley's view of Christianity has usually been described as a theology of experience. His affirmation of Christian experience is considered his main characteristic. Against the background of Deism and rationalism, Wesley and the Evangelical movement in England are seen as reactionary phenomena: an emotional reaction against an earlier intellectualism.<sup>7</sup> Rationalism had

to give way to faith and feeling.<sup>8</sup> At the same time the reaction marks a transition from natural to supernatural religion.<sup>9</sup> Wesley emphasized the necessity of God's self-revelation<sup>10</sup>; although, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, man is able to enter into immediate communion with God<sup>11</sup>.

Wesley's insistence on Christian experience means that he both supersedes and conforms to the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment led to the scepticism of Hume, but it was surmounted in Wesley by means of an irrationalism which naturally looked like enthusiasm to Locke and Butler and Hume.<sup>12</sup> Whereas to Butler faith was a matter of intellectual conviction, to Wesley, in the words of Mossner, it was "an inward sentiment of instinctive feeling."<sup>13</sup> Cell maintains that Wesley's contribution did not lie merely in superseding the narrow rationalism of the age by attributing prime importance in religious experience to feeling and will, but also -- and indeed chiefly -- in his strong reaction against the prevalent humanist Christianity and in going "clean over to a theocentric doctrine of Christian experience."<sup>14</sup> At the same time, Cell points out, he upheld the empirical principles of the Enlightenment in his appeal to experience and in his construction of an experiential theology.<sup>15</sup> With his experiential thinking, his way of regarding the Christian faith in the light of experience, Wesley built a bridge from the old to the new Protestantism.<sup>16</sup>

Bett, taking a strictly empirical view of Wesley, maintains that he founded religion and theology in the fact of experience.<sup>17</sup> Experience, if it is genuine, must concur with Scripture, but the former is regarded as the final authority. In this Bett sees the main contribution of Methodism to modern theological thought and method.<sup>18</sup> It anticipated Schleiermacher<sup>19</sup>, and at the same time, through the primary emphasis it gave to religious experience, it brought "the work of the Reformation to its legitimate and logical conclusion<sup>20</sup>." Earlier Workman on much the same lines as Bett but with even greater consistency, had insisted that the central fact about Wesley was his appeal to experience and particularly his doctrine of Assurance. This idea Workman calls "a lasting contribution to the life and thought of the universal Church."<sup>21</sup> He sees it as the fundamental principle of Methodism and the explanation of its widespread influence; also as "the complete expression of that individualism the desire for which ... lay at the root of the Reformation."<sup>22</sup> It was from this appeal to experience, moreover, that Wesley's doctrine of perfection sprang; the latter is regarded as a corollary of the former. The possibility of assurance of acceptance, Workman thinks, brought in its train the further possibility that "that consciousness shall be complete, 'without a cloud between'."<sup>23</sup> Even Wesley's Arminianism., his belief in God's universal will of salvation, is to Workman a necessary corollary in his doctrine of assurance, which was based upon his appeal to experience.<sup>24</sup>

It is clear that such an approach might easily lead to an oblique and a too one-sided and subjective view of Wesley. Yet the adducing of additional factors and a shift of emphasis would undoubtedly make it more complete and nearer the truth. Thus Cell, who insisted on Wesley's theocentricity, shifted the emphasis from subjectivity towards objectivity. Lee and Frost also helped to correct the earlier one-sided view. Thus Lee maintains that it is only half true to say that Wesley revolted against the eighteenth-century idea of religion as purely doctrine and outward respectability, substituting the faith and feeling of the individual.<sup>25</sup> Lee points out that in Wesley inward, individual experience is subject to the regulative control of the Bible, particularly as interpreted by the primitive Fathers, and reason.<sup>26</sup> Contending that the experiential element in Wesley has been exaggerated, Lee also adduces other factors in his theology, ethical, rational and institutional. The typical thing about Wesley, the idea that has given him his place in the history of Christianity, Lee finds, is his "combination of mystical experience with the ethical, the rational, and the institutional

elements in religion."<sup>27</sup> The objective alignment of Wesley's thought is also brought out by Frost, who has made a special study of his attitude to authority. Experience is an important element and considered an authority, but the final authority is the Bible.<sup>28</sup> Wesley himself was fully alive to the danger of making too much of individual experience: if man is not to go astray it must be checked by the Bible.<sup>29</sup> And here a final reference might be made to Schmidt. In a study of Wesley's religious evolution up to 1738 he calls attention to the objective leaning of Wesley's conception of faith. There is a conflict, he says, between two concepts of faith, on the one hand that which centres on facts (justification, sin, judgment) and on the other that which centres on psychical attributes (inner peace and joy); but the former takes precedence. In other words Schmidt maintains that the Reformed conception of faith won ascendancy over the Pietist<sup>30</sup>, although in this respect psychical factors played a more important part for Wesley than for Luther<sup>31</sup>. From the objective point of view Wesley occupies a position midway between Luther and Pietism .<sup>32</sup>

Undoubtedly the one-sided and thus fallacious expositions of the experiential element in Wesley have required rectification, but the fact remains that Christian experience played a most important rôle in his theology. Scripture was the obvious foundation to which he always referred, but it was interpreted in the light of experience.<sup>33</sup> Further, this experience was not simply his own personal experience but that of the Christian fellowship.<sup>34</sup> At the same time positive value was ascribed to reason.

If we look further and try to determine the real tenor of Wesley's outlook, we are confronted by substantial problems. It is easy enough to indicate different features: High Church Anglicanism, with its roots in the traditions of the Early Church and its Arminianism. and practical mysticism; Calvinistic and Lutheran trends, the Lutheran view especially in the form of Pietism and Moravianism. But what is the dominant tendency: is there a single focal point? Or must we be content to identify the heterogeneous elements of a loose, ununified conglomeration?

In older studies prominence is frequently given to the Reformed trend, chiefly the Calvinistic, even when the complexity of Methodism is realized. We find Schneckenburger, for instance, describing it as "eine eigenthümliche Gestaltung des Protestantismus, und zwar eine dem arminianischen Wesen theils verwandte, theils entgegengesetzte Modification des reformierten Protestantismus... , welche aber bereits, durch die Brüdergemeinde vermittelt, lutherische Einwirkungen erfahren hat." It is described as a further phase in English Calvinism.<sup>35</sup> Loofs regards Wesley and Methodism as essentially a manifestation of "universalistisch gerichteten reformierten Protestantismus."<sup>36</sup> Both Wesley's own and the modern Methodist theologians' view of the relation between justification and sanctification is said to be "völlig korrekt." Yet certain "Eigenthümlichkeiten" are observable. For instance, the notion that entire sanctification can be attained in this life is found to be peculiar to Wesley.<sup>37</sup> McGiffert sees Wesley primarily as an exponent of English Evangelicalism in reaction against rationalism. The experience of 1738 is called the birth of English evangelicalism .<sup>38</sup> As a result of their antagonism to rationalism, the Evangelicals gave special prominence to doctrines which were repudiated or depreciated by it. Thus they emphasized human depravity and the necessity of redemption. Accordingly the doctrines of the deity and atonement of Christ are restored and the doctrine of regeneration becomes of primary importance.<sup>39</sup> Wesley follows Luther in his view of salvation as a present reality and in the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. In another respect, in his chiefly ethical view of salvation and in his doctrine of perfection, he agrees with German Pietism.<sup>40</sup> McGiffert also thinks that in the stress he lays on the Fall, Wesley is closer to

historical Calvinism than to the High Church Arminianism. of the time. McGiffert does not deny the influence of the latter on Wesley, but maintains that his Arminianism., according to which man has some share in the work of his own salvation, is no more rationalistic than Calvinism. It is compatible with, or capable of subordination to, the main Evangelical element. It is true that Wesley and Whitefield represent disparate types of Evangelicalism, the former Arminian, the latter Calvinistic; but McGiffert finds the underlying interest identical in essence in both.<sup>41</sup>

In modern Wesley scholarship the great problem has been to reconcile the Reformed and the Arminian element. Interpretations fall into two main categories. On the one hand prominence has been given to the Reformed element; it is this that looms largest even when an attempt is made to do justice to other features. Alternatively, Arminianism. is given pride of place, with similar consequences. The Reformed interpretation accentuates Wesley's view of justification, the Arminian his conception of sanctification. In the latter case it is held that Wesley combines a Reformed doctrine of justification with a near-Catholic view of sanctification.

This difference in judgement is again seen in the answers given by modern Wesley scholarship to the problem of what really happened in 1738. Did Wesley's great experience that year constitute a decisive step towards the Reformed outlook, or was no real change of direction involved? Ought we not perhaps to make 1725 the really important turning point, when, at Oxford, under the influence of practical mysticism, Wesley was first inspired by his ideal of sanctification?

If we do this, 1738 becomes only the culmination of a process dating from 1725. This is the argument advanced by Leger.<sup>42</sup> Later Piette also places the great turning point in 1725 instead of 1738. The experience of 1738 is described as "la conversion évangélique" or more precisely as "sa conversion à l'amour de Dieu."<sup>43</sup> What happened, Piette thinks, was not that Wesley was converted to the Lutheran doctrine of justification through the mediation of Peter Böhler, the Moravian. Böhler's influence was different. It was he who made Wesley realize the fundamental importance of the love of God in the Christian life. As a result of his experience the feeling of intimate fellowship with God definitely became the dynamic force in his inward life and the source of his strength.<sup>44</sup>

On the whole Rattenbury follows Piette, but puts greater weight on Wesley's evangelical experience, which links him up with St. Paul and Luther<sup>45</sup>; though the danger of Antinomianism, present in Lutheranism, is absent in Wesley. In Wesley the acceptance of the Pauline doctrine of justification cannot result in a solifidianism that neglects the means of grace and ignores the consequences of faith in life.<sup>46</sup> Rattenbury does not minimize the significance of Wesley's conversion in 1738. He says it meant a rediscovery of God<sup>47</sup> and was the foundation-stone of "the permanent historical values of the Evangelical Revival.<sup>48</sup>" But at the same time he is at pains to insist that in some respects Wesley remained a High Churchman even after 1738. In spite of his Evangelicalism, his sacramental teaching was largely High Church.<sup>49</sup> Like Piette, Rattenbury indicates traits in Wesley which he considers imply a Catholic reaction in the Protestant development. Thus he finds the individualism and intellectualism of Protestantism balanced in Methodism as in Catholicism by Wesley's affirmation of the institutional and social, as well as the emotional, aspects of religion.<sup>50</sup> The placing of the emphasis in the Christian life on love rather than on faith is another of Rattenbury's reasons for classifying Methodism with Catholic rather than Protestant devotion.<sup>51</sup>

Laura Petri and Lee also follow Piette's interpretation. Like Piette, Petri sees Wesley mainly as a

mediator between Protestantism and Catholicism.<sup>52</sup> Petri gives prominence to the idea of sanctity, which she makes the most characteristic feature in his portrait. Consequently she has to locate the real climax in Wesley's religious development in 1725, not in the so-called evangelical conversion of thirteen years later.<sup>53</sup> Lee, stressing the Reformed side even less than Petri, asserts that the experience of 1738 was "not an evangelical but a mystical conversion -- that is, the conversion of a religious man to a higher state of religious devotion."<sup>54</sup> The background necessary to an understanding of Wesley's mature position, Lee thinks, is neither German Pietism nor English Dissent, but seventeenth and eighteenth-century Anglicanism.<sup>55</sup> In contradistinction to the Calvinist interpretation, Wesley's affinity with prevailing High Church Anglicanism is affirmed. Lee sees this reflected in Wesley's attitude to man as well. Thus he finds the idea of prevenient grace, in which Wesley is said to evince a Catholic view<sup>56</sup>, consonant with High Church Anglicanism.

The main lines of this interpretation will be found in Knox, who knew Wesley personally. According to Knox the essential characteristic of Wesley's attitude was his consistent ethical leaning.<sup>57</sup> Böhrer's influence, which led him to embrace the Reformed doctrine of justification, is also seen primarily from this angle.<sup>58</sup> And the moral principle retained its supremacy.<sup>59</sup> In his attitude to justification<sup>60</sup> and faith<sup>61</sup> it is again the ethical aspect that meant most to Wesley. Knox calls attention to the Early Church, Anglican element and the parallels with mysticism.<sup>62</sup> The Lutheran influence on his conception of faith is pushed into the background: explained away as transient or modified with time.<sup>63</sup> In short, Knox focuses all his attention on Wesley's general definition of faith as belief in the invisible world in accordance with Hebrews xi. 1. This means that he entirely underrates Wesley's view of faith in the sense of saving faith, faith in the atonement of Christ.<sup>64</sup> The Arminian interpretation of Wesley can be further exemplified by another modern work. In a comprehensive study, Impeta maintains that in his process of salvation Wesley follows two main lines: one Calvinistic and the other Arminian.<sup>65</sup> They run parallel, but the latter gradually grows in strength and finally dominates altogether.<sup>66</sup> Wesley's "Calvinism" is regarded as a mere passing phase in his soteriological thinking.<sup>67</sup>

Cell is emphatically opposed to the strictly anti-Calvinist and Arminian interpretation which in Wesley sees a restorer of the Catholic tradition in English Christianity. He holds that the key to the understanding of Wesley lies in his radical criticism of the humanism which pervaded the Arminianism of the time.<sup>68</sup> Reacting against this humanistic Arminianism he "went clean over to a theocentric doctrine of Christian experience."<sup>69</sup> He returned to Luther's and Calvin's idea of a God-given faith.<sup>70</sup> Thus for Cell the turning point in Wesley's religious and theological development is the experience in London in the spring of 1738. Then Wesley "crossed his religious Rubicon."<sup>71</sup> In his attitude to the doctrine of salvation by faith he followed in the footsteps of Luther and Calvin. It was this that gave the revival its religious force.<sup>72</sup> On the other side Wesley did not permit his reaction against humanism to turn him into an ultra-Calvinist. His opposition, however, to ultra-Calvinism was subordinate to his evangelical reaction against humanism.

This is Cell's main point. Keeping it in mind he goes on to try to do justice to Wesley's Arminianism. Wesley, he thinks, combined with his Calvinism valuable elements in humanism, as represented in Arminianism and Anglican theology.<sup>73</sup> The doctrines of justification and sanctification are fused in a synthesis peculiar to Wesley, an amalgam of both Protestant and Catholic devotion. In this synthesis the doctrine of justification fulfilled the special needs of Protestant devotion and that of Christian

perfection those of Catholic. Wesley joined these two ideas in his doctrine of Christian experience.<sup>74</sup> Cell particularly emphasizes the agreement between Wesley's doctrine of justification and the theocentric outlook of Luther and Calvin. At the same time he is also anxious to point out that in this synthesis of justification and sanctification, God's work for us through Christ and His work in us through the Holy Spirit, Wesley "has transcended the principles of the Reformers, at any rate, has corrected a recognized limitation." He did this by combining the Reformed view of God's sovereign grace with the idea of saving faith as an active principle of holiness in the heart and life of man.<sup>75</sup> He combined the Reformed doctrine of man's total sinfulness and entire dependence on grace with the Arminian doctrine of a freedom in man which makes him an acting subject with moral obligations. It is true that logically these two principles are contradicted but in experience, Cell maintains, freedom and dependence are joined.<sup>76</sup>

Of those who lay stress on the Reformed element in Wesley von Eicken, Scott, Schmidt, Lerch, and Lang may also be mentioned. Both von Eicken and Scott consider that Wesley upholds the Reformation view of justification.<sup>77</sup> A departure, however, is seen in his idea of sanctification. The deviation here in relation to Luther is attributed by von Eicken in the main to the difference of period.<sup>78</sup> Scott maintains that the place given to the doctrine of love by Wesley corresponds to that held by faith in Luther.<sup>79</sup> The difference between Wesley and Lutheranism emerges most clearly of all in their ideas of the conditions of the Christian life.<sup>80</sup> Whereas the conflict between the old and the new life is an essential feature in Lutheranism<sup>81</sup>, Wesley affirms the assurance of acceptance and the growth and victory of the Christian life.<sup>82</sup>

In describing Wesley's religious development up to his conversion in 1738, Schmidt too thinks that he can prove the affinity with Luther in the doctrine of justification.<sup>83</sup> In the idea of the supremacy of faith over sin, however, he finds that Wesley deviates from Luther's conception of man as *simul justus et peccator*. In Wesley this idea is the first step in a perfectionist line of thought.<sup>84</sup> The difference from Luther is found to lie particularly in the problem of the law.<sup>85</sup> Whereas in Luther the conception of God discloses intense oppositions between *Deus absconditus* and *Deus revelatus*, between *opus proprium* and *opus alienum Dei*, in Wesley it is fundamentally homogeneous.<sup>86</sup> Wesley's closeness to the Reformation, despite points of deviation, is also one of Lerch's contentions. This writer treats the experience of 1738 as a profound crisis affecting the relation between justification and sanctification.<sup>87</sup> Wesley shares the Reformed principles of *sola scriptura* and *sola gratia*. In his strictly personal idea of faith he also agrees with the Reformers.<sup>88</sup> The difference, Lerch finds, lies in his Arminianism and in his conception of sanctification. Wesley had greater faith in the possibility of deliverance from the power of sin and of man's experience of it.<sup>89</sup> According to Lang, Wesley is "der gesegnete Herold der im Deismus weithin vergessenen reformatorischen Lehre von der Rechtfertigung aus Gnaden und Glauben allein."<sup>90</sup> He restored the evangelical interpretation of the Scriptures and salvation to English Protestantism.<sup>91</sup> Methodism is primarily Calvinistic, not Lutheran. Lerch defines it as a new form of puritanical Pietism.<sup>92</sup> Its marked tendency towards ethical activism is ascribed chiefly to Law's influence.<sup>93</sup> Wesley departed from puritanical Pietism in his view of predestination, and this had important results.<sup>94</sup> On the one hand it meant that he drew close to Lutheran Pietism, on the other that he found himself attuned to modern times. Nevertheless, the foundations remained Reformed. In essentials his type of devotion remained the puritanical, in Pietistic form.<sup>95</sup>

These are the two main trends in the interpretation of Wesley, but there is also a third line of approach, which sees in Methodism the source of the so-called sanctification movements in the Protestant Churches. These are thought to derive from Wesley's doctrine of perfection.<sup>96</sup> As in the Arminian interpretation the emphasis falls here on sanctification, but on its experiential aspect -- rather one-sidedly -- instead of on its real ethical import. Attention is concentrated on entire sanctification, conceived as a stage in the Christian life analogous to justification.<sup>97</sup>

The attention that has been paid to justification and sanctification in Wesley is natural. They are indeed of central importance in his preaching and thinking. His view of Christianity is dominated by a few central doctrines, which are reflected in Christian experience. First and foremost is salvation, its conditions and nature, and here Wesley is primarily concerned with justification and sanctification as the two fundamental doctrines.<sup>98</sup> Of these it is undoubtedly sanctification that receives major attention.

We have seen that the idea of sanctification has given rise to difficulties of interpretation. It has proved difficult to place in Wesley's view of salvation and to show its inner organic structure. Particularly the relation to justification has proved a stumbling block in attempts to place sanctification in its right perspective. On the one hand the doctrine of justification easily acquires such prominence that full justice cannot be done to that of sanctification. On the other hand, the reverse error is made equally easily. Further, with regard to the relation between the two, the dual function of justification -- both present and final justification -- is not sufficiently regarded. Thus, even when the relation between sanctification and present justification has been correctly determined, it does not follow that the same has been done with the relation between sanctification and final justification. Under these circumstances it is clear that the significance of sanctification cannot be fully appreciated.

Sanctification itself is rarely presented in its full range. The conception is normally restricted. Sometimes it connotes Christian perfection only, no regard being had to the gradual development of sanctification from its commencement in the New Birth. Sometimes, it is true, the latter is included, but then entire sanctification is minimized. In neither alternative, moreover, has the significance, for Wesley's total view of salvation, of the principle of entire sanctification, been clearly expounded.

A general defect in many expositions of Wesley's view of sanctification and of his theology in general, is the complete or partial neglect of the internal links.<sup>99</sup> In particular a more thorough analysis of his conceptions of sin, atonement, and the process of salvation, are necessary if we are to arrive at a more exact determination of the significance and place of sanctification in his view of salvation.

The aim of this study is to provide such a systematic-theological analysis of the function and significance of sanctification in Wesley's conception of salvation. Thus we shall try to see sanctification in its full scope and in its due relation to the conception of salvation as a whole. We shall try to elucidate the connection between sanctification and justification, with regard to final as well as present salvation. Only when this has been done will it be possible to understand the significance and place of the idea of perfection in his conception of salvation. Further, an understanding of the character of sanctification will call especially for a detailed examination of the idea of love, since love was regarded by Wesley as the very essence of sanctification. A study of

Christian love should also throw light on his attitude to Christianity as a whole.

In the present study we must also allow for development in Wesley's views. After 1738 they underwent certain alterations and these will be pointed out. But there was no real change of direction. It is true that the years 1741 and 1770 have been indicated as particularly significant in the development of his outlook. But on careful consideration it will be seen that neither of these years can be said to mark the commencement of new periods: in both cases any new emphasis does not really depart from earlier principles. Laying the main stress therefore on the year 1738 we shall consider the differences and resemblances in his views before and after that date. In order to present his opinions with greater clarity and at the same time to recall the historical context, we shall compare his views on essential points with the basic outlook of the Reformation and subsequent Orthodoxy. We shall pay especial attention to practical mysticism, by which he was influenced. The most important name here is that of William Law, a contemporary who represented Arminian and High Church Anglicanism. Further, we shall deal with some of the fundamental characteristics of the Church of England, and of Moravianism, which exercised considerable influence on Wesley during his religious crisis in 1738.

Our task is assisted by ample records, primarily Wesley's own books, letters, and journals. Although he never wrote a systematic exposition of his views, a great deal of what he did write is doctrinal in character. There are, for instance, his *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* and his so-called *Standard Sermons*. The Methodists regard these sermons as the depository of his essential doctrines and the standard for their teachings. Wesley says that in his *Explanatory Notes* his chief guide was Johann Albrekt Bengel's *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*; his own work was a translation and abridgment of this. But he also used two commentaries by English Dissenters, *The Family Expositor* by Dr. Philip Doddridge and *A Practical Exposition of the New Testament* by Dr. John Guyse. To a lesser degree he also made use of another contemporary English book, a commentary by Dr. John Heylyn, a High Churchman, entitled *Theological Lectures at Westminster Abbey with an Interpretation of the Four Gospels*.<sup>100</sup> As Lerch has shown, however, Wesley employed his sources with such independence that the result is a reflection of his own beliefs. He also provided his own textual interpretations and we are justified in regarding *Explanatory Notes*, like the sermons, as a reliable source of evidence on his outlook.<sup>101</sup> It is true, of course, that these pronouncements, usually very brief, cannot tell us as much as the longer and continuous expositions in the sermons and elsewhere.

It was long believed that the standard sermons consisted of the fifty-three sermons in the first four volumes of Wesley's collected works, which were published in 1771. Actually, however, the originally specified standard sermons were those contained in the first four volumes of his *Sermons*. These were published between 1787 and 1788 and were only forty-four in number. With the exception of one additional sermon the contents were identical with the four volumes first published: in 1746, 1748, 1750, and 1760.<sup>102</sup> To obtain as complete a picture as possible of his later years as well we shall also draw on other sermons. In these as well a doctrinal trend will usually be found side by side with practical aims.

Another obvious source for the present investigation is Wesley's abridgement of the Thirty-nine Articles, which became the doctrinal basis of American Methodism. We shall also make use of the minutes of the conferences at which problems of doctrine were discussed, as well as Wesley's major theological writings. Equivalent value will also be ascribed to his shorter dissertations and those of his tracts which are mainly didactic in character. On the other hand the purely edifying tracts,

although they often throw light on Wesley's general attitude, will be treated as of secondary importance. A third category is made up of such tracts and treatises as consist of extracts selected by Wesley from other authorities approved by him. These will not be accepted as independent evidence, but only as corroborating conclusions already substantiated. The Prefaces to *Hymns and Sacred Poems* add to our knowledge of his early Evangelical outlook.

The exceptionally copious collection of letters, covering the seventy years from 1721 to 1791, is extremely valuable, for they are full of pronouncements on the Christian belief and its implications, and thus serve as additional data in the elucidation of his theology. The Journal also serves our purpose. It does not illuminate his religious development only but also -- and in no slight degree -- his theological position. This famous work, which covers the period 1735 -1790 and is perhaps unique of its kind, is an extremely detailed document, but is, of course, like his private Diary, chiefly of interest from the point of view of religious psychology and history.

References are to, and quotations from, Jackson's edition of Wesley's Works, with the following exceptions: for the Standard Sermons, Sugden's edition has normally been used; for the Letters, Telford's edition; for the Journal, Curnock's edition. For *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, which is not included in Jackson's edition, the second edition of 1757 has been used. Two tracts not included in Wesley's collected works are cited in the original editions.

The dates given are Sugden's for the Standard Sermons, otherwise Jackson's. For this purpose I have found Green's Bibliography extremely valuable. The dates are those of publication, unless otherwise stated, except in the case of the Minutes, which are under the years when the conferences were held.

---

## FOOTNOTES

1 LECKY, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, II, p. 631. On his social importance, see SOMMER, *John Wesley und die soziale Frage*; BREADY, *England: Before and after Wesley*.

2 STEPHEN, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, II, pp. 409, 419. Cf. LECKY, *op. cit.*, p. 629.

3 *ib.*, p. 424.

4 "Anselm found in ontological reasoning support for his faith; Wesley argued from the facts of Christian experience. As a philosopher, he analysed and synthesized the contents of his consciousness and that of Christian persons, together with its results in character and conduct." EAYRS, *John Wesley. Christian Philosopher and Church Founder*, p. 131.

5 EAYRS, *op. cit.*, p. 138. Cf. p. 17, 51, 58, 180.

6 CELL, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley*, p. 5, 7 ff. Cf. BETT, *The Spirit of Methodism*, p. 129 f. "There is no intention," LEE says, "to claim great theological originality for Wesley, but it is argued here that Wesley's position, theologically as well as otherwise, gives him importance for modern religion. It is necessary, therefore to turn to a consideration of his thought" *John Wesley and Modern Religion*, p. 110. MCCONNELL is

more cautious. He does not maintain that Wesley contributed at all substantially to theological thought, but holds that he "pushed into the foreground some considerations of which religious teachers must take account" John Wesley, p. 144.

7 STEPHEN, op. cit., p. 434; OVERTON-RELTON, *The English Church from the Accession of George 1. to the End of the Eighteenth Century (1714-1800)*, p. 72 f.

8 McGIFFERT, *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, p. 189. Cf. the same writer's *Protestant Thought before Kant*, p. 170.

9 See STEPHEN, Op. Cit., p. 432; MCGIFFERT, *Protestant Thought before Kant*, p. 175. Cf. MCCONNELL, *John Wesley*, p. 199 f.

10 FROST, *Die Autoritätslehre in den Werken John Wesleys*, p. 89.

11 Cf. MCGIFFERT, *Protestant Thought before Kant*, p. 169, 171 f.

12 MOSSNER, *Bishop Butler and the Age of Reason*, p. 166.

13 *Ib.*, p. 166.

14 CELL, *Op. cit.*, P. 15.

15 *Ib.*, pp. 4 f., 7, 11 ff., 14 f.

16 *Ib.*, p. 5. Cf. PIETTE, *La réaction wesléenne dans l'évolution protestante*, p. 596: "L'expérience triomphante dans les sciences naturelles, Wesley est amené à la transporter dans le domaine religieux, dans la vie surnaturelle. Autour de ses expériences personnelles et de celles qu'il provoque dans ses disciples, tous ses écrits théologiques se polarisent. L'expérience religieuse est le pivot sur lequel reposent en dernière analyse ses publications doctrinales et ses sermons est le mouvement de ferveur qu'il déclancha." EAYRS (*Op. cit.*, p. 58), like PETRI (*John Wesley*, p. 268) and BETT (*Op. cit.*, p. 142 f.) later, says that Wesley turned to experience and applied Bacon's inductive methods to religion. Cf. also RATTENBURY, *Wesley's Legacy to the World*, p. 58: "Christianity at its centre is life. Wesley knew this, and discovered that Christianity could only be understood by experiment."

17 BETT, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

18 *Ib.*, pp. 131, 135 f.

19 *Ib.*, p. 131. EAYRS, *op. cit.*, pp. 181 ff., 186 f. mentions William James too but points also to differences.

20 BETT, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

21 WORKMAN, *The Place of Methodism in the Life and Thought of the Christian Church (Introduction to TOWNSEND and others, A New History of Methodism)*, p. 27. Cf. DIMOND, *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival*, p. 231; FINDLAY, article on Methodism, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 8, p. 610.

22 *Ib.*, p. 27.

23 *Ib.*, p. 31 f. DIMOND (*Op. cit.*, p. 244 f.) follows Workman.

24 *Ib.*, p. 34 ff.

25 LEE, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

26 *Ib.*, p. 139. Cf. p. 143: "In common with the historic Church, he recognized the Bible as the one rule of faith and practise; but he supplemented this by an acknowledgment of the priority of the primitive Fathers as interpreters, and by a recognition of the place of reason; and to this he added the authority of experience, the religious experience of man in its broadest sense, but particularly the testimony of the 'adult children of God'."

27 *Ib.*, p. 321.

28 See FROST, *Op. cit.*, p. 88 f.

29 *Ib.*, p. 89.

30 SCHMIDT, *Die Bedeutung Luthers für John Wesleys Bekehrung*, *Luther Jahrbuch* 1938, p. 154 f. Cf. the same writer's *John Wesleys Bekehrung*, p. 75.

31 *Ib.*, p. 157 f. See also p. 153 f.

32 *Ib.*, p. 154.

33 Cf. Wesley's preface to the standard sermons: "I have endeavoured to describe the true, the scriptural, experimental religion, so as to omit nothing which is a real part thereof, and to add nothing thereto which is not." *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 32. SUGDEN observes that Wesley "first worked out his theology by strict logical deduction from the Scriptures; and then he corrected his conclusions by the test of actual experience." "His class-meetings were," he adds, "a laboratory in which he verified or modified his hypotheses," *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 196, note. Cf. von EICKEN (*Rechtfertigung und Heiligung*, p. 68) who holds that Scripture corrected experience.

34 Cf. EAYRS, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 61, 63, 70, 73. Wesley "constantly corrected his understanding and interpretation of divine truth by comparison with that given to others." *Ib.*, p. 18. DIMOND (*Op. cit.*, p. 234) points out that Methodism escaped the danger pertaining to a system of thought built upon the experience of the individual by its appeal to collective experience as the final authority. Of this brake on individualism he says further: "And beyond the same corrective of the corporate judgment within the Methodist organization, Wesley taught men who were individualists in the originating centre of their thinking, to look beyond their own faith and fear to the one great witness of the universal Church in all ages." Cf. RATTENBURY, *op. cit.*, p. 78; EDWARDS, *Methodism and England*, p. 85 ff.

35 SCHNECKENBURGER, *Vorlesungen*, p. 149 f.

36 Loops, article on Methodismus, *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*. 3. Aufl., XII, p. 798: "Eigentliche Lehrdifferenzen hat der Methodismus im Vergleich mit universalistisch gerichtetem reformiertem Protestantismus nicht."

37 *ib.*, p. 799. Cf. GENNRICH, *Die Lehre von der Wiedergeburt*, p. 195 ff.

38 McGIFFERT, *Protestant Thought before Kant*, p. 163.

39 *ib.*, p. 164 ff.

40 *ib.*, p. 166 f. Cf. BÖHMER (*Pietismus und Methodismus*, *Neue Kirchliche Zietschrift* 1895), who tries to establish affinities and differences between Pietism as a Lutheran and German, and Methodism as a Calvinist and English, movement. See *ib.*, p. 669 ff. But Böhmer finds unLutheran elements in Pietism too. This applies particularly to Francke. Böhmer holds that Methodism has something in common with Francke's doctrine of perfection (p. 682). He finds that Halleian Pietism is very close to Methodism in the order of salvation (p. 689).

41 McGIFFERT, *op. Cit.*, p. 174 f. WAKEMANN (*An Introduction to the History of the Church of England*, p. 442) also detects some divergence between Wesley and the prevailing Anglican view. The doctrines Wesley "added to the creed were practically two -- that of the new birth and that of Christian perfection." But Wakeman does not consider these very important differences.

42 LEGER, *La jeunesse do Wesley*, p. 365 f.

43 PIETTE, *La réaction wesléyenne dans l'évolution protestante*, p. 443.

44 *ib.*, P. 445: "Tout bien considéré, Is rôle que l'on doit reconnaître à l'intervention. do Böhler n'est pas d'avoir initié John Wesley au dogme luthérien de la foi sans les œuvres, mais de lui avoir fait voir la place capitale que doit occuper dans la vie chrétienne l'amour do Dieu. N'est-ce pas l'élément qui manquait le plus dans la synthèse du fellow?" It is not that "l'amour de Dieu" was previously absent in him, but, Piette says, "il est, croyons-nous, parfaitement légitime de dire que dès l'heure de son expérience préparée par Böhler le vrai ressort de sa vie intérieure sera définitivement un sentiment d'union intime avec Dieu. Et se sentiment conscient, vivement perçu, expérimenté, va faire sa force."

45 RATTENBURY, *Wesley's Legacy to the World*, p. 165 f.

46 *ib.*, p. 166 f.

47 *ib.*, p. 67 f.

48 *ib.*, p. 70.

49 *ib.*, p. 174 ff., 178 ff. "The Methodist Movement was not only a missionary appeal to outsiders, but a revival of devotional, and especially of sacramental, practice in the Church of England. The Wesleys, with all their fervid evangelicalism, never ceased to be sacramentalists, and there is no antithesis more false than the common one of sacrament and gospel." *ib.*, p. 174. Cf. WATKIN-JONES, *Two Oxford Movements: Wesley and Newman*, *The Hibbert Journal*, October 1932, p. 86 f.; TAYLOR, *Methodism and Politics 1791-1851*, p. 32.

50 *ib.*, p. 167, 169 ff.

51 *ib.*, p. 167 ff.

52 PETRI, John Wesley, p. 271.

53 *ib.*, p. 259.

54 LEE, John Wesley and Modern Religion, p. 103.

55 *ib.*, p. 110.

56 *ib.*, p. 126.

57 KNOX, Remarks (supplement to SOUTHEY, Life of Wesley, II), pp. 419-422.

58 *ib.*, p. 419 f.

59 *ib.*, p. 420 f.

60 *ib.*, p. 420.

61 *ib.*, p. 496 ff.

62 See *ib.*, pp. 445, 448, 455--462, 500 ff.

63 *ib.*, p. 484 ff.

64 See *ib.*, pp. 484 f., 495 f.

65 IMPETA, Do Leer der Heiliging en Volmaking bij Wesley on Fletcher, p. 111 ff.

66 *ib.*, p. 117.

67 *ib.*, p. 118. Criticizing Wesley from a Calvinistic angle, Impeta holds that like Fletcher he did not pay sufficient attention to the theocentric aspect of salvation (*ib.*, p. 398). The central error, Impeta thinks, lay in the synergism in evidence here; the Reformed view of the relation between justification and sanctification could not, *de facto*, be reconciled with Wesley's attitude. "De groote fout van het Methodisme, hiertegenover, is zijn leer van de vrijheid van den menschlijken wil, die medewerkt met de goddelijke genade" *ib.*, p. 399.

"De stelling dat geen heiligmaking aan do rechtvaardigmaking voorafgaat is op Wesleyaansch-Methodistisch standpunt niet to handhaven.

Afgezien nu van het feit dat later nog weer totale afval en een hernieuwd bekeeringsproces, zelfs meermalen, mogelijk is -- wordt, ook met het oog op wat aan haar voorafgaat, de wedergeboorte niet absoluut gesteld. Dit grondprincipe van het Calvinisme wordt door Wesley als hij nit het reformatorsch-calvinistisch standpunt, soms door hem ingenomen, redeneert, beleden, maar overal waar hij de mogehjkheid en (facultatieve) noodzakelijkheid aarmeemt van werken ter rechtvaardigmaking (en wedergeboorte) to doen, *de facto* verworpen" *ib.*, p. 406.

68 CELL, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley*, p. 24. Cf., p. 15.

69 *ib.*, p. 15.

70 *ib.*, p. 25. The issue between Wesley and Arminian Anglicanism was, we are told, "the idea of a God-given faith in Christ or the work and witness of the Holy Spirit as the first principle of all Christian experience" *ib.*, p. 18.

71 *ib.*, p. 28.

72 *ib.*, p. 272: "The spring of religious energy in the Revival lay in Wesley's essential concurrence with the Luther-Calvin doctrine of salvation by faith; it lay in the Luther-Calvin doctrine how that faith is given and on the Luther-Calvin thesis that a God-given faith is the sole and abiding principle of all Christian experience; it is witnessed in the revolution wrought in Wesley's preaching by his abandonment of the libertarian theology and his adoption of the Luther-Calvin position."

73 *ib.*, p. 265 ff.

74 *ib.*, p. 362.

75 *ib.*, p. 341.

76 *ib.*, p. 308 f.

77 v. EICKEN, *Rechtfertigung und Heiligung bei Wesley*, p. 28; SCOTT, *John Wesleys Lehre von der Heiligung*, p. 6.

78 v. EICKEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 49, 67.

79 SCOTT, *Op. Cit.*, P. 15 f.

80 See *ib.*, pp. 29 f., 37, 80 f.

81 *ib.*, p. 80; 85 ff.

82 See *ib.*, pp. 84-87.

83 See SCHMIDT, *Die Bedeutung Luthers für John Wesleys Bekehrung*, *Luther Jahrbuch* 1938, pp. 143 ff., 154 ff.; *John Wesleys Bekehrung*, p. 69 ff. Cf. LOCKYER (Paul: *Luther: Wesley*, p. 217 f.), who sees Wesley as a follower of St. Paul and Luther. He thinks that in essentials Wesley's religious experience of 1738 was parallel to spiritual crises of St. Paul and Luther. Cf. also WATKIN-JONES, *Methodist Thought in Contact with Modern History*, *The Hibbert Journal*, October 1937, p. 61 f.

84 SCHMIDT, *Op. cit.*, p. 154.

85 *ib.*, p. 158.

86 *ib.*, p. 158 f.

87 LERCH, *Heil und Heiligung bei John Wesley*, p. 150 ff.

88 *ib.*, p. 153.

89 *ib.*, p. 154.

90 LANG, *Puritanismus und Pietismus*, p. 333.

91 *ib.*, p. 341: "J. Wesley bleibt daher ungeschmälert das grosse, providentielle Verdienst, den englischen Protestantismus nach den Verwiltungen des Deismus zu dem Kernpunkt des evangelischen Verständnisses der Heiligen Schrift und der reformatorischen Heilserkenntnis zurückgeführt zu haben."

92 See *ib.*, pp. 324-332, 349.

93 *ib.*, p. 339.

94 See *ib.*, p. 342-345.

95 *ib.*, p. 349.

96 FLEISCH, *Zur Geschichte der Heiligungsbeziehung*, I, p. 7.

97 *ib.*, p. 42 f. Cf. the same writer's articles on Methodisten (*Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3, col. 2160 f.), and Heiligungsbeziehung (*Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2, col. 1751 f.); KÖBERLE (*Rechtfertigung und Heiligung*, p. 126 f.), whose remarks on Wesley have been criticized by SCOTT (*John Wesleys Lehre von der Heiligung*, pp. 87-92). Cf. also v. EICKEN, *op. cit.*, p. 67 f.

98 See Wesley's *A Farther Appeal*, 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 46; *Notes*, 1755, Rom. xii. 6; *Sermon on The New Birth*, 1760, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 65; *A Short History of Methodism*, 1765, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 349; *sermon On God's Vineyard*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 205.

99 In the book cited above Lerch throws light on the inner links, but the material on which he bases his arguments is exiguous. Further, entire sanctification does not here appear in its real importance.

100 *Notes*, Preface, p. iv f.; LERCH, *Heil und Heiligung bei John Wesley*, pp. 8-12. Among other authorities whose books Wesley used, Lerch mentions John Goodwin, the Arminian theologian of the previous century. See HUNT, *Religious Thought in England*, I, p. 295 ff.; *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 12, p. 239.

101 LERCH, *op. cit.*, pp. 22, 24. See also Lerch's textual commentary on *Notes* and collation with *Standard Sermons*, *ib.*, pp. 8-24.

102 SUGDEN'S *Introduction to The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, pp. 13-16. See also *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 11, pp. 331-340.

# Wesley and Sanctification

by

**Harald Lindström**

---

## CHAPTER ONE

### SANCTIFICATION AND THE NATURE OF MAN

#### I

#### *The State of Natural Man Determined by Original Sin.*

The key to the understanding of any interpretation of Christianity must be the interpreter's idea of the nature of man. What did Wesley think of man? This is the first question we must try to answer in analysing his view of sanctification in relation to his doctrine of salvation as a whole. The data will be found in his attitude to natural man and to the doctrine of prevenient grace.

Attention will first be focussed on his conception of sin in order to discover how it can be said to determine his view of salvation. In particular I shall try to establish the relation between sin as guilt and sin as an inherent force, between sin conceived on the one hand as an objective factor determining the life of man and on the other as an inherent subjective trait or substance. In his conception of salvation we shall find an analogous correlation, here between justification, which to Wesley means liberation from the guilt of sin and the recovery of God's favour, and sanctification, which to him denotes liberation from the inherent power and root of sin and the restoration of God's image. It would seem, then, that an investigation of his conception of sin should throw some light on the place and purport of sanctification in his theology.

In his attitude to natural man Wesley stands in marked opposition to the shallow rationalizing of Deism. In this matter his profound sense of sin links him up with the Reformation and with later orthodoxy.<sup>1</sup> Some of his remarks point in this direction even before the full crystallization, in 1738, of the Reformed<sup>2</sup> trend in his doctrine of justification. He finds, for instance, that the natural man is dead to God.<sup>3</sup> The humility attending the circumcision of the heart "convinces us, that in our best estate we are, of ourselves, all sin and vanity; that confusion, and ignorance, and error reign over our understanding; that unreasonable, earthly, sensual, devilish passions usurp authority over our will; in a word, that there is no whole part in our soul, that all the foundations of our nature are out of course."<sup>4</sup> Even at this period stress is laid on the corrupt state of natural man. True, the attitude is not very clearly defined as yet and his sense of sin was to become still more profound.<sup>5</sup>

This deeper insight into man's predicament outside grace is naturally bound up with the new knowledge of justification by faith. Indeed Wesley regards the former as an essential condition of

the latter. At one with the Reformed outlook, he insists here on the total corruption of natural man, grounding the tenet on the doctrine of original sin. "Wherewithal then," he says in the discourse which is the first testimony of the new alignment in his doctrine of justification, "shall a sinful man atone for any the least of his sins? With his own works? No. Were they ever so many or holy, they are not his own, but God's. But indeed they are all unholy and sinful themselves, so that every one of them needs a fresh atonement. Only corrupt fruit grows on a corrupt tree." And man's heart "is altogether corrupt and abominable."<sup>6</sup> Later on he expands this line of thought. He says he is "firmly persuaded, that every man of the offspring of Adam is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil; that this corruption of our nature, in every person born into the world, deserves God's wrath and damnation; that therefore, if ever we receive the remission of our sins, and are accounted righteous before God, it must be only for the merit of Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings of any kind."<sup>7</sup> In his *Minutes* for 1744 he explains how it is that Adam's sin can be imputed to the whole human race: "In Adam all die; that is, (1.) Our bodies then became mortal. (2.) Our souls died; that is, were disunited from God. And hence, (3.) We are all born with a sinful, devilish nature. By reason whereof, (4.) We are children of wrath, liable to death eternal. (Rom. v. 18; Ephes. ii. 3)."<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, he denies that natural man has free will or any power of his own to do good. His only hope is the free grace of God.<sup>9</sup>

Wesley's earlier evangelical sermons reveal the same general attitude. It is based on three main assumptions: natural man is totally corrupt; this corruption is the result of original sin; man can be justified only through God's grace in Christ. The Fall and its consequences are fundamental in his doctrine of justification: "This therefore, is the general ground of the whole doctrine of justification. By the sin of the first Adam, who was not only the father, but likewise the representative, of us all, we all fell short of the favour of God; we all became children of wrath; or, as the Apostle expresses it, 'judgement came upon all men to condemnation'. Even so, by the sacrifice for sin made by the second Adam, as the representative of us all, God is so far reconciled to all the world, that He hath given them a new covenant; the plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, 'there is no more condemnation' for us, but 'we are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption, that is in Jesus Christ'."<sup>10</sup> The righteousness of faith, he says, presupposes that the man to whom it is given has been deprived of the image of God and been visited by His wrath, and that through sin, which has killed his soul, he now hastens to bodily and everlasting death.<sup>11</sup> "Is it not then the very foolishness of folly, for fallen man to seek life by this righteousness? for man, who was 'shapen in wickedness, and in sin did his mother conceive him'? man, who is, by nature, all 'earthly, sensual, devilish'; altogether 'corrupt and abominable'; in whom, till he find grace, 'dwelleth no good thing'; nay, who cannot of himself think one good thought; who is indeed all sin, a mere lump of ungodliness, and who commits sin in every breath he draws; whose actual transgressions, in word and deed, are more in number than the hairs of his head? What stupidity, what senselessness, must it be for such an unclean, guilty, helpless worm as this, to dream of seeking acceptance by his own righteousness, of living by 'the righteousness which is of the law!'"<sup>12</sup> Whereas it is foolish in such circumstances to rely on the righteousness of the law it is wise to submit to the righteousness which comes from faith. The first step on the path, the renunciation of personal righteousness, is nothing more nor less than to act in accordance with the true nature of things: to confess with heart and lips one's true condition: that one came into the world with a corrupt, sinful nature and that consequently one is prone to all that is evil and averse from all that is good, that like one's heart all one's actions too are ungodly and that therefore one deserves nothing but the wrath of God and the due reward of sin, which is death.<sup>13</sup>

Natural man is consistently represented as thoroughly corrupt. His spiritual qualities are thoroughly corrupt. The innate corruption in his heart and innermost nature is described as an evil root from which spring both inward and outward sin.<sup>14</sup> The man who has been awakened becomes aware that his heart "is all sin, 'deceitful above all things, desperately wicked'; that it is altogether corrupt and abominable, more than it is possible for tongue to express; that there dwelleth therein no good thing, but unrighteousness and ungodliness only; every motion thereof, every temper and thought, being only evil continually."<sup>15</sup> His first repentance is accompanied by overwhelming conviction of "the loathsome leprosy of sin, which he brought with him from his mother's womb, which overspreads his whole soul, and totally corrupts every power and faculty thereof." He becomes increasingly aware of the evil inclinations, which have their root in his evil nature.<sup>16</sup> Original, inbred sin, from which all other sins derive, is compared to a sour yeast which to some extent permeates all the movements of the soul and taints words, deeds, and actions: "To consider this a little more particularly: how wide do these parent-sins extend, from which all the rest derive their being; that carnal mind which is enmity against God, pride of heart, selfwill, and love of the world! Can we fix any bounds to them? Do they not diffuse themselves through all our thoughts, and mingle with all our tempers? Are they not the leaven which leavens, more or less, the whole mass of our affections? May we not, on a close and faithful examination of ourselves, perceive these roots of bitterness continually springing up, infecting all our words and tainting all our actions?"<sup>17</sup>

The thought of this inward and outward evil, characteristic of the condition of natural man, leads on to the thought of guilt. God's wrath envelops the sinner. The punishment he merits is eternal damnation.<sup>18</sup> The idea of sin as a force inherent in man gives place to the idea of the guilt that man thus incurs with God. An objective and judicial forms side by side with the subjective and psychological view. When the mind turns to the relation to God the sins that fetter man are seen as debts. In a commentary on the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer Wesley writes: " these, considered with regard to ourselves are chains of iron and fetters of brass. They are wounds wherewith the world, the flesh, and the devil have gashed and mangled us all over. They are diseases that drink up our blood and spirits, that bring us down to the chambers of the grave. But, considered as they are here, with regard to God, they are debts immense and numberless. Well, therefore, seeing we have nothing to pay, may we cry unto Him, that He would frankly forgive us all!"<sup>19</sup>

This attitude to man persists. By nature man is utterly depraved<sup>20</sup>, and his depravity is the result of the Fall<sup>21</sup>. *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, published in 1757, shows more clearly than any of Wesley's other works how firmly his idea of sin was grounded on that doctrine. Here, in marked opposition to such a rationalistic interpretation of Scripture as that of Dr. John Taylor of Norwich, who urged the rejection of the old orthodox view, Wesley staunchly defends the doctrine of original sin. He considers the veiled deism of Taylor's attack on the doctrine even more dangerous than Middleton's and Bolingbroke's open criticism of the Bible.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, he regarded any attack on the doctrine as an attack on the very foundation of revealed religion, whether Jewish or Christian.<sup>23</sup> In controversion of a doctrine that idealized natural man<sup>24</sup>, he maintains his complete corruption the essential distinction between Christianity and heathenism<sup>25</sup>.

Fundamentally orthodox features are manifest in the picture of natural man drawn in *The Doctrine of Original Sin* and in contemporary and later sermons. The description of the primitive state and of the Fall brings out the great difference between Adam's original, and the present life of man. Before the Fall man lived in a state of perfection.<sup>26</sup> He was made in the image of God, and he enjoyed God's

favour. The *imago Dei* was threefold, First, there was the natural image, through which man was furnished with immortality, understanding, free will, and "various affections."<sup>27</sup> He was also immune to pain.<sup>28</sup> Second, with respect to man as a governing being, there was the *political image*. This gave him the power of ruling over the other, lower creatures, But man's original perfection was most pronounced of all in his moral image, which meant that he was created in righteousness and true holiness. Just as God is love, so man at first was imbued with love. His whole being bore its imprint. It was the guiding principle of his disposition, thoughts, words, and deeds. Like the Creator, the creature was righteous, merciful, true, and pure. He was innocent of all sin.<sup>29</sup> The image of God embraced the intellectual function of man as well. He had true knowledge of God and His work and lived on the intellectual plane proper to him, "in the right state of his intellectual powers."<sup>30</sup>

The Fall completely reversed the conditions of human life. Primitive perfection was replaced by total corruption of man's nature. The Fall was made possible because Adam misused his free will. Although holy and wise like his Maker, he is nevertheless regarded as having been capable of falling.<sup>31</sup> He preferred to be guided by his own will instead of by his Creator's; he wanted to seek happiness not in God but in the world and in the work of his own hands.<sup>32</sup> He rebelled against his Creator, the sovereign King of Heaven, whom he should have obeyed.<sup>33</sup> He therefore suffered spiritual, temporal and eternal death.<sup>34</sup> Both God's favour and the *imago Dei* in which he was created were now utterly lost.<sup>35</sup> He lost too his knowledge of God and his love for Him, becoming unholy and unhappy.<sup>36</sup> Once the image of God, he was now stamped with the image of the devil: with pride and self-will. And he sank "into sensual appetites and desires, the image of the beasts that perish."<sup>37</sup>

Wesley, then, ascribes the inbred sin which now pervades mankind to Adam's primal sin. In this he is distinctly and strikingly at variance with the beliefs of the Enlightenment. In Wesley's opinion the corruption and evil habits which prevail and have prevailed among men cannot be explained in terms of bad example and bad upbringing. Such an explanation offers no solution of why good and wise parents did not give their children the same education in virtue and wisdom as they received themselves. Where have such children found a bad example? And conversely, why has the wisdom of later generations been powerless to remedy the errors of their fathers?<sup>38</sup> Wesley's answer is because evil must precede bad nurture<sup>39</sup>, and he goes on to cite the ancient biblical dogma that Adam's sin is the cause of the fall of the race. If we look more closely into Wesley's views on the connection between the Fall and the corruption of man since, we shall find him keeping close to St. Augustine in interpreting St. Paul's doctrine of original sin. Adam is regarded as the first ancestor and representative of mankind.<sup>40</sup> His disobedience made all men sinners, for they were all "in the Loins of their first Parent, the common Head and Representative of them all."<sup>41</sup> Everyone sinned in Adam.<sup>42</sup> The fall of the primogenitor was the fall of the whole race.

We can now ask: what exactly did the term 'original sin' mean to Wesley? The Fall, he believed, had deprived man of his original perfection and occasioned total corruption of human nature. Consequently, Adam's descendants are spiritually dead at birth and utterly devoid of the righteousness and holiness in which he himself was created.<sup>43</sup> Sometimes original sin is described as an inclination to evil<sup>44</sup>, or a condition in which all the faculties of man, understanding and will and affections, have been perverted<sup>45</sup>. But he can use stronger language, defining it as total corruption of the whole of human nature, a corruption chiefly manifested in atheism and idolatry, pride, self-

will, and love of the world.<sup>46</sup>

In determining the nature of original sin Wesley does not take it to mean simply the corruption inherent in man. To him it is also guilt. An objective and judicial is thus conjoined with a subjective and psychological conception. Since the Fall man has not merely come under the dominion of sin: by his very nature he has also become the child of wrath.<sup>47</sup> He is subject to guilt and punishment, the consequences of sinful actions.<sup>48</sup> This punishment is seen in the suffering and death inseparable from human life as it now is, the suffering and death which are the outcome of Adam's sin.<sup>49</sup> Since all suffering, which is the consequence of sin, is punishment, it follows that punishment has been visited upon Adam's posterity because of his sin.<sup>50</sup> Because of his transgression all men have been punished with death.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, all are guilty, for all through their fellowship with Adam as the representative of the race, share in his trespass. And so the guilt and punishment of that trespass are also imputed to them.<sup>52</sup> They too are subject to the wrath and the curse of God. Thus, even before the individual has acted in any way whatsoever, he has incurred the wrath of God and stands a sinner before Him. Before God even children are not innocent, but "involved in the guilt of Adam's sin; otherwise death, the punishment denounced against that sin, could not be inflicted upon them."<sup>53</sup>

In agreement with the orthodox view original sin is considered to involve liability to punishment, *reatus*, in the sense of damnation. That is, it involves eternal as well as spiritual and temporal death.<sup>54</sup> Even through birth man deserves damnation. This conception of the consequences in guilt and punishment of original sin is made possible particularly by the way in which Wesley conceives Adam's relationship to humanity. Here Wesley evinces an affinity with Calvinist federalism. Adam is presented, we have seen, as the representative as well as the primogenitor of mankind.<sup>55</sup> When he fell, therefore, the guilt occasioned by his sin could be imputed to the whole race.

Yet there is another aspect of Wesley's collective view in which his line of thought diverges from the orthodox; in which instead he adopts a position influenced by Moravianism and closely allied to the Arminian view of election. Although man is subject to guilt and punishment because of his fellowship with Adam, he is nevertheless absolved from original sin because of the atonement of Christ.<sup>56</sup> On this point the orthodox outlook is modified by the introduction of a different attitude, viz., that man is after all not damned eternally by the very fact of original sin.<sup>57</sup>

Wesley never diverged from his belief in the corruption of natural man. His statements vary in emphasis but there is no departure in principle. The same fundamental assumption confronts us everywhere in his writings: original sin is the prime factor in human nature. All men are "shapen in wickedness, and in sin did our mother conceive us". The nature of man is "altogether corrupt in every power and faculty."<sup>58</sup> We are all "by nature, 'dead in sin', and, consequently, 'children of wrath'."<sup>59</sup> The present condition of man is distinguished by his complete inability to apprehend the invisible world. He can see nothing of God, he cannot hear His voice, he can savour nothing of His goodness or of the powers of the world to come; nor is he conscious of the workings of the Holy Spirit in his heart.<sup>60</sup>

Stress has already been laid on the fact that this doctrine of original sin is of fundamental importance in Wesley's conception of salvation. The Fall is regarded as the necessary condition of

the work of Christ. Wesley says it was the reason of Christ's coming.<sup>61</sup> The two events are regarded as analogous. The depravation through Adam corresponds to the restoration through Christ, although the work of the latter surpasses that of the former.<sup>62</sup> Just as Adam represents mankind in his disobedience, Christ is our representative in his work of atonement. Just as in Adam all men died, they are all brought to life again in Christ. The new life through Christ is paralleled by death through Adam, although the gift and the grace from the former outweigh the Fall.<sup>63</sup> Given the Fall and inbred sin, atonement and regeneration are seen to be necessary. Thus Wesley's attitude to original sin reveals a marked soteriological element in his theology and emphasizes the idea of grace. Since the whole of mankind is involved in guilt and punishment and since human nature has been utterly perverted, man has no chance at all of saving himself by his own efforts. Instead he is referred exclusively to God's grace in Christ. In this way the doctrine of original sin safeguards the idea of grace. The doctrine is necessarily linked up with the essential purpose of the Gospel, which he declared was to humble mankind and to ascribe the whole of his salvation to God's free grace instead of to man's free will.<sup>64</sup>

The theological position outlined above is close to the orthodox outlook, but in Wesley, we also find another, divergent train of thought, which we must now unravel. As well as the collective view of the doctrine of original sin, he employs an individualistic approach. This is implicit in the importance which he attached, in company with the Pietists and Moravians, to personal experience. What he does is to conjoin a subjective attitude with the objective one. Objective facts and circumstances must be not merely comprehended by man but actually experienced. So we find a pronounced interest in psychological factors in his theology. We find it, for instance, in his conception of original sin. Like the Moravians, he puts the chief emphasis on the awareness of sin rather than on sin as an objective fact. "Feel," he says, "that your carnal mind is enmity against God."<sup>65</sup> In first repentance, man "has a deep sense" of the loathsome leprosy of sin which has been with him since birth, and he "sees more and more of the evil tempers" that spring from that evil root.<sup>66</sup> The process of salvation in the individual begins when he becomes conscious of his sinfulness, with "conviction of sin." Therefore he is admonished thus: "Sinner, awake! Know thyself! Know and feel, that thou wert 'shapen in wickedness', and that 'in sin did thy mother conceive thee'; and that thou thyself hast been heaping sin upon sin, ever since thou couldest discern good from evil!"<sup>67</sup> The individual's awareness of his corrupt nature is considered an absolute prerequisite of his faith in Christ, and this in its turn is a condition for his love of God and his neighbour.<sup>68</sup> No one can come to Christ as his Saviour, "till he knows and feels himself a lost sinner." None "will come to the 'Physician' but 'they that are sick', and are thoroughly sensible of it; that are deeply convinced of their sinful tempers, as well as sinful words and actions." And "these tempers, they well know, were antecedent to their choice, and came into the world with them."<sup>69</sup> He maintains further that experience corroborates the doctrine of original sin in Scripture.<sup>70</sup> Such consciousness in the individual of his corruption is pneumatic experience, the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>71</sup>

Awareness of original sin is not only awareness of it as inherent corruption: it embraces experience of the attendant guilt. Consciousness of this accompanies first repentance. Guilt is always present to the mind of the penitent sinner. He "knows the punishment he has deserved, were it only on account of his carnal mind, the entire, universal corruption of his nature: how much more, on account of all his evil desires and thoughts, of all his sinful words and actions!"<sup>72</sup> The deep conviction of his sinfulness, which is necessary if man is to arrive at true faith in Christ must also include guilt. Such profound consciousness of sin and conviction of guilt is impossible unless he knows his nature is

corrupt.<sup>73</sup> Thus he must be conscious not only of his inherent sinfulness but also of the guilt that attends it.<sup>74</sup>

In turning to the problem of the guilt attaching to original sin we find Wesley taking up a particularly individualistic position at variance with the orthodox collective doctrine and in near affinity with the Enlightenment; this is the outcome of his Arminian strain. It is true, as we have seen, that original sin involves guilt, but Wesley regards this guilt as imputed, not personal.<sup>75</sup> Original sin involves guilt and punishment, which apply to all the children of Adam, yet nevertheless they are not implicated in quite the same way as Adam himself was. Although in a sense all men are burdened with guilt, Adam's descendants cannot feel his sin to be theirs in quite the same way as Adam and Eve felt it.<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, as original sin cannot be ascribed to later generations the same way as to Adam, his guilt cannot affect them to the same extent as it would if his sin had been their own personal sin.<sup>77</sup> Thus, alongside original guilt, we have the idea of personal guilt deriving from the actual sins of the individual. It is this latter idea that determines the conception of guilt in the full sense.<sup>78</sup> Adam was capable of choice and personal action. It follows that guilt could fall upon him in full measure. But his descendants are in a different position: since they cannot choose for themselves, their guilt is only hereditary guilt. It is a guilt which is certainly imputed to them, but it is not personal. The distinction is seen in the punitive consequences. Original sin is not thought in itself to determine man's final destiny. No one, Wesley thinks, is finally damned unless he chooses to be so.<sup>79</sup> It is true that the imputed guilt of original sin involves the temporal and spiritual death of man. But as such it does not lead to eternal death.<sup>80</sup> That is incurred only as a result of approving the promptings of original sin. If an individual is punished with eternal death, therefore, it is the result of his own actions.<sup>81</sup>

Wesley is trying to reconcile an individualistic approach with the collective view: to combine the idea of personal responsibility and personal cooperation, where man's eternal destiny is at stake, with a conception of the situation of natural man which emphasizes the idea of saving grace. On the one hand, he maintains that through Adam all mankind are implicated in sin and guilt. Only thus can God's work in Christ be represented as the necessary cause of salvation. He is at pains to emphasize the complete inability of man to attain salvation by himself. It can only come to him through faith. In keeping with this, he maintains that sin has been transmitted from Adam to his children; and here he is interested solely in *the fact that* this is so, not in *how* it is so.<sup>82</sup> The reality of original sin as personal sin too, is shown, we have seen, in the fact that death comes to us all as punishment. Such suffering is a punishment of sin. It would not be inflicted if we were not guilty. Thus we must be considered guilty before God. We share Adam's sin and guilt. On the other hand, the participation in Adam's sin and guilt which original sin involves does not amount to guilt in the full sense. For this the personal consent of the individual is also necessary.

The individualism of this qualification is a consequence of Wesley's Arminian view of election. By subscribing to the latter he rejects the Calvinist doctrine of reprobation and makes predestination conditional. It is dependent on personal choice. He who chooses life shall live he who chooses death shall die.<sup>83</sup> God's relation to man is governed by His decision that he who believes shall be saved, while he who does not shall suffer damnation.<sup>84</sup> This being so, Wesley has to repudiate the notion that original sin, which attends the individual through no personal fault of his own, should in itself spell eternal death for him. If it did, man would be lost without having had an opportunity of choosing. Instead, Wesley decided that eternal death must depend upon individual responsibility.<sup>85</sup> If

the individual is damned therefore, he must himself be responsible for his damnation. It is not the will of God that man should be damned, for God's desire that he should be saved is universal. True, original sin and personal sin are very intimately connected. If man allows himself to be swayed by original sin, he *ipso facto* chooses to retain it. In this sense original sin certainly does lead to eternal death. Yet it does not necessarily do so, for such a necessity would conflict with God's desire for universal salvation. Not God, then, but man himself, is chargeable with eternal damnation. Eternal death can only be incurred by personal participation in sin, by actual sin.

But in what sense can man, whose nature Wesley considers totally corrupt, be said to have the power of real choice? It is not merely that natural man cannot do good, he cannot will it either. His freedom of choice is but freedom to do evil.<sup>86</sup> How then in his actions can man withhold response to the evil tendency dictated by original sin? Wesley finds the answer in an argument which is related to his tenet of conditional election and God's desire of universal salvation. Men need not transgress, by virtue of the grace God offers to them all. Thus original sin does not necessarily lead to actual sin. If man takes advantage of God's grace he can conquer the inclination to evil. In other words Wesley finds opportunity of choice on the foundation of grace. If, despite this privilege, man prefers to follow the inclination to evil of original sin and thus commits personal sin, he must be regarded as being himself responsible, for his transgression.<sup>87</sup>

## II

### *Original Sin and Specific Sins. Personal Sin.*

Wesley distinguishes between original sin and its manifestations in specific sins. Yet, as we have seen, the connection between the two is intimate and organic. Original sin as innate corruption of the innermost nature of man is compared to an evil root bearing like branches and like fruits.<sup>88</sup> The specific sins which proceed from original sin are compared to evil sprouts proceeding from the same evil root.<sup>89</sup>

The personal sins, the actual transgressions, are divided into two categories: inward sins and outward sins, There is also a third type which can be distinguished from inward sins and treated as a separate category, namely sins of omission.<sup>90</sup> These can be defined as negative inward sins. In the Christian life various forms of negligence can divide man from God, such as neglecting to punish one's brother for his sins, failing to rebuke those who sin in one's presence, letting slip any means of grace, and omitting to pray in public, in the family, and in private.<sup>91</sup> Wesley regards these sins of omission as signs of spiritual sluggishness, of shirking battle.<sup>92</sup> Inward sins of the other kind are manifested in such transgressions as pride, wrath, and foolish desire. The last shows itself in inordinate love of something other than God and what tends to him, in seeking happiness in the creation instead of in God.<sup>93</sup> Thus it expresses the reverse of love to God.

Inward sin grows like a root of bitterness and darkens the soul of the man who was previously in a state of grace.<sup>94</sup> Outward sin is defined as the final phase in a sort of process of sin. It begins when man yields to temptation and acquiesces in it, declining to remain in the state of grace by which God wishes to preserve him. After inward sin, at least after some neglect on the part of man, and after the formation and expansion in the soul of an evil desire, faith and love disappear. And thus man commits outward sin. The stages in this development are described in the following way: "You see

the unquestionable progress from grace to sin: Thus it goes on from step to step. (1.) The divine seed of loving, conquering faith, remains in him that is born of God. 'He keepeth himself', by the grace of God, and 'cannot commit sin'. (2.) A temptation arises; whether from the world, the flesh, or the devil, it matters not. (3.) The Spirit of God gives him warning that sin is near, and bids him more abundantly watch unto prayer. (4.) He gives way, in some degree, to the temptation, which now begins to grow pleasing to him. (5.) The Holy Spirit is grieved; his faith is, weakened; and his love of God grows cold. (6.) The Spirit reproves him more sharply, and saith, 'This is the way; walk thou in it'. (7.) He turns away from the painful voice of God, and listens to the pleasing voice of the tempter. (8.) Evil desire begins and spreads in his soul, till faith and love vanish away: He is then capable of committing outward sin, the power of the Lord being departed from him."<sup>95</sup> An inward sin on the part of man is thought to precede the loss of faith. Yet before man actually commits voluntary outward sin, faith and love are already lost. We note, however, that in describing these stages in the process of sin, by which man falls from grace, Wesley attributes the responsibility to the individual. The emphasis is laid on man's obedience, although an obedience grounded on saving grace,

We have already seen that the specific sins derive from the sinfulness in man's nature. This corruption is regarded as the seed of all other sins. It is the cause of all specific sins both in our hearts and in our lives.<sup>96</sup> Wesley's empirical predilection, however, leads him to pay particular attention to the specific sins; it is to these, the inward sins of the heart and the outward sins of action, that he gives most space.<sup>97</sup>

### III

#### *The Conceptions of Sin and Salvation.*

I have referred above to the fact that Wesley regards original sin not only as guilt but also as inherent corruption. And like sin in general it is seen from both an objective and a subjective angle. He himself describes these aspects as two relations: on the one hand sin in its relation to God, and on the other, sin in its relation to man himself.<sup>98</sup> Further, since Wesley's doctrine of justification is concerned with sin as guilt, whereas sanctification is concerned with sin as an inherent factor, the relation between the objective and subjective aspects of his conception of sin will find a parallel in the relation between justification (or forgiveness) and sanctification (or new birth and subsequent sanctification) in his doctrine of salvation

The emphasis laid on sin as guilt has already been noted. Just as forgiveness from the causal point of view is considered of prime importance in relation to sanctification, so his view of guilt can be said to occupy a corresponding position in relation to inherent sin. This is implicit in the function attributed to forgiveness in his doctrine of salvation. Forgiveness, as a factor in atonement, is the source of salvation. "Pardoning love," we read, "is still at the root of all. He who was offended is now reconciled."<sup>99</sup> Through deliverance from guilt, then, man is thought to gain freedom from the domination of inherent sin. The latter follows from the former; "And, if we attain the former, the latter follows of course: If our debts are forgiven, the chains fall off our hands. As soon as ever through the free grace of God in Christ, we receive 'forgiveness of sins', we receive likewise 'a lot among those which are sanctified, by faith which is in him'. Sin has lost its power: It has no dominion ,over those who are under grace, that is, in favour with God."<sup>100</sup>

It is true that here the conception of sin centres round the idea of guilt, but all the same sin is usually represented in Wesley as inherent corruption. As such it corresponds to sanctification in his doctrine of salvation. He is fond of describing sin as an injury, as corruption, as disease. Original sin he pictures as leprosy infecting mankind<sup>101</sup>, and the sins proceeding from it as 'wounds' and 'diseases'<sup>102</sup>. As sin is thus regarded as an illness, it follows that salvation will be seen primarily from a subjective-medical rather than an objective-judicial angle. Salvation is called a healing: man, is cured of his inherent sinfulness as of a disease. With sin seen in this way as the background of salvation and the motivation of its indispensability, it is natural that the idea of sanctification should come to the fore. "And who might not say, upon this supposition, 'I cannot see that we have much need of Christianity? Nay, not any at all; for 'they that are whole have no need of a Physician'; and the Christian Revelation speaks of nothing else but the great 'Physician' of our souls; nor can Christian Philosophy, whatever be thought of the Pagan, be more properly defined than in Plato's word: It is *Θεραπεία ψυχῆς*, 'the only true method of healing a distempered soul'. But what need of this, if we are in perfect health? If we are not diseased, we do not want a cure. If we are not sick, why should we seek for a medicine to heal our sickness? What room is there to talk of our being renewed in 'knowledge' or 'holiness, after the image wherein we were created', if we never have lost that image? if we are as knowing and holy now, nay, far more so, than Adam was immediately after his creation?"<sup>103</sup> No one, as we have already seen in another context, can come to Christ, the Physician, before he is conscious of his disease.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, this knowledge in man of the depravity of his nature is the extreme subjective condition of his sanctification. It is regarded as the first step in the process of salvation, in which the goal is sanctification: "The power of godliness consists in the love of God and man; this is heavenly and substantial religion. But no man can possibly 'love his neighbour as himself', till he loves God; and no man can possibly love God, till he truly believes in Christ; and no man truly believes in Christ, till he is deeply convinced of his own sinfulness, guiltiness, and helplessness. But this no man ever was, neither can be, who does not know he has a corrupt nature."<sup>105</sup>

The importance attached by Wesley to the inherent subjective view of sin is clearly shown by his readiness to treat original sin exclusively from this angle.<sup>106</sup> The basic corruption of natural man is again portrayed as a disease, salvation as a restoration to health. A conception of religion which accepts such a view of sin must be determined by the idea of sanctification. And this is the case with Wesley. He writes of the true nature of the Christian religion: "It is *Θεραπεία ψυχῆς* -- God's method of *healing a soul* which is thus diseased. Hereby the great Physician of souls applies medicines to heal this sickness; to restore human nature, totally corrupted in all its faculties. God heals all our Atheism by knowledge of Himself, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; by giving us faith, a divine evidence and conviction of God, and of the things of God, -- in particular, of this important truth, 'Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*'. By repentance and lowliness of heart, the deadly disease of pride is healed; that of self-will by resignation, a meek and thankful submission to the will of God; and for the love of the world in all its branches, the love of God is the sovereign remedy. Now, this is properly religion, 'faith' thus, 'working by love': working the genuine meek humility, entire deadness to the world, with a loving, thankful acquiescence in, and conformity to, the whole will and word of God."<sup>107</sup> The great purpose of religion is said to be to renew man's heart in the image of God, to make good the total loss of righteousness and holiness. Man, thoroughly corrupt by nature, will by grace be completely transformed: "Ye know, that he who seeth what is in man gives a far different account both of nature and grace, of our fall and our recovery. Ye know that the great end of religion is, to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and

true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parent. Ye know that all religion which does not answer this end, all that stops short of this, the renewal of our soul in the image of God, after the likeness of Him that created it, is no other than a poor farce, and a mere mockery of God, to the destruction of our own soul ... By nature ye are wholly corrupted. By grace ye shall be wholly renewed."<sup>108</sup> Man must learn the nature of his disease and how it can be cured.<sup>109</sup>

Inherent sin, then, can be regarded as an illness which must be cured.<sup>110</sup> Accordingly, Christ is thought of as a physician in his work for mankind. Any suffering he causes man is in order to heal him.<sup>111</sup>

But the healing lies in liberation from objective guilt as well as from inherent sin: "Here is a remedy provided for all our guilt: He 'bore all our sins in his body on the tree'. And 'if any one have sinned, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous'. And here is a remedy for all our disease, all the corruption of our nature. For God hath also, through the intercession of His Son, given us his Holy Spirit, to renew us both 'in knowledge', in his natural image; -- opening the eyes of our understanding, and enlightening us with all such knowledge as is requisite to our pleasing God; -- and also in his moral image, namely, 'righteousness and true holiness'."<sup>112</sup> The medical approach, to which Wesley seems to attach increasing importance, can be applied, we see, not only to inherent sin but also to objective guilt. That it could -- even though only a few instances can be cited -- is evidence of the great influence exercised by the idea of sanctification on his doctrine of salvation as a whole.

Thus the idea of inherent sin is not merely subsidiary to the idea of objective guilt in Wesley: on the contrary, it attracts the major interest. A subjective-medical view prevails over an objective-judicial attitude in his conception of salvation. In this way sin is organically incorporated in a theology primarily determined by the idea of sanctification. An orthodox outlook, or rather an orthodoxy modified by Moravianism, is thus crossed by a line, of thought reminiscent of Pietism and William Law and practical mysticism, and the latter gains the ascendancy.<sup>113</sup>

#### IV

##### *Prevenient Grace and Salvation.*

Wesley believes that in natural man the image of God was completely lost. This applies to the moral image in which Adam was created and which constituted the essence of his relation to God. It is chiefly this that Wesley has in mind. On the other hand man's natural and political image have not been entirely lost, although, in these respects too he has undergone severe deprivation. Consequently man has retained his character as a personal being and certain of the features incidental to this character. He still has "the spiritual nature and immortality of the soul" and also "a degree of dominion over the creatures".<sup>114</sup> Like God, his Creator, but unlike material things, which are totally and essentially passive, man has a spiritual nature and is self-moving.<sup>115</sup> He has fallen but still retains "an immaterial principle, a spiritual nature, endued with understanding, and affections, and a degree of liberty; of a self-moving, yes, and self-governing power," without which he would be a mere machine or stock or stone.<sup>116</sup> In this respect Wesley finds a certain continuity between man's life before and after the Fall. Yet it is a circumstance which in no way alters his idea of natural man. From the point of view of salvation natural man has no resources of his own whatsoever. He is sinful

through and through, has no knowledge of God and no power to turn to him of his own free will.

There is another idea, however, which we have touched on above, but which at this point calls for closer scrutiny: the idea of prevenient grace.

Wesley maintains that natural man is totally corrupt, but he also maintains that God gives to all men his prevenient grace. It is a doctrine that appears only in passing and seldom in the years immediately after 1738. Wesley was then so absorbed by the distinction between natural man, dead in sin, and man vitalized by faith, that all his attention was devoted instead to the saving grace operative in justification and the New Birth. With time, however, prevenient grace acquires increasing importance and concurrently his divergence from the Calvinistic doctrine of election and his acceptance of Arminianism. becomes more evident.<sup>117</sup>

The idea of prevenient grace is in Wesley logically bound up with the Arminian view of election. Although natural man is devoid of free will, all men have been endowed by supernatural intervention with a measure of free will and some power of discernment: "Natural free-will, in the present state of mankind, I do not understand: I only assert, that there is a measure of free-will supernaturally restored to every man, together with that supernatural light which 'enlightens every man that cometh into the world'."<sup>118</sup> The liberty thus given to man is a liberty founded on grace. Wesley believes that God redeems man as a freely acting being. Grace is not irresistible. Man can either cooperate with it or oppose it. As soon as God's work has begun in the souls of men they may become "workers together with Him."<sup>119</sup> In the last resort the doctrine is based on his conception of God. Such free will harmonizes better to Wesley's mind with God's wisdom, justice, and mercy than the reprobation which he says is the alternative.<sup>120</sup> It is only through the grace of God that man becomes capable of turning to Christ and believing in Him.<sup>121</sup> Prevenient grace, which in varying degrees is given to everyone, makes it possible for man, despite his natural condition, to seek God.<sup>122</sup>

Prevenient grace confers some discernment on everyone although natural man as such lacks all knowledge of God. This discernment comes to man through "what is vulgarly termed natural Conscience." At least this throws some light on "the general Lines of Good and Evil."<sup>123</sup> Here Wesley concurs with St. Paul's statement in the Epistle to the Romans that even heathens are not without knowledge of God and His law. Yet he does not regard such discernment as something emanating from natural man's own resources, a consequence of the survival after the Fall of a certain residue of the *imago Dei*, but instead as deriving from prevenient grace.<sup>124</sup> When we are told of the heathens that although they have not the law they nevertheless do by nature what the law prescribes, we must not understand that they could do so merely by their own natural strength. Despite their ignorance of the written law, God works in them all the same by supernatural grace. "It is certain," Wesley writes, "they had not the written law; but had they no supernatural assistance? Is it not one God 'who works in' us and in them, 'both to will and to do'?"<sup>125</sup> Thus even the heathens know the spirit, though not the letter of the law. This discernment is not considered a purely natural form of percipience and consequently cannot be a premise for a *theologia naturalis*; yet neither is it regarded as a saving knowledge in the strict sense. The measure of light conferred on all men by prevenient grace does not involve any knowledge of the main tenets of the Christian faith: atonement through Christ and man's transformation by the Divine Spirit in the image of God in which he was made.<sup>126</sup> Everyone, however, has "some discernment of the difference between moral good and evil, with an approbation of the one, and disapprobation of the other, by an inward monitor,

excusing or accusing." Also, "sometimes at least," they have "some desire to please God, as well as some light concerning what does really please him, and some convictions when they are sensible of displeasing him."<sup>127</sup>

The light given to all men by prevenient grace is particularly associated with conscience and its workings. But Wesley sees conscience, not as something "natural" but as an expression of prevenient grace.<sup>128</sup> It comprises "all the drawings of the Father the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more; all that light wherewith the Son of God 'enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world' -- showing every man 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God'; all the convictions which His Spirit, from time to time, works in every child of man -- although it is true, the generality of men stifle them as soon as possible, and after a while forget, or at least deny, that they ever had them at all."<sup>129</sup> In a sermon published towards the end of his life, in which Wesley makes conscience his main theme, he writes: "This faculty seems to be what is usually meant by those who speak of natural conscience; an expression frequently found in some of our best authors, but yet not strictly just. For though in one sense it may be termed natural, because it is found in all men; yet, properly speaking, it is not natural, but a supernatural gift of God, above, all his natural endowments. No; it is not nature, but the Son of God, that is 'the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world'. So that we may say to every human creature, 'He', not nature, 'hath showed thee, O man, what is good'. And it is his Spirit who giveth thee an inward check, who causeth thee to feel uneasy, when thou walkest in any instance contrary to the light which he hath given thee."<sup>130</sup> Although everyone by nature is dead in sin, no one is in a purely natural state. No one is quite without God's grace, unless he has stifled it. To Wesley, therefore, conscience is a manifestation of prevenient grace: "For allowing that all the souls of man are dead in sin by *nature*, this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called *natural conscience*. But this is not natural: It is more properly termed, *preventing grace*. Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man. Every one has, sooner or later, good desires; although the generality of men stifle them before they can strike deep root; or produce any considerable fruit. Every one has some measure of that light, some faint glimmering ray, which, sooner or later, more or less, enlightens every man that cometh into the world. And every one, unless he be one of the small number whose conscience is seared as with a hot iron, feels more or less uneasy when he acts contrary to the light of his own conscience. So that no man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath."<sup>131</sup>

It is clear that Wesley cannot reconcile the idea of a knowledge of God arising from the human resources of natural man with his doctrine of original sin. The insight accorded by conscience acquires therefore the character of supernatural grace. It is true that the supernatural character may be obscured by his endeavour to contend that this grace is given to all. In any case the distinction between so-called natural conscience and conscience as a manifestation of Divine grace is not always clearly marked.<sup>132</sup> Yet he rarely fails to draw attention to it. It is particularly emphasized when prevenient grace is expressly described as saving grace, although not in the same sense as justifying grace. It is with prevenient grace that salvation in the widest sense begins.<sup>133</sup> This grace has its source in Christ's work of atonement.<sup>134</sup>

The combination of this view of prevenient grace with Wesley's doctrine of original sin necessarily

had a twofold result in his doctrine of salvation. Firstly, man becomes entirely dependent upon God for salvation. God is the only possible Saviour of mankind, for in his natural state man is totally corrupt and dead in sin. Thus the collective view in the doctrine of original sin emphasizes the idea of grace in the conception of salvation. There is no possibility of such a thing as human merit. Secondly, the individualistic approach and the idea of prevenient grace on which this view is based lay stress on man's personal responsibility. Prevenient grace, which is offered to all and enables everyone to turn to God, makes man himself responsible for his own damnation. What Wesley is doing is to try to harmonize an objective with a subjective attitude. It is clear that the latter, a consequence of the change from an unconditional to a conditional view of election, will easily lead to synergistic tendencies.

## V

### *The Conception of Man in the Twenty-five Articles of 1784.*

At this point, bearing in mind Wesley's view of man, we pass on to his abridgement of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church, which he published in 1784 to provide American Methodism with basic doctrine.<sup>135</sup>

In the Thirty-nine Articles, the Article of original sin, influenced to some extent by the second Article of the Augsburg Confession, reads as follows: "Original sin standeth not in the following of *Adam*, (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of *Adam*; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek *phronema sarkos*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin."<sup>136</sup> In Wesley's abridgement the whole of the second half of this Article, together with one or two expressions mentioned above, is omitted. He also makes a small addition. It now runs: "Original sin standeth not in the following of *Adam* (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of *Adam*, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually."<sup>137</sup> For the Article on free will, however, which, according to Wheeler, in its first part follows the Württemberg Confession, and in its second goes back to St. Augustine<sup>138</sup>, Wesley uses the same formulation as in the Thirty-nine Articles: "The condition of man after the fall of *Adam* is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."<sup>139</sup>

There can be no possible doubt that Wesley's position here, in line with that of the Thirty-nine Articles, is strikingly at variance with Pelagianism. But how exactly are we to interpret the view of man's state after the Fall which he advances?

The statement in the Article on original sin that "man is very far gone from original righteousness," can obviously be taken as a departure from the Reformed outlook. It can be understood as an expression of the view by which the Fall, while bringing a *depravatio naturae*, did not involve a *tota depravatio*. On this point both Pelagianism and pure Calvinism are rejected. The Thirty-nine Articles take a middle path between the two. There is further corroboration for this conclusion, one also drawn by Bicknell<sup>140</sup>, in the fact that the definitive version replaced an earlier, purely Calvinistic one<sup>141</sup>. At all events we are certainly confronted by a modification of Calvinism here.<sup>142</sup>

We have seen, however, that Wesley regarded the corruption of natural man as a total depravity. And he never abandoned this view. Thus his subscription to the definition of the state of natural man in the Thirty-nine Articles need not be regarded as a departure from a view he is otherwise consistent in maintaining. In all probability his concurrence should be interpreted in accordance with that view.

Dogmatic disagreement has been adduced to explain Wesley's drastic abridgement of the Article on original sin. Wheeler holds that he omitted the word 'fault', if this connotes the idea of original guilt, because he did not share such a view. Wheeler also finds dogmatic reasons for Wesley's omission of the whole of the second part of the Article. Wesley, Wheeler thinks, cannot subscribe to the statement that even at birth all men deserve the wrath and condemnation of God.<sup>143</sup> From what has been said above, however, it will be seen that Wheeler has not taken sufficient note of the scope and importance of sin in Wesley's conception of man. We saw that to Wesley original sin also takes on the character of guilt. In the collective view natural man is certainly thought to deserve damnation even at birth. Yet, as with the Moravians, Christ's atonement has absolved him from it.<sup>144</sup> Further, as a result of his individualistic tendency, original sin, as merely imputed, does not assume the same character of guilt as personal sin, man's own actual sin. Even if Wesley did omit the word 'fault' and the latter half of the Article because of some divergence of opinion<sup>145</sup>, as indeed seems probable, Wheeler cannot be said to have given a clear account of the nature of the divergence. He has failed to realize Wesley's close affinity with orthodoxy. Moreover, the omitted lines contain a point on which Wesley is in full agreement: he too thought concupiscence a sin.<sup>146</sup>

Wesley naturally incorporated the Article on free will in unaltered form. It agrees with his own idea of the part played by prevenient grace in salvation. Accompanying the idea of prevenient grace is also that of cooperating grace.<sup>147</sup> The fact that this conception could be reconciled with his doctrine of original sin, is due, as we have seen, to his view of prevenient grace as a supernatural grace, and not as an attribute issuing from the resources with which man was endowed at the creation.

---

## FOOTNOTES

1 This general attitude in Wesley, in spite of some deviation from orthodox principles, is urged by SCHNECKENBURGER in his *Vorlesungen* (see pp. 108, 111).

The same characteristic feature in his conception of sin is also stressed in more recent studies. See the chapter entitled *The Infinite Distance of Sin* in CELL, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley*, pp. 273-296. Cell asserts that Wesley is in the direct line of descent of St. Paul, St. Augustine, Luther, Calvin (p. 275). The

affinity with central Lutheran ideas is also indicated in v. EICKEN, *Rechtfertigung und Heiligung bei Wesley*, pp. 8-11, and in SCOTT, *John Wesleys Lehre von der Heiligung*, p. 78 ff. See also BETT, *The Spirit of Methodism*, p. 153. In his doctrines of corruption through sin and of grace as the means of salvation, Bett finds that Wesley follows Calvin. The divergence lay in the limited redemption of the latter. Cf. also LERCH, *Heil und Heiligung bei John Wesley*, p. 37 ff. See further Introduction, pp. 7, 11 ff.

2 This expression only refers to the general principles of the Reformation. Thus it includes a Lutheran as well as a Calvinistic view.

3 *The Circumcision of the Heart*, delivered 1733, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 267.

4 *Ib.*, p. 268.

5 See further the following sermons delivered in the same period: *On Grieving the Holy Spirit*, 1733, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 491; *The Trouble and Rest of Good Men*, 1735, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 365 f.; *On the Holy Spirit*, 1736, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, pp. 509-512.

6 University sermon on *Salvation by Faith*, delivered 11 June 1738, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 37 f.

7 *The Principles of a Methodist*, 1742, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 361.

8 *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 277.

9 *Minutes*, 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 285: "Q. 23. Wherein may we come to the very edge of Calvinism? A. (1.) In ascribing all good to the free grace of God. (2.) In denying all natural free-will, and all power antecedent to grace. And, (3.) In excluding all merit from man; even for what he has or does by the grace of God."

10 *Justification by Faith*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 118 f.

11 *The Righteousness of Faith*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 138.

12 *Ib.*, p. 141.

13 *Ib.*, p. 141 f.

14 See *The Way to the Kingdom*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 156 f.

15 *The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 187.

16 *The Sermon on the Mount*: 1, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 323. On man as born in sin, also *ib.*, p. 326 f., *The Sermon on the Mount*: XIII, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 34.

17 *The Sermon on the Mount*: XI, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 534.

18 See *The Way to the Kingdom*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 157; *The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 187 f.; *The Sermon on the Mount*: I, 1748,

The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 324. On first repentance a man has his guilt always before him. He knows what punishment he has deserved "were it only on account of his carnal mind, the entire, universal corruption of his nature: how much more, on account of all his evil desires and thoughts, of all his sinful words and actions!" He cannot for a moment doubt that the most trifling of these deserves the damnation of Hell. See also *ib.*, p. 326 f.

19 The Sermon on the Mount: VI, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 442.

20 See the interpretation of Rom. vi. 6 in Notes, 1755. The *expression Our old man* is commented on as follows: "Coeval with our Being, and as old as the Fall; our evil Nature; a strong and beautiful Expression for that entire Depravity and Corruption, which by Nature spreads itself over the whole Man, leaving no Part uninfected." See also the commentary on John i. 14: "*Grace and truth* -- We are all by Nature Liars and Children of Wrath, to whom both Grace and Truth are unknown. But we are made Partakers of them, when we are accepted *thro' the Beloved.*"

21 See Notes, 1755, Rom. v. 12, 14, 19. See also *ib.*, Eph. ii. 3.

22 The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, Preface, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 193. Wesley's treatise is an answer to John Taylor's book on original sin. For Taylor, whose unitarianism undermined the orthodox outlook, see HUNT, Religious Thought in England, III, p. 254 ff. For the two other theologians, Wesley's contemporaries, the latitudinarian Dr. Conyers Middleton and the deist Lord Bolingbroke with his radical biblical criticism, see *ib.*, III, pp. 60-70 and 190-194 respectively.

23 *ib.*, p. 194.

24 See sermon on Original Sin, 1760, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 54.

25 See *ib.*, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 63: "But here is the *shibboleth*: Is man by nature filled with all manner of evil? Is he void of all good? Is he wholly fallen? Is his soul totally corrupted? Or, to come back to the text, is 'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually'? Allow this, and you are so far a Christian. Deny it, and you are but an Heathen still."

In a letter to Taylor dated 3 July 1759, the year before, Wesley had spoken similarly of the fundamental importance of original sin in Christianity. Here his main point is that the controversy between them concerns "*de re*, if ever there was one in this world; indeed, concerning a thing of the highest importance -- nay, all the things that concern our eternal peace." "It is," he continues, "Christianity or heathenism! for, take away the scriptural doctrine of Redemption or Justification, and that of the New Birth, the beginning of sanctification, or (which amounts to the same) explain them as you do, suitably to your doctrine of Original Sin, and what is Christianity better than heathenism? wherein, save in rectifying some of our notions, has the religion of St. Paul any pre-eminence over that of Socrates or Epictetus?" He concludes this letter with the following words: "Either I or you mistake the whole of Christianity from the beginning to the end! Either my scheme or yours is as contrary to the scriptural as the Koran is. Is it mine, or yours? Yours has gone through all England and made numerous converts. I attack it from end to end. Let all England judge whether it can be defended or not!" The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 67 f.

26 See Justification by Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 116; The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 293.

27 Sermon on The New Birth, 1760, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 66.

28 The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 352.

29 Sermon on The New Birth, 1760, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 66 f.

30 The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 293. For Adam's perfect, and his descendants' defective, understanding, see *ib.*, p. 289 f.

31 *ib.*, p. 291.

32 Sermon on The New Birth, 1760, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 67.

33 The sermon What Is Man?, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 230; sermon, The Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels, written 1790, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 344.

34 The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 245.

35 The sermon What Is Man?, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 230; sermon The Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels, 1790, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 344. Wesley does not think the natural and political image of man is totally lost, but he considers this irrelevant to salvation. See below p. 44 f.

36 Sermon on The New Birth, 1760, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 67.

37 *ib.*, p. 67 f.

38 The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 238.

39 *ib.*, p. 239.

40 See Notes, 1755, Rom. v. 12, 14.

41 *ib.*, Rom. v. 19. See also sermon on The New Birth, 1760, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 68: "And in Adam all died, all human kind, all the children of men who were then in Adam's loins."

42 *ib.*, Rom. v. 12. Cf. Augustine's conception in LJUNGGREN, *Det kristna syndmedvetandet intill Luther*, p. 181 ff.; SILÉN, *Den kristna människouppfattningen intill Schleiermacher*, p. 103 ff.

43 See sermon on The New Birth, 1760, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 68.

44 See The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 273. See also *ib.*, p. 295, where it is likewise defined as a "natural propensity to evil."

45 See *ib.*, p. 295.

46 See sermon on Original Sin, 1760, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 63, where the doctrine of original sin is said to be the fundamental difference between Christianity and paganism: "But still as none of them were apprized of the fall of man, so none of them knew of his total corruption. They knew not that all men were

empty of all good, and filled with all manner of evil. They were wholly ignorant of the entire depravation of the whole human nature, of every man born into the world, in every faculty of his soul, not so much by those particular vices which reign in particular persons, as by the general flood of Atheism and idolatry, of pride, self-will, and love of the world."

According to Wesley it is these sins in particular that express the essence of inherent sin. Cf. The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 433, where the root of sin is said to be: pride, self-will, un-belief, heart-idolatry. In the sermon on The Deceitfulness of Man's Heart, written in 1790, self-will, pride, love of the world, independence of God, Atheism and idolatry are specified as the origin of human evil. The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 337 ff.

47 The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 243.

48 See *ib.*, p. 395. Quoting Watts.

49 See *ib.*, pp. 243, 319.

50 *ib.*, p. 242 f.

51 *ib.*, p. 242.

52 See *ib.*, p. 409 f. Quoting Hebden.

53 *ib.*, p. 316. See also *ib.*, p. 313, where we read that by nature the child is. "a 'child of wrath', under the guilt and power of sin." Cf. p. 438, a quotation stating that even infants must be reborn. Just as they had to be circumcised in the age of the Old Testament, they must now be baptized at Christ's commandment.

54 Cf. passages already quoted in Minutes 1744, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 277; Justification by Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 118 f.; The Righteousness of Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 141. See further the sermon on Justification by Faith, p. 117 f.: "Thus 'by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And so death passed upon all men', as being contained in him who was the common father and representative of us all. Thus, 'through the offence of one', all are dead, dead to God, dead in sin, dwelling in a corruptible mortal body, shortly to be dissolved, and under the sentence of death eternal. For as, 'by one man's disobedience', all 'were made sinners'; so, by that offence of one, 'judgment came upon all men to condemnation'. (Rom. v. 12, & c.)" See The Sermon on the Mount: 1, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 324; The doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, p. 264: "By *punishment* I mean *evil*, suffered on account of sin. And are we not obnoxious to any evil on account of Adam's sin?" *ib.*, p. 291: "They suppose Adam to have been created holy and wise, like his Creator; and yet capable of falling from it. They suppose farther, that through temptations, of which we cannot possibly judge, he did fall from that state; and that hereby he brought pain, labour, and sorrow on himself and all his posterity; together with death, not only temporal, but spiritual, and (without the grace of God) eternal. And it must be confessed, that not only a few Divines, but the whole body of Christians in all ages, did suppose this, till after seventeen hundred years a sweet-tongued orator arose, not only more enlightened than silly Adam, but than any of his wise posterity, and declared that the whole supposition was folly, nonsense, inconsistency, and blasphemy!" See further *ib.*, p. 303.

In A Treatise on Baptism, written 1756, Wesley has allowed the orthodox opinion to remain unaltered: "That we are all born under the guilt of Adam's sin, and that all sin deserves eternal misery, was the unanimous sense of the ancient Church, as it is expressed in the Ninth Article of our own." The Works of John Wesley, X,

p. 190. By reason of the guilt of original sin children are "children of wrath, and liable to eternal damnation." *ib.*, p. 193. In his revision of *The Shorter Catechism* Wesley also allows the orthodox Calvinistic view to remain unqualified. See MACDONALD's text in *Wesley's Revision of The Shorter Catechism*, p. 4 f.

55 See further *Justification by Faith*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 118, *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley*, IX, p. 332 ff.

56 *Minutes* 1744, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 277: "That text, 'As by one man's disobedience all men were made sinners, so by the obedience of One, all were made righteous', we conceive means, By the merits of Christ, all men are cleared from the guilt of Adam's actual sin." See also *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley*, IX, p. 303.

Because of Christ's atonement children are not reprobate on account of the guilt of Adam's sin. See IMPETA, *De Leer der Heiliging en Volmaking bij Wesley en Fletcher*, p. 125.

57 Cf. Zinzendorf's conception, which in this respect deviates from the Augsburg Confession and the subsequent orthodox Protestant position. Referring to Christ's atonement Zinzendorf maintains that a child that dies before baptism will not be damned. ZINZENDORF'S *Sendschreiben an Ihre Königl. Maj. von Schweden ... betreffende sein und seiner Gerneinde Glauben und Bekänntnis*, Corp. Conf., *Die Brödergemeinde*, p. 692. Cf. PLITT, *Zinzendorfs Theologie*, 1, p. 252; 11, p. 213 f. Cf. also SPANGENBERG, *Idea fidei fratrum*, p. 157. See Augsburg Confession, Art. II in J. T. MÜLLER, *Die symbolischen Bücher der evangelischlutherischen Kirche*, p. 38; J. MÜLLER, *Die christliche Lehre von der Sünde*, II, p. 418 f.

Yet on this point too Wesley allows the orthodox outlook to remain unaltered in the *Treatise on Baptism*, which holds that deliverance from original guilt is not effected until baptism. *The Works of John Wesley*, X, p. 190 ff.

58 *Self-Denial*, 1760, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 286.

59 *A Short History of Methodism*, 1765, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 349.

60 See sermon *On Living without God*, written 1790, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 351. The relation of the natural man to the invisible world is here compared with that of a toad to the visible world; both are enveloped in darkness. "What a thick veil is between him and the invisible world, which, with regard to him, is as though it had no being! He has not the least perception of it, not the most distant idea. He has not the least sight of God, the intellectual Sun, nor any the least attraction toward him, or desire to have any knowledge of his ways. Although His light be gone forth into all lands, and His sound into the end of the world, yet he *heareth* no more thereof than of the fabled music of the spheres. He *tastes* nothing of the goodness of God, or the powers of the world to come. He does not *feel* (as our Church speaks) the working of the Holy Spirit in his heart. In a word, he has no more intercourse with, or knowledge of, the spiritual world, than this poor creature had of the natural, while shut up in its dark inclosure." Cf. sermon on *The New Birth*, 1760, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 70, where the situation of natural man is similarly described. The unborn child has no perception of things in the world; nor has man, before he has been born of God, any knowledge of or communion with Him.

61 See *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley*, IX, p. 304.

62 See *ib.*, p. 255. Quotation.

63 *ib.*, p. 253 f.

64 See Wesley's Hebden quotation in *The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX*, p. 429: "A denial of original sin contradicts the main design of the gospel, which is to humble vain man, and to ascribe to God's free grace, not man's free will, the whole of his salvation. Nor, indeed, can we let this doctrine go without giving up, at the same time, the greatest part, if not all, of the essential articles of the Christian faith. If we give up this, we cannot defend either justification by the merits of Christ, or the renewal of our natures by his Spirit."

Cf. further Wesley's own account *ib.*, p. 327, "Here is the ground, the real and the only ground, for true Christian thankfulness: 'Christ died for the ungodly that were without strength'; such as is every man by nature. And till a man has been deeply sensible of it, he can never truly thank God for his redemption; nor consequently, for his creation; which is, in the event, a blessing to those only who are 'created anew in Christ Jesus.'" Cf. also p. 313: "This doctrine, therefore, is the 'most proper' of all others 'to be instilled into a child': That it is by nature a 'child of wrath', under the guilt and under the power of sin; that it can be saved from wrath only by the merits, and sufferings, and love of the son of God; that it can be delivered from the power of sin only by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit; but that by his grace it may be renewed in the image of God, perfected in love, and made meet for glory."

See further *A Short History of Methodism, 1765, The Works of John Wesley, VIII*, p. 349, in which Wesley maintains that the doctrine of original sin is implicit in the doctrine of salvation by faith.

65 *A Word to a Condemned Malefactor, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, XI*, p. 180.

66 *The Sermon on the Mount: I, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I*, p. 323.

67 *ib.*, p. 326 f. See also *The Sermon on the Mount: XIII, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II*, p. 34.

68 See *The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX*, p. 313: "The power of godliness consists in the love of God and man; this is heavenly and substantial religion. But no man can possibly 'love his neighbour as himself', till he loves God; and no man can possibly love God, till he truly believes in Christ; and no man truly believes in Christ, till he is deeply convinced of his own sinfulness, guiltiness, and helplessness. But this no man ever was, neither can be, who does not know he has a corrupt nature."

69 *ib.*, p. 306. "So far," he continues, "every man who comes to Christ is first convinced of the several things he lost by Adam"; though he may not clearly know the source of that corruption which he sees and feels in his heart and life."

70 *ib.*, p. 273. Experience, however, does not always tally with reality. Thus the justified but not entirely sanctified man, who at times does not feel sinful, must not draw the conclusion that he is not. Even though man does not feel sin stir within him, it is nevertheless there. See *The Wilderness State, 1760, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II*, p. 255; *The Scripture Way of Salvation, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II*, p. 446.

But it is seldom long, we are told, before the justified become aware that sin is still with them: "They now feel two principles in themselves, plainly contrary to each other; 'the flesh lusting against the spirit'; nature opposing the grace of God." *The Scripture Way of Salvation, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II*, p. 447. Experience shows "that the roots of sin, self-will, pride, and idolatry, remain still in his heart." Sermon on

The Deceitfulness of Man's Heart, 1790, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 341.

71 See *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 454.

72 *The Sermon on the Mount: I*, 1748, *StS I*, p. 324.

73 See *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley IX*, p. 313

74 See also *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *StS, II*, p. 455.

75 Wesley finds authority in the Bible for this distinction between personal sin and imputed guilt. See *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley, IX*, p. 317. Adam's sin is imputed to his children, but they have no personal sin. *Ib.*, p. 326.

76 *Ib.*, p. 243.

77 *Ib.*, p. 410, quotation.

78 See *ib.*, p. 410. Quotation: "And yet it is allowed, we are no so guilty by nature, as a course of actual sin afterward makes us. But we are, antecedent to that course, 'children of wrath'; liable to some degree of wrath and punishment." Cf. *ib.*, p. 286, where Wesley writes of the punishment in this world and that to come. "That all men are liable to these for Adam's sin alone, I do not assert; but they are so, for their own outward and inward sins, which, through their own fault, spring from the infection of their nature. And this, I think, may fairly be inferred from Rom. vi. 23: 'The wages of sin is death'; its due reward; death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal."

79 *Ib.*, p. 332.

80 See *ib.*, p. 332.

81 See *Predestination Calmly Considered*, 1752, *The Works of John Wesley, X*, p. 236. Cf. *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley, IX*, p. 315: "But with regard to parents and their posterity, God assures us, children 'shall not die for the iniquity of their fathers.' No, not eternally. I believe none ever did, or ever will, die eternally, merely for the sin of our first father."

82 See letter to Dr. Robertson, 24 Sept. 1753, *The Letters of John Wesley, III*, p. 107. Cf. *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley, IX*, p. 306.

83 See sermon on Free Grace, delivered 1740, *The Works of John Wesley, VII*, p. 385: "Yea, the decree is past; and so it was before the foundation of the world. But what decree? Even this: 'I will set before the sons of men 'life and death, blessing and cursing'. And the soul that chooseth life shall live, as the soul that chooseth death shall die.'"

84 *Predestination Calmly Considered*, 1752, *The Works of John Wesley, X*, pp. 235, 238.

85 See Wesley's rejection of the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation with the help of such testimonies to individual responsibility as that in Ezekiel xviii: " 'Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?' (Temporally he doth, as in the case of Achan, Korah, and a thousand others; but not eternally.)

'When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die'; shall die the second death." *Ib.*, *The Works of John Wesley*, X, p. 216.

86 See in particular the sermon on *The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption*, *The Works of John Wesley*, V., p. 104. See also *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley*, IX, p. 273. *Ib.*, p. 450. Quotation: "Leave the unrenewed will to itself, it will choose sin and reject holiness; and that as certainly as water poured on the side of a hill will run downward and not upward." There is a direct opposition to God Himself in the will of natural man. *Ib.*, p. 451. Quotation.

Another quotation shows full agreement with Luther's view of natural man as 'incurvatus in se'. *Ib.*, p. 456: "Yes, self is the highest end of unregenerate men, even in their religious actions. They perform duties for a name; for some worldly interest; or, at best, in order to escape from hell. They seek not God at all, but for their own interest. So that God is only the means, and self their end." Cf. also *ib.*: "Whithersoever they move, they cannot move beyond the circle of self. They seek themselves, they act for themselves; their natural, civil, and religious actions, from whatever spring they come, do all run into, and meet in, this dead sea."

87 See *ib.*, p. 275: "But 'if all actual transgressions proceed from Adam's sin, then he is the only guilty person that ever lived. For if his sin is the cause of all ours, he alone is chargeable with them.'

"True; if all our transgressions so proceed from his sin, that we cannot possibly avoid them. But this is not the case; by the grace of God we may cast away all our transgressions: Therefore, if we do not, they are chargeable on ourselves. We may live; but we will die.

"Well, but 'on these principles all actual sins proceed from Adam's sin; either by necessary consequence, or through our own choice; or partly by one, and partly by the other'. Yes; partly by one, and partly by the other. We are inclined to evil, antecedently to our own choice. By grace we may conquer this inclination; or we may choose to follow it, and so commit actual sin." Of Wesley's rejection of older and newer deterministic theories in *Thoughts upon Necessity*, 1774, *The Works of John Wesley*, X, pp. 457-474.

88 See *The Way to the Kingdom*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 156 f. Cf. *Justification by Faith*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 123. The man who is not justified does only what is evil, for his heart is evil. As long as the tree is corrupt, the fruits are corrupt, 'for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit'. Cf. also *The Righteousness of Faith*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 142.

89 See *The Sermon on the Mount: I*, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 323. Cf. *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley*, IX, p. 433; here sin is regarded as an organic relation between the root, the branches and the leaves. All John Taylor's doctrine can do. Wesley says, "is to shake off the leaves. It does not affect the branches of sin. Unholy tempers are just as they were. Much less does it strike at the root: Pride, self-will unbelief, heart-idolatry, remain undisturbed and unsuspected."

90 See sermon on *The Wilderness State*, 1760, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 81. Here sin of omission is distinguished from inward sin. Cf. on the other hand the sermon on *The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God*, 1748, *The Works of John Wesley*, V, p. 232, where this distinction is not made.

91 *Sermon on The Wilderness State*, 1760, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 86.

92 *Ib.*, pp. 83, 87 f.

93 *Ib.*, p. 82 f.

94 *Ib.*, p. 86.

95 Sermon on The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God, 1748, *The Works of John Wesley*, V, p. 231.

96 Virtually, it comprises all sins, for it is the seed of them all. *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley*, IX, p. 462. Quotation.

97 The connection between this and Wesley's interest in the cure of souls is particularly clearly seen in *The Wilderness State*, 1760, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 248 ff.

In *John Wesley's Lehre von der Heiligung*, p. 81, SCOTT maintains that Methodism, unlike Lutheranism, is very much concerned with sins but very little with sin. This is *per se* a correct observation, but true understanding of Wesley's attitude necessitates also due recognition of the importance he attached to original sin.

98 *The Sermon on the Mount: VI*, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 441 f. Cf. p. 23 f. above.

99 *An Earnest Appeal to Man of Reason and Religion*, 1743, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 24.

100 *The Sermon on the Mount: V1*, 1748, *The Works of John Wesley*, V, p. 339 f.

101 *The Sermon on the Mount: 1*, 1748, *The Works of John Wesley*, V, p. 253.

102 *The Sermon on the Mount: V1*, 1748, *The Works of John Wesley*, V, p. 339.

103 *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley*, IX, p. 194 (Preface).

104 *Ib.*, p. 306. Cf. above p. 33.

105 *Ib.*, p. 313.

106 This is the case in *Original Sin*, 1760, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 210 ff.

107 *Ib.*, p. 223 f.

108 *Ib.*, p. 225.

109 *Ib.*, p. 225.

110 See also *Self-Denial*, 1760, in which the corruption of original sin is called an evil disease. *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 287.

111 *Ib.*, p. 289.

112 *Sermon On the Fall of Man*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 223.

113 Cf. *LAW, A Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection*, 1726, *The Works of William Law*, III, p. 11 ff. For

Law's view, see further below.

114 The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 381. Quotation: "The 'image of God', in which Adam was created, consisted eminently in righteousness and true holiness. But that part of the 'image of God' which remained after the fall, and remains in all men to this day, is the natural image of God, namely, the spiritual nature and immortality of the soul; not excluding the political image of God. or a degree of dominion over the creatures still remaining. But the moral image of God is lost and defaced, or else it could not be said to be 'renewed'."

115 Sermon on The General Deliverance, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 242 ff.

116 Sermon on The Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels, 1790, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 345. Cf. Some Remarks on "A Defence of the Preface to the Edinburgh Edition of Aspasio Vindicated," 1766, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 350: "I believe that Adam, before his fall, had such freedom of will, that he might choose either good or evil; but that, since the fall, no child of man has a natural power to choose anything that is truly good. Yet I know (and who does not?) that man has still freedom of will in things of an indifferent nature."

117 Cf. Wesley's declaration at the 1744 Conference; one of the questions at issue was whether the Methodists had not been inclining too much towards Calvinism. Minutes, 1744; The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 277 f.

118 Predestination Calmly Considered, 1752, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 229 f.

119 *Ib.*, p. 231.

120 *Ib.*, p. 232 ff. Cf. Thoughts upon God's Sovereignty, 1777, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 361 ff. Wesley here says that God as Creator has acted according to his supreme will. On the other hand, as Governor, he has to act "according to the invariable rules both of justice and mercy." It is in this latter character that God rewards and punishes; a prerequisite being that man has "free-agency" and is able to choose.

121 See Notes, 1755, John vi. 44.

122 The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 265. See also Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's "Review of all the Doctrines Taught by Mr John Wesley," 1772, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 392: "But, indeed, both Mr F. [Fletcher] and Mr W. [Wesley] absolutely deny natural free-will. We both steadily assert that the will of man is by nature free only to evil. Yet we both believe that every man has a measure of free-will restored to him by grace." Cf. FLETCHER, A Vindication, 1771, p. 15 f.

123 Notes, 1755, John i. 9.

124 *Ib.*, Rom. i. 19: "*For what is to be known of God -- Those great Principles which are indispensably necessary to be known, for God hath shewed it to them -- By the Light which enlightens every Man that cometh into the World.*" Rom. ii. 14: "*Do by nature -- That is, without an outward Rule; though this also, strictly speaking, is by preventing Grace. These, not having the written law, are a law unto themselves -- That is, what the Law is to the Jews, they are (by the Grace of God) to themselves; namely, a Rule of Life.*" Occasionally, however, Wesley can express the opinion that a certain residue of knowledge of the law was preserved after the Fall. The moral law that at the creation was inscribed on the heart of man has been largely defaced but not totally obliterated. The Sermon on the Mount: V, 1748, The Standard Sermons of

John Wesley, I, p. 400 f.; *The Original ... of the Law*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 43. Cf. below p. 49.

125 *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley*, IX, p. 268. Wesley adds: "They who, by this help, do the things contained in the law, we grant, 'are not the objects of God's wrath.'" As this grace has been given them, they are without excuse if they remain corrupt: "True, if God had not offered them grace to balance the corruption of nature: But if he did, they are still without excuse; because they might have conquered that corruption, and would not. Therefore we are not obliged to seek any other sense of the phrase, 'By nature', than, 'By the nature we bring into the world.'" *Ib.*, p. 268. Cf. also *ib.*, p. 273: "If you ask, 'Why, how are they capable of performing duty?' I answer, By grace; though not by nature. And a measure of this is given to all men."

126 *Sermon On Working Out Our Own Salvation*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 506. Wesley admits, however, that in the best and most thoughtful heathens there can be "some resemblance of these truths." *Ib.*, p. 506 f.

127 *Sermon on The Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, 1790, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 345.

128 See Notes, 1755, Rom. ii. 14.

129 *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 11, p. 445. 4

130 *Sermon On Conscience*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 187 ff.

131 *Sermon On Working Out Our Own Salvation*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 512.

132 See sermon on *The Heavenly Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, 1790, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 345.

133 See sermons *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 445; *On Working Out Our Own Salvation*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 509, where Wesley says: "Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) preventing grace; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life; some degree of salvation; the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God."

134 See Minutes, 1744, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 277 f. Cf. Art. VIII in *The Articles of Religion*, 1784, Corp. Conf., *Die Methodistenkirche*, p. 12.

135 Wesley reduced the Thirty-nine Articles to twenty-four. This abridgement was first published in Wesley's 1784 revision of the *Book of Common Prayer*, entitled *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America With Other Occasional Services*. See COOKE, *History of the Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, p. 163 ff., 166 ff. By the addition of an article called "Of the Rulers of The United States of America" at the Baltimore Conference in 1784-85 the number rose to twenty-five. See GREEN, *Wesley Bibliography*, p. 224; WHEELER, *History and Exposition of the Twenty-five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, p. 8 f.

136 *The Book of Common Prayer*, *Articles of Religion*, Art. IX. Cf. *Augsburg Confession*, Art. II in J. T. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, p. 38 f. See WHEELER, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

137 See Corp. Conf., Die bischöfliche Methodistenkirche, p. 11 f.

138 See WHEELER, op. cit., p. 190. This is also pointed out by BICKNELL, A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, p. 219. For the Württemberg Confession, which agrees with the Augsburg Confession, and its influence on the forty-two articles in the revision of 1562, see HARDWICK, A History of the Articles of Religion, p. 124 ff.

139 See Corp. Conf., Die bischöfliche Methodistenkirche, p. 12.

140 See BICKNELL, op. cit., p. 230 f. According to Bicknell the article represents a mediating position: "On the one side it clearly takes a gloomier view of man's present position than the Council of Trent. It follows St Augustine so far as to speak of *'the fault and corruption (depravatio) of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil'*. It definitely repudiates the Pelagian idea that the 'Fall' had no effect on man at all. On the other side it carefully avoids the Calvinistic extravagance of saying 'Tota depravatio'." *Ib.*, p. 231. See also *ib.*, p. 21.

141 See WHEELER, op. cit., p. 187. A pro-Calvinistic revision in 1643, Wheeler says, gave the wording "whereby man is wholly deprived of original righteousness." After the power of Calvinism was broken, the phrase "very far gone from" was substituted.

This was a return to the versions of the Thirty-nine Articles of 1571 and that of earlier Articles. In the 1571 version original sin is "the fault and corruption of the nature of euery man that naturally is engendered of the ofspring of Adam, whereby man is very farre gone from originall ryghteousness. . ." In the Latin text of the 1562 Articles original sin is defined as "vitium. et deprauatio naturae cuiuslibet hominis ex Adamo naturaliter propagati, qua fit, vt ab originali iustitia quàm longissime distet. . ." The Latin text of the Forty-two Articles of 1552 has the same wording. In the English text original sin is described as "the fault and corruption of the nature of euery manne, that naturallie is engendered of the ofspring of Adam, whereby manne is very farre gone from his former righteousness, whiche he had at his creation. . ." These texts in HARDWICK, Op. Cit., p. 262 ff. See also Corp. Conf., Die Kirche von England, p. 381 f.

142 OLSSON, however, has shown that there is an inconsistency in Calvin's own view. On the one hand Imago Dei is considered "deleta" after the Fall, on the other, only "prope deleta." Calvin och reformationens teologi, I, pp. 220, 236 f., the note, 268 f.

143 WHEELER, op. cit., p. 23.

144 Further confirmation that in this respect Wesley is not of one mind with the Thirty-nine Articles and later orthodoxy will be found in a comparison between the baptismal ritual of the Church of England and the corresponding ritual in the revision of the Book of Common Prayer which he published simultaneously with the Articles of Religion. See Corp. Conf., Die Kirche von England, p. 212. The corresponding passage in Wesley's revision in COOKE, op. cit., p. 192 f.

145 In this connection we can disregard the discrepancy between the latter part of the Article and Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection.

146 But it is not looked upon as actual sin. James i. 15 is explained in Notes, 1755: "*Then desire having conceived -- By our own Will joining therewith, bringeth forth actual sin -- It doeth not follow that the Desire itself is not Sin. He that begets a Man is himself a Man: and sin being perfected -- Grown up to Maturity,*

which it quickly does, *bringeth forth death* -- Sin is born big with death." Cf. The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 307 ff., 311.

147 WHEELER is quite right in maintaining that an earlier wording, "working in us," was later altered to "working with us." Op. cit., p. 190. The Latin texts of 1552 and 1562 read "cooperante dum volumus." The English text of the Articles of 1552 has the expression "working in us," the Thirty-nine Articles of 1571, "workyng with vs." See HARDWICK, op. cit., p. 264 f. See also Corp. Conf., Die Kirche von England, p. 382 f.; BICKNELL, op. cit., p. 242 ff.

# Wesley and Sanctification

by

**Harald Lindström**

---

## CHAPTER TWO

### ATONEMENT, JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION

#### I

#### *Atonement.*

In considering Wesley's attitude to man we have already touched upon his view of salvation and the place in it of sanctification. We now pass on to a closer examination of his idea of salvation, in order, firstly, to determine the principles governing the relation between justification and sanctification, and, secondly, to bring out the importance attributed to sanctification. In this chapter, in clarifying the connection between justification and sanctification, we shall be concerned only with present justification. The question of the relation between sanctification and final justification, or final salvation, will be dealt with later on. The first step must be to scrutinize Wesley's view of atonement. It is the natural starting point here, for both justification and sanctification are based on it.

Wesley never took up the Atonement for special consideration in any of his treatises or tracts. Nor is it the main theme in any of his sermons. His views on it will be found primarily in scattered remarks bearing on his exposition of sin, justification, and sanctification. Yet it was undoubtedly a pivotal and essential theme in both his preaching and his thought.<sup>1</sup>

Along with the new knowledge of justification in 1738, the Atonement, the rock on which justification is built, naturally comes to the fore. The controversy between Wesley and William Law, which was engendered by the doctrine of justification, also embraced the Atonement.

Law had seen religion as in the main synonymous with sanctification, which meant conformity to the life of Christ. It was man's duty to bear the cross and follow Christ. Mortification constituted the essence of piety.<sup>2</sup> Man had to die to the world and live a new life in the spirit of Christ.<sup>3</sup> But although Christ is regarded as the cause of human sanctification, considerable emphasis is nevertheless laid on the necessity to exert oneself to the uttermost to achieve that holiness of life and heavenly wisdom in all one's actions which is Law's definition of Christianity.<sup>4</sup> The struggle for sanctification is also regarded as a necessary condition of justification. Salvation, that is, depends upon the sincerity and completeness of man's effort to attain it. Until he has striven to the last ounce of his strength he cannot win God's favour.<sup>5</sup>

But sin and guilt too have their place in Law's conception of man, and through them his attention is directed towards atonement. Man has perverted the nature with which God endowed him. He has fallen, and consequently has no right to feel proud.<sup>6</sup> If we consider the Atonement, which was necessary that man might be liberated from the guilt of sin, the frightfulness of sin becomes manifest.<sup>7</sup> Law sees the Incarnation and the suffering and death of Christ as essential to the re-establishment of man's fellowship with God. "Nothing less," he says, "has been required to take away the guilt of our sins, than the sufferings and death of the Son of God. Had He not taken our nature upon Him, our nature had been for ever separated from God, and incapable of ever appearing before Him."<sup>8</sup> Without the mediation of the Son of God and His intercession with the Father, man would not even have been in a position to pray for the forgiveness of his sins.<sup>9</sup> Because of his sin, man is subject to punishment, and the only way in which he can obtain the favour of God is through the Atonement effected by Christ.<sup>10</sup>

Yet this line of thought does not lead to a Reformed adjustment of the relation between justification and sanctification. Christ's work for mankind in the Atonement is not given significance enough to make such a step possible. The idea of atonement is modified in Law, as it was in practical mysticism in general, by the notion of man's own mortification. Christ's suffering on the cross is not regarded as a vicarious suffering for mankind. It is only a representational act in the name of mankind which has been credited to man in the sense that his union with Christ is accepted by God. Christ is a sacrifice to make the sacrifices of mankind acceptable to God.<sup>11</sup> For Law Christ's work of atonement does not constitute the only ground of deliverance from guilt and the favour of God: another factor is man's own mortification. Man must practise self-denial and bear his cross if he is to benefit from Christ's atonement. Law maintains that "all the sons of Adam are to go through a painful, sickly life, denying and mortifying their natural appetites, and crucifying the lusts of the flesh, in order to have a share in the atonement of our Saviour's death."<sup>12</sup> The restoration of God's favour demands not only "so great an Atonement of the Son of God" but also so great a "repentance of our own."<sup>13</sup>

Wesley's new insight into, and experience of, salvation by faith was made possible because he too acquired a new way of looking at the question of atonement.<sup>14</sup> For him Christ's work of atonement became the sole basis of justification and regeneration. Justifying faith became a faith in Christ's work of atonement and His merits. Thus it was inevitable that Wesley should find himself compelled to settle matters with William Law, who had been his principal spiritual mentor for a number of years. He saw clearly that the main source of dissension between them was the Atonement. Wesley's chief concern was now "a living faith in the blood of Christ."<sup>15</sup> Writing to Law in May, 1738, he expresses the fundamental difference between their views in the words: "He is our propitiation through faith in His blood."<sup>16</sup> It is true that the Atonement, as we have seen, had a place in Law's theology, but it was not, as with Wesley, of such fundamental importance for justification that in this respect man's own actions could be left entirely out of account. To Wesley, Law's way of salvation now seemed a way of law, which he had tested but found quite impracticable. Of course Wesley undoubtedly exaggerates Law's legalistic tendency. It had assumed excessive proportions for him precisely because of his earlier concentration on Law's insistence on sanctification. This had meant that Wesley had put all the emphasis on man's bearing of his own cross and mortification, while he had hardly paid any attention at all to what Law had to say about Christ's work of atonement.<sup>17</sup> Consequently Wesley now tends to underestimate the importance attributed to grace in Law's conception of salvation. All the same, it is true that in Law the idea of Atonement is entirely subordinated to sanctification. Further, Wesley's criticism cannot be said to involve any

misrepresentation of Law's principles, for in Law's conception of man's justification, grace is not fully freed from the trammels of the legalistic framework.

Wesley, then, came to regard Christ's work of atonement as the sole ground of human justification. "The sole cause of our acceptance with God (or, that for the sake of which, on the account of which, we are accepted) is the righteousness and the death of Christ, who fulfilled God's law, and died in our stead."<sup>18</sup> Justification cannot therefore be based on any righteousness in man himself: neither righteousness of outward acts nor righteousness of inward temper. Thus sanctification becomes not a cause, but an effect, of justification.<sup>19</sup> Faith alone is regarded as the necessary condition for justification, a faith which does not embrace any form of human sanctity, but out of which inward and outward sanctity spring.<sup>20</sup>

The controversy with Law and the other mystics brings out clearly the importance that Wesley now ascribed to the Atonement. We have already hinted at its significance for the relation between justification and sanctification. The purport of the breach with the mystics can be summed up in the statement that he changed his mind about the way of salvation. But as to the goal of salvation, he remained in agreement with Law and practical mysticism. As we shall see later on, he continued to regard sanctification as the true aim and essence of religion.<sup>21</sup> Yet the fact that Wesley's way of salvation did not remain Law's, was a natural consequence of the former's deepened conception of Sin.<sup>22</sup>

Before attempting a definition of Wesley's idea of atonement, we turn our attention to the view of it contained in the Thirty-nine Articles and the Homily of Salvation of the Church of England.

In the Thirty-nine Articles it will be found in a few sentences dealing with Christ's work of atonement, which is particularly treated in three of the Articles. In connection with the Incarnation it is maintained that Christ, who was a true God and a true man, "truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men."<sup>23</sup> The Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacrifices of Masses is rejected. The sacrifice of Christ, "once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone."<sup>24</sup> In the Article on justification, Christ's merits are said to be the only basis of human justification: "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings: wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification."<sup>25</sup>

Orthodox satisfaction would seem to be the dominant conception in the view of atonement reflected in these brief formulations.<sup>26</sup> The legal order and the judicial system emerge as the governing principle. The work of Christ, by which God is atoned, is perceived as a satisfaction. By it God's justice is satisfied. Yet it does not follow that the idea of grace is absent. In the Article on justification, where we are told that man is justified by the merit of Christ, the stress is laid on the justification of man solely "for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith" and not "for our own works and deservings." Of the alternatives, the merit of Christ on the one hand and our own works on the other, the former is put first to accentuate the principle that justification takes place by grace alone. But while this theocentric view is seen in the attitude to grace, an anthropocentric

tendency seems simultaneously to emerge in the notion of comfort for distressed man.<sup>27</sup>

The Homily of Salvation, which explains Article XI in the Thirty-nine Articles, shows still more clearly that this view of atonement is in alignment with the orthodox doctrine of satisfaction. Thus it agrees with the Latin idea of atonement, which, dating from Tertullian and Cyprian, is fully developed in Anselm, and in modified form continues in orthodox theology.<sup>28</sup> The act of atonement is seen from the point of view of both grace and justice, but the latter seems to be the dominant principle. As all men have broken the law of God and thus their fellowship with Him, God justifies them instead through Christ. Thus no one can be justified by his own acts<sup>29</sup>; the justification of man occurs by the grace of God<sup>30</sup>. Implicit in, but partly independent of, this view of grace, a conception of justice also emerges. We see it in the way atonement is regarded as a form of satisfaction. The law broken by man must be fulfilled. This is done through Christ. God sent His only Son to fulfil the law for us and that by shedding His most precious blood He should provide God with that satisfaction or compensation for our sins which was necessary if God's wrath against us was to be appeased.<sup>31</sup> Since atonement is thus regarded as a form of satisfaction tendered to God, the work of Christ is seen as partly independent of God's and operating as a separate factor, distinct from God's, in redemption. In this way the free operation of God's grace is interrupted. This is also seen when the act of atonement is regarded as sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice, seen as meeting the just exactions of God, is regarded as the immediate -- and from God's grace partly independent -- condition for the re-establishment of fellowship with God. Redemption is represented as a ransom paid by Christ to God.<sup>32</sup>

The relation between the functions of God and of Christ in redemption reflects two aspects of the Divine nature. By the redemption God is conceived to have "tempered his justice and mercy together." In this way the human intelligence is provided with a satisfactory answer to the question as to how redemption can be given both freely and by payment of ransom.<sup>33</sup> As a result of this adjustment the consequences of neither God's justice nor His mercy have been fully exerted. Without mercy his justice would have sentenced us to the everlasting captivity of the devil; His mercy, on the other hand, would have freed us without the payment of a just ransom. Instead, "with his endless mercy," God has "joined his most upright and equal justice," delivering us from our captivity without recompense from us -- we had no means of paying it -- and ordaining a ransom through the precious blood of Christ. As well as paying this ransom, Christ has also wholly fulfilled the law for us.<sup>34</sup> Thus justification is bound up with three related factors: *From God*, His mercy and grace; *from Christ*, His satisfaction of God's justice by the ransom of His blood and His perfect fulfilment of the law; and *from man*: a true and living faith in the merits of Christ, a faith which is yet not his own work but God's working in him. Through faith man relies on the promise of God's mercy and the forgiveness of sins. Thus any idea of man achieving justification due to merits resulting from any action of his own is entirely eliminated. The mind is directed towards the merits of Christ instead of man's own, and at the same time this brings the idea of God's grace to the fore.<sup>35</sup> But joined to this view of grace is that of justice: equally balanced, both God's mercy and His justice are operative.

Here I have called particular attention to the feature specially characteristic of the orthodox doctrine of satisfaction. The main point was that the just claims of God had to be fulfilled and compensation paid. Even Christ's vicarious suffering of punishment was regarded as satisfaction. It is true that the grace of God is also seen in the Atonement, but this grace is an integral part of the

order of law. Thus, in the orthodox way, the Atonement expresses an unbroken legal order and a broken act of God.

In conformity with his general subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles and the homilies of the Anglican Church Wesley adopted in his abridgement without essential changes the three Articles that deal specifically with Atonement.<sup>36</sup> Apart from his general solidarity with Anglicanism, his conception of sin, which was expounded in the previous chapter, would in itself lead us to expect his concurrence in the doctrine of the work of Christ as satisfaction and in the related idea of the merits of Christ. He did concur in this. It was through the sin of Adam, who was not only the father but also the representative of mankind, that all became subject to sin and punishment; similarly Christ, as the second Adam and representative of the human race, bore the sins of all. He suffered on behalf of all. His sacrifice was a full, perfect and sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.<sup>37</sup> Christ bore our punishment.<sup>38</sup> He paid the price for us.<sup>39</sup> Consequently man has nothing to offer to God but the merits of Christ.<sup>40</sup> Because of their inward and outward evil all that men deserve is the wrath of God and eternal damnation. Yet they can do nothing to assuage that wrath, atone for their sins, and escape the punishment they rightly deserve. They have no means of making satisfaction to the justice of God for their sins.<sup>41</sup> Thus their only hope is the vicarious suffering of Christ.<sup>42</sup>

This train of thought, which is found in the first of Wesley's sermons published after his experience in 1738, continues to be expressed; we see him considering the idea of the payment chargeable for the debt man owes to God. The man who has undergone first repentance and thus become aware of the punishment he merits, finds himself confronted by this problem of compensation and of his inability to discharge his debt: "But what shall he give in exchange for his soul, which is forfeited to the just vengeance of God? 'Wherewithal shall he come before the Lord?' How shall he pay Him that he oweth? Were he from this moment to perform the most perfect obedience to every command of God, this would make no amends for a single sin, for any one act of past disobedience; seeing he owes God all the service he is able to perform, from this moment to all eternity: could he pay this, it would make no manner of amends for what he ought to have done before. He sees himself therefore utterly helpless with regard to atoning for his past sins; utterly unable to make any amends to God, to pay any ransom for his own soul."<sup>43</sup> Man's only hope is therefore "to be washed in His blood, and renewed by His almighty Spirit, who himself 'bare all our sins in His own body on the tree!'"<sup>44</sup> In conformity with the Anglican Homily of Salvation, Wesley further maintains that "these things must go together in our justification; -- upon God's part, His great mercy and grace; upon Christ's part, the satisfaction of God's justice; and upon our part, true and lively faith in the merits of Jesus Christ."<sup>45</sup> In the court of Divine justice Christ acts as mediator between God and the sinner. In this way Divine justice is satisfied and man can obtain forgiveness through faith.<sup>46</sup> With his active and passive righteousness Christ effects perfect atonement.<sup>47</sup> The satisfaction thus given by Christ, Wesley thinks, is given by Him *qua homo*. It is as Man that Christ mediates between God and mankind.<sup>48</sup> In his activity as High Priest Christ is also considered as a representative of mankind.<sup>49</sup>

This agreement in Wesley with certain essential features in the traditional orthodox view of atonement<sup>50</sup> is again conspicuous in another controversy with Law, after the latter had come under the influence of Böhme's mysticism. Law's fundamentally mystical position led him to identify the Atonement with the regeneration of fallen man.<sup>51</sup> Christ's death did not constitute any satisfaction to God, but was only a means to the transformation of man and a demonstration of Christ's superiority to the world, death, Hell, and the Devil.<sup>52</sup> To Wesley as to Law the death of Christ was

the only possible way by which the Almighty might overcome the evil in fallen mankind. But this was true only if Christ really atoned for our sins.<sup>53</sup>

To Wesley, therefore, it was important that Christ's death should also have an objective import with relation to God. It had to have the meaning of an objective event establishing a new basis for human justification. Here as previously Wesley regarded Christ's work of atonement as the payment of ransom or satisfaction. By analogy with the parable of the kingdom of Heaven as a king who would take account of his servants, the relation of fallen mankind to God is seen as that of debtor to creditor. Man cannot pay his debt. Nevertheless God has the right to insist on its discharge, and if this fails, to hand him over to the tormentors.<sup>54</sup> Christ, however, was a ransom for us all and a sacrifice to God.<sup>55</sup> His work acquired satisfactoral and meritorious significance for all men.<sup>56</sup>

This difference between Law and Wesley in their attitude to atonement is naturally accompanied by divergence in their attitude to God. The former is a consequence of the latter. Whereas Law denies that wrath ever was or will be attributable to God, Wesley maintains that He is capable of wrath just as He is capable of justice.<sup>57</sup> Law holds that wrath and pain are attributes of the created world only.<sup>58</sup> God is goodness alone, and nothing but happiness can emanate from Him.<sup>59</sup> Punishment cannot emanate from Him.<sup>60</sup> His punitory justice is denied.<sup>61</sup> In their respective conceptions of God, Law evinces a superficial monism and Wesley a more dualistic tendency. To Wesley God's mercy is mixed with His justice.<sup>62</sup> His wrath bears the same relation to His justice as His love to His mercy. In human terms the love and wrath of God are passions corresponding to the dispositions of mercy and justice. If, Wesley says, we deny that God is capable of wrath it would only be consistent to deny His justice also.<sup>63</sup> From all eternity God was infinitely just and consequently His wrath had to manifest itself when man sinned.<sup>64</sup> Thus there is in God punitory justice, and Adam's sin must necessarily call forth His punishment.<sup>65</sup>

Differing thus from Law in this matter of God's wrath<sup>66</sup>, Wesley also differs to some extent from Zinzendorf, to whom God's wrath does not seem to have the same force and significance<sup>67</sup>. Consequently, Wesley gives more prominence than Zinzendorf to the objective side of the Atonement.<sup>68</sup>

Now as Wesley regarded Christ's work of atonement as a form of satisfaction, it is chiefly a judicial view that finds expression in his conception of it. God's justice must be satisfied, compensation must be paid. Christ is thought to have given this satisfaction *qua homo* and thus the Atonement is not regarded as a single continuous act of God. It is true that God takes the initiative in His grace, but in the act of atonement itself His grace is interrupted by His justice.

Grace, however, also has its place in Wesley's idea of atonement. He dwells a great deal on the grace and love of God as reflected in His willingness to provide means of satisfaction.<sup>69</sup> He emphasizes the love of God or Christ in the Atonement, although this love is not specifically defined.<sup>70</sup> Just as in the Thirty-nine Articles and the Homily of Salvation, he considers the satisfaction and merits of Christ to express Divine grace. Salvation comes to man not because of his own works but through Christ alone.<sup>71</sup> The issue is put thus: salvation on the grounds of what God did for us in Christ, or alternatively on the grounds of man's own merits; and as the former is the true way the stress is laid on grace. A further point is that the sentence of damnation on all men was

necessary in order that the inexhaustible wealth of Christ might be made manifest.<sup>72</sup>

Wesley is not unfamiliar with the concept of Christ's work of atonement as an act of deliverance and conquest, although this is implicit rather than explicit and found chiefly in the earlier sermons. The Atonement is a step after which God no longer puts forth His wrath but instead appears as a loving father. When Wesley regards the devil as "the executioner of the wrath and righteous vengeance of God<sup>73</sup>," the Atonement is seen as Christ's victory over the devil. The association of the devil with God's just sentence leads on to the idea that the victory over the devil both implies that God reconciles and is reconciled: at one and the same time He is both the subject and the object of atonement.<sup>74</sup> In consonance with this Wesley writes of that perpetual and victorious Divine intervention against the powers of Evil that so greatly helps him who believes: "He feared not all the powers of darkness, whom God was daily bruising under his feet. Least of all was he afraid to die; nay, he desired to 'depart, and to be with Christ'; (Phil. i. 23;) who, 'through death, had destroyed him that had the power of death, even the devil; and delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime', till then, 'subject to bondage'. (Heb. ii. 15.)"<sup>75</sup>

Although in this way atonement can sometimes appear as an act of liberation, this is never more than ancillary to the main train of thought. The characteristic expression of the idea of atonement lies in satisfaction. Accordingly, Wesley links the Atonement with Christ's office as High Priest, which as well as His vicarious work of atonement also comprises His intercession with the Father on man's behalf. The victorious and liberating aspect of Christ's work finds expression primarily in His office as King.<sup>76</sup> A natural consequence of this partition of Christ's offices is that the conception of satisfaction and the victor theme are thus distinguished; satisfaction standing first in the work of atonement, while the idea of victory and liberation is realized in Christ's royal office. In this way the victory idea is associated not with Christ's work for us but with His work in us; the restoration of the image of God in man. And thus the idea of victory is expressed not in the Atonement but in the New Birth and sanctification.

In the orthodox manner it is thus satisfaction that especially distinguishes Wesley's attitude to atonement. But this does not mean that his idea of satisfaction is exactly identical with the orthodox conception of it, particularly as formulated in the classical period. Though Wesley can include both the active and the passive obedience of Christ in the work of atonement, the stress nevertheless lies on the latter. From the very beginning the thought of the death and suffering of Christ predominates<sup>77</sup>, and in a controversy with a contemporary representative of orthodoxy, James Hervey<sup>78</sup>, Wesley virtually confines satisfaction to comprise passive obedience. He contends that it was the passive obedience of Christ that laid the foundation of justification. True, he speaks also of the meritorious life of Christ, but always in connection with His atoning death. Christ's fulfilment of the moral law, moreover, is not regarded as essential to our redemption. The satisfaction through the death of Christ is sufficient for our full forgiveness. Christ was a substitute only in suffering punishment, not in His fulfilling of the law.<sup>79</sup> The fact that in essence satisfaction only implies His suffering and death is conditioned by the alternatives with which according to Wesley man was confronted. The choice was simple: to obey and fulfil the law or to die.<sup>80</sup> But Christ died in obedience to the Father<sup>81</sup>, and His death alone gave full satisfaction for the sins of the world<sup>82</sup>.

As Wesley gives such prominence to the death of Christ and regards only His penal suffering as substitutional, it is clear that the judicial factor cannot be as important in His view of atonement as

it was to the orthodox. If atonement also comprises a fulfilment of the law by proxy, as it did to Hervey, the legal concept must obviously be emphasized. Clearly the idea of the law fulfilled by Christ involved the restoration of a greater degree of equilibrium to the judicial order deranged by the Fall.

Parallel to this view of atonement is Wesley's conception of justification. Here he had to diverge from the orthodox outlook, in which the imputation of Christ's righteousness is involved in justification together with forgiveness and acceptance by God. To Wesley, justification implies the two latter factors only.<sup>83</sup> It is true that he also speaks of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer, but this does not imply more than that by virtue of Christ's righteousness man shall obtain forgiveness and acceptance.<sup>84</sup> In this way Christ's righteousness is regarded only as the meritorious cause or ground of human justification.<sup>85</sup> Here Wesley was guided by a twofold motive: on the one hand he was eager to repudiate all thought of any righteousness or merit in man on the basis of which he might be justified<sup>86</sup>; on the other, he wanted to repudiate a tendency in man to rely on Christ's righteousness imputed to him and to neglect the demand for inherent righteousness<sup>87</sup>.

Wesley's rejection of the idea of a fulfilment of the law by proxy is an outcome of his struggle against antinomianism. He finds its very essence to lie in the idea that Christ has met the claims of the law on man's behalf and that therefore he is not called upon to fulfil the moral law.<sup>88</sup> Accordingly he disassociates the fulfilment of the law from atonement and justification and attaches it instead to sanctification. This explains why sanctification in the sense of fulfilment of the law occupies such an important place in his theology.

## II

### *The Law.*

In his treatment of the law Wesley, like the orthodox theologians<sup>89</sup>, could not agree with the dualistic view of Luther. It is typical that the law is always regarded as holy and good.<sup>90</sup> Thus he expressly repudiates Luther's belief that it can be ranged with sin, death, and the devil.<sup>91</sup> Accordingly he cannot see it as an evil power overcome by Christ in the Atonement.

This law, which became so important to Wesley, is exclusively the moral law. It is regarded as "an incorruptible picture of the High and Holy ONE that inhabiteth eternity." It is the making visible of that God whose spirit none has seen nor can see. "It is He whom, in His essence, no man hath seen, or can see, made visible to men and angels. It is the face of God unveiled; God manifested to His creatures as they are able to bear it; manifested to give, and not to destroy, life -- that they may see God and live. It is the heart of God disclosed to man. Yea, in some sense, we may apply to this law what the Apostle says of His Son: it is ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης και χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ -- the *streaming forth* or *out-beaming of His glory, the express image of His person.*"<sup>92</sup> This law, ordained by God, is further defined as "a copy of the eternal mind, a transcript of the divine nature; yea, it is the fairest offspring of the everlasting Father, the brightest efflux of His essential wisdom, the visible beauty of the Most High." It is "the delight and wonder of cherubim and seraphim, and all the company of heaven, and the glory and joy of every wise believer, every well instructed child of God upon earth."<sup>93</sup> Wesley also sees it as an eternal, unchanging, rational order of things. "If we survey the law of God in another point of view," he says, "it is supreme, unchangeable

reason; it is unalterable rectitude; it is the everlasting fitness of all things that are or ever were created."<sup>94</sup>

In proceeding to explain the characteristics of the law, he pays special attention to its holiness, justice, and goodness.<sup>95</sup> Above all it is holy. It is "in the highest degree, pure, chaste, clean, holy."<sup>96</sup> It follows that it is "the immediate offspring" and "the express resemblance, of God, who is essential holiness."<sup>97</sup> It is "pure from all sin, clean and unspotted from any touch of evil." Just as sin is essentially "enmity to God," God's law is "enmity to sin."<sup>98</sup> Thus it can neither be sin itself or a cause of sin. The law unveils sin and brings it into the light of day, so that it can be seen in its proper hideousness. If committed against better knowledge, "being stripped even of the poor plea of ignorance, it loses its excuse, as well as disguise, and becomes far more odious both to God and man." Thus exposed to the light of the law, sin will rage more wildly. It will become still more violent when the law tries to repress it. Yet this is no blemish: the law is holy all the same. What it does show, however, is how evil and corrupt is the heart of man.<sup>99</sup>

That the law is just implies that it gives each man his due and exactly prescribes what is right with respect to the Creator, ourselves, and every other created being. In every respect the law is suited to the nature of things and their mutual relations.<sup>100</sup> There is nothing arbitrary in it.<sup>101</sup> It is an immutable rule for what is right and what wrong.<sup>102</sup> Since the law thus depends on the nature and relations of things, it must, Wesley continues, depend on God's will, for it is solely through that will that these exist. In this way the law becomes an expression of God himself, for God and God's will cannot be separated.<sup>103</sup>

The third characteristic of the law, its goodness, is disclosed to Wesley when he considers God's motive in revealing His will in the law, or when he contemplates its nature and effects. The law resembles the source from which it flows, viz., God's goodness. It was goodness alone that impelled God to impart this image of himself to the angels and later to men. Nor was it anything other than goodness that impelled Him after the Fall to reveal His will once again to mankind.<sup>104</sup> The law by nature is "full of goodness and benignity: it is mild and kind; it is, as the Psalmist expresses it, 'sweeter than honey and the honey-comb'."<sup>105</sup> Since the law itself is good it follows that its effects are good too. "As the tree is, so are its fruits. The fruits of the law of God written in the heart are 'righteousness, and peace, and assurance for ever'. Or rather, the law itself is righteousness, filling the soul with a peace which passeth all understanding and causing us to rejoice evermore, in the testimony of a good conscience toward God."<sup>106</sup>

Thus Wesley affirms the supremacy and inviolability of the moral law. Nevertheless, the Christian, he says, is no longer subject to the law, but under grace. In what sense, then, is he outside the jurisdiction of the law?

First the Christian is free from Jewish ritual.<sup>107</sup> Because of the work of Christ the Mosaic ceremonial law is no longer valid.<sup>108</sup> It has been abolished for ever.<sup>109</sup> Further, the Christian is independent of the whole Mosaic dispensation. No longer under "the Jewish dispensation" he is now under "the gracious Christian dispensation." Because his relation to God is that of child to father he can now serve "without fear, in righteousness and holiness with a free, loving, childlike spirit."<sup>110</sup> Through Christ's atonement he is independent of "the whole Mosaic institution" and brought "under a new

dispensation: 'That ye should' without any blame 'be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead'; and hath thereby given proof of His authority to make the change; 'that we should bring forth fruit unto God'." This is now possible for the Christian because he has learnt to understand the efficacy of Christ's resurrection. Previously, when he was under the power of corrupt nature, sin brought forth the fruit of death. The workings of sin were manifested and inflamed through the Mosaic law, yet not conquered. Now, however, man is delivered from "that whole moral, as well as ceremonial economy" and finds himself "in a new spiritual dispensation." Whereas before his service was but outward and by the letter he shall now serve Christ in a new manner in accordance with the Spirit.<sup>111</sup>

With Christ's work of atonement a new foundation was laid for the salvation of man. The Christian is now independent of the moral law, moreover, in so far as he is not obliged to keep it as the condition of his acceptance with God.<sup>112</sup> He is not concerned with it as a means of procuring his justification.<sup>113</sup> Thus Wesley attributes no importance to the moral law *in loco justificationis*.<sup>114</sup>

A related fact is that the Christian is freed from the condemnation of the law. The believer has been absolved by Christ from the condemnation and the punishment to which his transgressions render him liable.<sup>115</sup> He is absolved from "the curse of the moral law<sup>116</sup>," from its "condemning power<sup>117</sup>." We are told of the man who no longer finds himself under the law, but under grace, that: "As he is no longer under the ceremonial law, nor under the Mosaic institution; as he is not obliged to keep even the moral law, as the condition of his acceptance; so he is delivered from the wrath and the curse of God, from all sense of guilt and condemnation, and from all that horror and fear of death and hell whereby he was all his life before subject to bondage."<sup>118</sup>

Thus Wesley repudiates the moral law as a necessary condition of justification. The Christian is nevertheless under an obligation to fulfil the law on the basis of faith.<sup>119</sup> The moral law, which the gospel of Christ manifested to man in all its clarity<sup>120</sup>, will as such survive eternally. It is regarded as an expression both of God's justice and of His grace. This is seen in Wesley's three uses of the law. The first use is to instil conviction of sin. It unmask man and reveals to him his real nature; that he is dead to God and devoid of all spiritual life.<sup>121</sup> The second use is to lead man to Christ that he may live. Although in these functions the law acts as "a severe schoolmaster," love is operative behind it and uses the law for its own ends.<sup>122</sup>

The third use of the law concerns its place in the Christian life. The law does not only lead man to Christ; it also serves to keep the justified and regenerated man alive and helps him to grow in grace.<sup>123</sup> The function of the law in promoting sanctification is also threefold: 1. To convince the Christian of the sin that remains in him and thus to keep him so close to Christ that His blood may cleanse him every moment; 2. To "derive strength from Christ" to the believer in order to supply him with that strength which Christ bestows to enable him to do as His law commands; 3. To confirm his hope of whatever the law commands and he has not yet attained, "of receiving grace upon grace," till he is "in actual possession of the fulness" of God's promises.<sup>124</sup>

Wesley associates the law very closely with Christ. This is particularly true when he is speaking of its usefulness in the Christian life. The importance attributed to the law indicates that here he is in closer agreement with Calvin than with Luther.<sup>125</sup> The more the Christian sees himself in the mirror of the perfect law, the more he feels the need of Christ's atoning blood and of His purifying spirit.<sup>126</sup>

The law drives man to Christ, and Christ drives him to the law. "On the one hand, the height and depth of the law constrains me to fly to the love of God in Christ; on the other, the love of God in Christ endears the law to me 'above gold or precious stones'; seeing I know every part of it is a gracious promise which my Lord will fulfil in its season."<sup>127</sup> Thus the law and grace are not regarded merely as two poles between which the Christian life is ignited and lived. The latter is also -- and primarily -- regarded as a force by means of which the law is to be fulfilled in man. By faith the law shall be established in the heart and life of man.<sup>128</sup> Wesley is able to treat the law and the gospel as the same thing seen from different aspects<sup>129</sup>, and similarly he identifies the fulfilment of the law with love in the Christian life. It is typical of him to regard sanctification as an expression of both the law and love.<sup>130</sup>

### III

#### *Justification and Sanctification.*

We have already seen that the Atonement is the foundation of justification and sanctification. Here justification, taken as the individual application of the Atonement<sup>131</sup>, is more closely related to it than sanctification. Man is justified by faith because of Christ's atonement. His sins are forgiven and he is accepted by God. Justification, that is to say, is immediately linked up with Christ's work as High Priest. Since it is true that the latter constitutes the necessary condition for Christ's royal office yet is distinguishable from it, it is possible to say that sanctification will bear an indirect relation to atonement. For sanctification is principally regarded as the consequence of Christ's royal office<sup>132</sup> or the work of the Holy Ghost<sup>133</sup>.

Although justification and sanctification are closely associated, Wesley nevertheless thinks it necessary to distinguish between them. In the wide sense he is able immediately after 1738 to include both the forgiveness of sins and the New Birth in justification.<sup>134</sup> In the strict sense, however, justification only implies, as we have already seen, the forgiveness of sins and the acceptance incident to it. In this way it is distinguished from sanctification, which begins in man with new birth. The latter implies a real, inherent righteousness. It is true that sanctification is said to be "in some degree, the immediate fruit of justification," but also "a distinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature." Whereas justification is defined as "what God does for us through His Son," sanctification is "what He works in us by His spirit."<sup>135</sup> But the distinction is seen most clearly if we say that justification involves a relative, and sanctification a real, change. The former is essentially an objective change.<sup>136</sup> There is a transformation in the relation between man and God with the result that man is now possessed of God's favour. The latter is a subjective change, a real renewal in man himself. The former involves deliverance from the guilt of sin; the latter, liberation from the power (in the New Birth) and root (in entire sanctification)<sup>137</sup> of sin. The relation between justification and new birth is described as follows: "But though it be allowed, that justification and the new birth are, in point of time, inseparable from each other, yet they are easily distinguished, as being not the same, but things of a widely different nature. Justification implies only a relative, the new birth a real, change. God in justifying us does something *for* us; in begetting us again, He does the work *in* us. The former changes our outward relation to God, so that of enemies we become children; by the latter our inmost souls are changed, so that of sinners we become saints. The one

restores us to the favour, the other to the image, of God. The one is the taking away the guilt, the other the taking away the power, of sin: so that, although they are joined together in point of time, yet are they of wholly distinct natures."<sup>138</sup>

Thus the differentiation of salvation into the separate stages of a process -- to which the next chapter will be devoted -- is already apparent here. Nevertheless the relative transformation of justification and the real transformation of the New Birth are only logically, not temporally, distinguished.<sup>139</sup> In describing justification and sanctification in a later sermon the former is thus defined: "Justification is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins; and, what is necessarily implied therein, our acceptance with God. The price whereby this hath been procured for us (commonly termed 'the meritorious cause of our justification'), is the blood and righteousness of Christ; or, to express it a little more clearly, all that Christ hath done and suffered for us, till He 'poured out His soul for the transgressors'. The immediate effects of justification are, the peace of God, a 'peace that passeth all understanding', and a 'rejoicing in hope of the glory of God' 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'" Simultaneously with justification, sanctification begins. "And at the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification begins. In that instant we are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit: there is a *real* as well as a *relative* change. We are inwardly renewed by the power of God. We feel 'the love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us'; producing love to all mankind, and more especially to the children of God; expelling the love of the world, the love of pleasure, of ease, of honour, of money, together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper; in a word, changing the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, into 'the mind which was in Christ Jesus'."<sup>140</sup> Although justification and the New Birth are thus closely associated, both being seen as instantaneous and simultaneous events, they are nevertheless distinguished and regarded as distinct works. The distinction between justification and sanctification now takes on temporal quality as well; this becomes more marked still in the contemplation of continued sanctification, in its successive stages.

So far we have been trying to establish definitions of these general concepts. We must now attempt a more exact definition of the relation between justification and sanctification. It will be best, however, to narrow down the problem here and examine it only in so far as it bears on a presentation of Wesley's doctrine of justification by faith.

Wesley himself considered that in this doctrine he was in full harmony with the attitude of the Reformation<sup>141</sup>, and many modern scholars have agreed with him. On this point Wesley and the Reformation are found to concur.<sup>142</sup>

This is undoubtedly correct in so far as Wesley's doctrine of justification expresses a fundamentally Reformed attitude. The law had no place *in loco justificationis*. Further, we have already seen how it was bound up with his view of man. The doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law was clearly a natural consequence.

The new view of justification turned Wesley's attention to God's grace in Christ. This is now the only cause of human justification and new birth. Since man can offer God nothing but sin, this salvation is God's gift.<sup>143</sup> It comes to man by faith.<sup>144</sup> Typical of this justifying faith is a personal trust in the efficacy of Christ's work for mankind. This trust is above all a trust in the atonement of Christ.<sup>145</sup>

Wesley affirms the way of faith and grace instead of works. Man is justified and re-born solely by God's grace; he cannot plead any righteousness of his own.<sup>146</sup> Nor is faith regarded as a work of man by which he may be justified. Although sanctification and good works are the necessary consequences, the latter does not as such include them.<sup>147</sup> It is the sinner whom God justifies. "God justifieth not the godly, but the ungodly; not those that are holy already, but the unholy."<sup>148</sup> We can say of Him: "He seeks and saves that which is lost. He pardons those who need His pardoning mercy. He saves from the guilt of sin (and, at the same time, from the power) sinners of every kind, of every degree; men who, till then, were altogether ungodly; in whom the love of the Father was not; and, consequently, in whom dwelt no good thing, no good or truly Christian temper; but all such as were evil and abominable -- pride, anger, love of the world, the genuine fruits of that *carnal mind* which is 'enmity against God'."<sup>149</sup> The notion that man must be sanctified before he can be justified, i. e., obtain forgiveness and be accepted by God, is totally rejected. "So far from it," Wesley writes of this belief, "that the very supposition is not only flatly impossible (for where there is no love of God, there is no holiness, and there is no love of God but from a sense of His loving us), but also grossly, intrinsically absurd, contradictory to itself. For it is not a saint but a sinner that is forgiven, and under the notion of a sinner."<sup>150</sup> Further, no works are good in the Christian sense that do not issue from justifying faith. All truly good works are done after justification.<sup>151</sup>

This opposition between the way of the law and the way of faith is particularly strongly stressed in the period immediately after the evangelical revolution in his doctrine of justification. Here Wesley employs the idea which is so typical of Calvinist theology, that of the two covenants: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.<sup>152</sup> He maintains, for instance<sup>153</sup>, that the conditions under which God gave man the covenant of works were quite different from those pertaining to the covenant of grace. The former was given in Paradise and required man's perfect and unflinching obedience to every provision of God's law. It was the necessary condition for man to remain in that state of perfection in which he was created. The second covenant, on the other hand, was established through Christ with fallen man.<sup>154</sup> The aim of fallen man is to regain the grace and life of God. For this all that is necessary is faith, "living faith in Him who, through God, justifies him that obeyed not."<sup>155</sup> The covenant of works "required of Adam, and all his children, to pay the price themselves, in consideration of which they were to receive all the future blessings of God," whereas under the covenant of grace, "seeing we have nothing to pay, God 'frankly forgives us all': provided only, that we believe in Him who hath paid the price for us; who hath given Himself a 'propitiation for our sins, for the sins of the whole world'."<sup>156</sup> Good works done by man himself are not a necessary condition for his justification. "Knowest thou not, that thou canst do nothing but sin, till thou art reconciled to God? Wherefore, then, dost thou say, 'I must do this and this *first*, and then I shall believe'? Nay, but *first believe!* Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the propitiation for thy sins. Let this good foundation first be laid, and then thou shalt do all things well."<sup>157</sup>

This evangelical attitude is maintained. Justifying faith is seen as a result of man's total inability to attain justification by his own works. Man must abandon all reliance on his own works and put his trust solely in the atonement of Christ.<sup>158</sup> He may not plead any sanctity or works of his own as grounds for acceptance; nor need anything of the kind precede this.<sup>159</sup> Wesley answers the question as to the sense in which the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer, as follows: "In this: all believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of anything in them, or of anything that ever was, that is, or ever can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them. I say again, not for the sake of anything in them, or done by them, of

their own righteousness or works: 'Not for works of righteousness which we have done, but of His own mercy He saved us.' 'By grace ye are saved through faith; ... not of works,, lest any man should boast'; but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for us. We are 'justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ'."<sup>160</sup>

In this attitude to justification Wesley is obviously following Reformed principles. The relation between justification and sanctification is adjusted on evangelical lines: the latter is not considered a necessary condition for the former.

To this extent Wesley himself and Wesley scholarship are right in maintaining that with regard to justification he was following in the train of the Reformation. But in attempting a more precise determination of Wesley's position, and even though the relation of sanctification to final justification at the last judgement is left out of account, allowances should be made for the differences of outlook on this point between Luther on the one hand and on the other Calvin, Melancthon and the orthodox theologians. Recently much has been made of the difference between Luther and Melancthon. It was with the latter that the development towards Lutheran orthodoxy began.<sup>161</sup> Von Eicken, like Wesley himself, pays no regard to them in this context.<sup>162</sup> The same is true of Cell and others. Cell discusses Wesley's theology in such wide perspective that the relation to Luther is hardly touched upon. It is true, however, that Lang has correctly indicated the Calvinist strain that we saw above in the idea of the two covenants.<sup>163</sup>

We have seen that Wesley distinguishes between justification and the New Birth, between "a relative change" and "a real change." Although they take place simultaneously, they are regarded as distinct. In this differentiation of the idea of salvation, Wesley diverges from Luther, to whom justification also included inward renewal<sup>164</sup>; instead he shows an affinity with Calvin<sup>165</sup>, Melancthon, and Orthodoxy<sup>166</sup>. Thus Christian life becomes two focal points: justification or the forgiveness of sins, and the ethical regeneration of sanctification. The first is given an objective, the second a subjective import. Further, to Luther justification was immediately associated with atonement, which was an event in the present, not only in the past. Ultimately they meant the same.<sup>167</sup> Justification was the continuous work of atonement.<sup>168</sup> Wesley, like Melancthon and the orthodox theologians<sup>169</sup>, distinguished between them: atonement was the legal basis of justification. Atonement was a single event in the past, justification its individual and present application. The contrast with Luther becomes still more marked when we turn to the structure of the conception of salvation as a whole. Whereas to Luther justification can connote the whole content of salvation, the latter to Wesley is a process in which justification (including the New Birth) is only a primary and basic stage.<sup>170</sup>

Here a further consideration is pertinent: on this point Wesley is not in full accord with the purely theocentric tenets of the Reformation. There is no doubt that his attitude to justification is in this respect distinct from a Reformed doctrine based on unconditional predestination. I refer to the fact that alongside the pure theocentricity<sup>171</sup> of his representation of faith as the necessary condition of justification, an attempt to present man as an independent subject of faith is also apparent. The latter tendency becomes more prominent with time. It is an inevitable result of Wesley's Arminian view of election, which makes election dependent on man's faith. This Arminian bias excludes the possibility of thinking of grace in the form of sovereign grace, which is the natural consequence of a view of salvation based on unconditional election. His attitude to predestination also makes it

possible for him to attribute importance to faith as a subjective condition of justification. Thus man himself is considered active in his salvation, this activity being a necessary condition of justification.

This subjective tendency is seen still more clearly in the idea of the repentance that precedes faith. Here Wesley shows agreement with the same idea in the liturgy of the Church of England.<sup>172</sup> Repentance implies consciousness of sin. It is described as "a deep sense of the want of all good, and the presence of all evil."<sup>173</sup> In addition to this conviction of sin and guilt, repentance also comprises "suitable affections," among them an earnest desire to escape God's wrath, to cease from doing what is evil and to learn to do good.<sup>174</sup> With time Wesley distinguishes this repentance more and more clearly from justifying faith and comes to regard the former as its necessary condition, although the main stress is always put on the latter.

Thus if we consider the relation between justifying faith and the repentance that precedes it, we find that the latter is given steadily increasing attention. The fruits of this repentance also take on a certain importance. We find Wesley, particularly in the period immediately after 1738, contending with special emphasis that faith alone is really essential to justification.<sup>175</sup> Nothing that man does or feels, he says, is necessary before justification.<sup>176</sup> His own works "are all unholy and sinful themselves, so that every one of them needs a fresh atonement."<sup>177</sup> Before justification his works "have in them the nature of sin," so that he cannot at this stage do anything "acceptable to God."<sup>178</sup>

Yet later Wesley pays increasing attention to repentance before justification and its fruits. In this, as in his attack on Antinomianism, he is at variance with Calvinism. At the doctrinal conference of 1744 he declared that earlier there had been too much leaning towards Calvinism and Antinomianism.<sup>179</sup> It is true that faith, which means the faith in atonement effected by the Holy Ghost<sup>180</sup>, is said to be the condition of justification, but he also maintains that before justification there must be repentance, which implies the conviction of sin and the corresponding works, "obeying God as far as we can, forgiving our brother, leaving off from evil, doing good, and using his ordinances, according to the power we have received<sup>181</sup>." Yet no works can justify.<sup>182</sup> At the next conference, in the following year, belief in Christ is said to be the sole condition of justification, but the repentance that precedes faith is also affirmed. If the opportunity is given, he says, the fruits of this repentance ought also to precede faith.<sup>183</sup>

In *A farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, published in the same year, Wesley again urges the importance of repentance for justification. Repentance and its fruits, however, are not necessary in the same degree as faith. While at whatever moment he believes man is justified, this is not the case when he repents or brings forth fruits of repentance. So faith alone justifies and repentance and its fruits are not necessary in the same degree. Nor are they necessary in the same sense as faith, for they do not have "so direct, immediate a relation to justification as faith." Faith is said to be "proximately necessary," whereas repentance is only "remotely" necessary, i. e. "necessary to the increase or continuance of faith." But even in this sense the fruits of repentance are not absolutely necessary: they are dependent on time and opportunity. When these are not available, God shortens his work, and faith precedes the fruits of repentance.<sup>184</sup> He expresses himself similarly in a later sermon in which faith is said to be the sole condition of justification, although repentance and its fruits are in a sense necessary too. However, they are not regarded as necessary to the same extent as faith. The fruits of repentance are only conditionally necessary, i. e., if there is time and opportunity. But without faith man cannot be justified. And when he believes, "with or without those

fruits, yea, with more or less repentance," he is justified. Further, repentance and its fruits are only "remotely necessary; necessary in order to faith." Only faith is regarded as "immediately and directly necessary to justification."<sup>185</sup>

In his struggle with Quietism and Antinomianism Wesley was impelled to lay particularly strong stress on the fruits of repentance. Some of his remarks on works in the course of these controversies seem to stand in direct opposition to his earlier doctrine of justification by faith. This is particularly true of certain statements made at the London conference of 1770.<sup>186</sup>

But in order to understand the purport of these statements we must distinguish carefully between the conditions 1) for the attainment of justification, 2) for remaining in the state of justification, and 3) for man's final justification at the last judgement. He says with regard to the conditions necessary for the attainment of justification: "We have received it as a maxim, that 'a man is to do nothing in order to justification'. Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God, should 'cease from evil, and learn to do well'. So God himself teaches by the Prophet Isaiah. Whoever repents, should 'do works meet for repentance'. And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?"<sup>187</sup>

In spite of its emphatic formulation, however, this statement does not constitute a departure from earlier principles. Particularly heavy stress is certainly put here on the fruits of repentance, yet their importance to justification is practical and not a matter of principle. Nor are these works, which to Wesley are linked up with the idea of prevenient grace, in any sense merits.<sup>188</sup> At the same conference, sanctification was declared a condition of justification, but only in the sense that it is necessary to its retention, not to its attainment. The question "Who of us is now accepted of God?" is answered: "He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart."<sup>189</sup> That the issue here does not concern how man is to win God's favour but how he is to remain in a state of acceptance, is a point made by Wesley himself in a letter of the following year, in which he comments on the pronouncements of the London conference. These had caused a considerable stir and Wesley had been exposed to much criticism. He now writes: "Who of us is *now* accepted of God? (I mean, who is now in His favour? The question does not refer to the *gaining* the favour of God, but the *being* therein, at any given point of time.) 'He that now believes in Christ with a loving and obedient heart.'<sup>190</sup> Wesley's insistence here on love and obedience not being a condition for attaining justification but for remaining in God's favour, shows that in principle his attitude was still the same as before. The love attaching to faith is not regarded as a prerequisite for the attainment of justification, though as previously it is a condition of man's remaining in faith and in God's favour.<sup>191</sup> Thus at the London conference works were declared necessary if man was to remain in a state of justification. They were also declared necessary to final justification at the last judgement.<sup>192</sup> But none of these declarations constituted a departure from Wesley's earlier attitude.<sup>193</sup>

Thus the idea of a repentance and its fruits preceding faith does not involve any modification of the principles of Wesley's earlier conception of the relation between justification and sanctification. It shows, however, that this conception is linked up with Wesley's Arminian view of salvation. Prominence could also be given to man's repentance and its fruits, due to the association of the idea of prevenient grace with the Arminian view of election. Undoubtedly a synergistic tendency can be seen here -- a corollary of prevenient grace. Wesley's Arminianism made this a latent principle in him from the very beginning, and it becomes more manifest with time.<sup>194</sup>

We have now seen how salvation, based on atonement, comprises justification or forgiveness and sanctification. beginning with the New Birth, "a relative change" and "a real change." Although the relative change of forgiveness is given logical priority over the real change of new birth and subsequent sanctification<sup>195</sup>, the main emphasis in Wesley's conception of salvation is nevertheless laid on the latter. The necessity of this has already been seen in our examination of the relation between the objective idea of guilt and the conception of sin as an inherent force in his view of sin. In considering his view of atonement we have also seen the dominant position he attributes to the law. Further, we have seen the importance he gave to it in the Christian life. Since the fulfilment of the law was transferred from justification to sanctification, the latter was naturally given prominence. It was regarded as the goal of salvation. Thus a teleological leaning finds its way into his view of salvation.<sup>196</sup>

The idea of real change in the New Birth comes clearly to the fore immediately after 1738. The salvation that comes by faith is a salvation from both the power and the guilt of sin.<sup>197</sup> Through new birth by the Holy Ghost a new life is accorded to the man who believes in Christ. Subsequently this life will grow and develop towards perfection.<sup>198</sup> Saving faith necessarily produces good works and holiness.<sup>199</sup> Otherwise it is dead.<sup>200</sup> Wesley maintains that by salvation he means, "not barely, according to the vulgar notion, deliverance from hell, or going to heaven; but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity; a recovery of the divine nature; the renewal of our souls after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and truth."<sup>201</sup>

In the struggle against antinomianism, the idea of sanctification acquires a prominent place in salvation. Wesley contends that the doctrine of salvation by faith must not occasion any depreciation of love and obedience. The only faith of value is one that operates through love. "It is impossible, indeed, to have too high an esteem for 'the faith of God's elect'. And we must all declare, 'By grace ye are saved through faith; not of works, lest any man should boast'. We must cry aloud to every penitent sinner, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved'. But, at the same time, we must take care to let all men know, we esteem no faith but that which worketh by love; and that we are not saved by faith, unless so far as we are delivered from the power as well as the guilt of sin. And when we say, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved', we do not mean, 'Believe, and thou shalt step from sin to heaven, without any holiness coming between; faith supplying the place of holiness'; but, 'Believe, and thou shalt be holy; believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt have peace and power together: thou shalt have power from Him in whom thou believest, to trample sin under thy feet; power to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and to serve Him with all thy strength; thou shalt have power, 'by patient continuance in well-doing, to seek for glory, and honour, and immortality'; thou shalt both do and teach all the commandments of God, from the least even to the greatest: thou shalt teach them by thy life as well as thy words, and so 'be called great in the kingdom of heaven'.<sup>202</sup> Such an interpretation of imputation, by which Christ's righteousness is imputed to man with the result that he is relieved of the necessity of any real change of his own heart, rouses sharp opposition in Wesley: "This is indeed," he says "'a blow at the root', the root of all holiness, all true religion. Hereby Christ is 'stabbed in the house of his friends', of those who make the largest professions of loving and honouring him; the whole design of his death, namely, 'to destroy the works of the devil', being overthrown at a stroke. For wherever this doctrine is cordially received, it leaves no place for holiness."<sup>203</sup>

The pivotal importance of sanctification in Wesley's view of salvation and the teleological tendency of the latter is particularly evident when faith is seen as the means by which the law is established. Faith becomes the means of which love is the end.<sup>204</sup> However "glorious and honourable" faith may be, it is nevertheless only the "handmaid of love." Only love is "the end of all the commandments of God." It is said to be "the end, the sole end, of every dispensation of God, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things."<sup>205</sup> The real purpose of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ is thus declared to be the sanctification of man.<sup>206</sup>

If we turn to Wesley's definitions of a Christian and of the nature of Christianity, or to his descriptions of a Methodist and of the nature of Methodism, we shall find sanctification the dominant conception. Sanctity is regarded as an ethical transformation of the heart and life of man. Its essence is love. Being a Christian means having a faith which is active in love.<sup>207</sup> Love of God and of one's neighbour on the basis of faith are given as the true characteristics of the Christian.<sup>208</sup> He has the temper of Christ.<sup>209</sup> He who believes in Christ walks in the Holy Ghost. In him are revealed the fruits of the Spirit.<sup>210</sup> He is sanctified in heart and in life.<sup>211</sup> Accordingly Wesley finds Christian freedom to lie not so much in freedom from the ceremonial law of the Jews or from the guilt of sin or the fear of Hell, as in freedom from the dominion of sin, in love of God, and in obedience to His law.<sup>212</sup> Thus those who are unsanctified and lack the temper of Christ, cannot be Christians.<sup>213</sup>

Wesley, then, sees Christianity particularly from the point of view of new birth and sanctification.<sup>214</sup> Against mere outward formalism he maintains that religion is love. It is "the love of God and of all mankind; the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us, as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth, as our own soul."<sup>215</sup> He thinks the Sermon on the Mount contains the best survey of Christianity.<sup>216</sup> The holiness it urges he declares to be the very spirit and quintessence of religion.<sup>217</sup> Further, as we have seen<sup>218</sup>, religion is regarded as *Θεραπεία ψυχῆς* -- God's method of *healing a soul*;" it is seen as a means of renewing the corrupt nature of man<sup>219</sup>. The renewal of man in the image of God becomes the end of religion.<sup>220</sup>

The Methodist and Methodism are similarly described. The emblem of the Methodist is love of God and all men on the ground of belief in atonement and forgiveness.<sup>221</sup> And the essence and prime end of Methodism is sanctity, or the moral transformation of the heart and life of man.<sup>222</sup>

---

## FOOTNOTES

1 Cf. the letter of 7 Febr. 1778, in which Wesley speaks of the centrality of the Atonement in Christianity: "Indeed, nothing in the Christian system is of greater consequence than the doctrine of Atonement. It is properly the distinguishing point between Deism and Christianity. 'The scriptural scheme of morality', said Lord Huntingdon, 'is what every one must admire; but the doctrine of Atonement I cannot comprehend'. Here, then, we divide. Give up the Atonement, and the Deists are agreed with us." The Letters of John Wesley, VI, p. 297 f.

2 LAW, *Serious Call*, p. 165. To understand the breach with Law in 1738, we must turn to this famous work of Law's, published in 1728, which has had immense influence. See OVERTON, William Law. *Nonjuror and Mystic*,

p. 109 ff.; INGE, *Studies of English Mystics*, p. 133 ff.; BRILIOTH, *The Anglican Revival*, p. 18 f.; MINKNER, *Die Stufenfolge des mystischen Erlobnisses bei William Law*, p. 11 f. Even after 1738 Wesley could speak appreciatively of this book. He says that it "will hardly be excelled, if it be equalled, in the English tongue, either for beauty of expression, or for justness and depth of thought." *Sermon On a Single Eye*, dat. 1789, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 297. In his *Serious Call* Law describes the way to salvation of deistic religion, which attributes no importance to faith in this life. Law was deeply opposed to such an attitude and puts the emphasis on the need for sanctification. The book is mainly a practical religious appeal but as such it also expresses its author's idea of Christianity. For a more detailed account of sanctification in Law and the relation between him and Wesley in this respect, see below, the fifth chapter.

3 *Ib.*, p. 219.

4 "For as sure as Jesus Christ was wisdom and holiness, as sure as He came to make us like Himself, and to be baptized into His spirit, so sure is it, that none can be said to keep to their Christian profession, but they who, to the utmost of their power, live a wise and holy and heavenly life. This, and this alone, is Christianity; an universal holiness in every part of life, a heavenly wisdom in all our actions, not conforming to the spirit and temper of the world, but turning all worldly enjoyments into means of piety and devotion to God." *Ib.*, p. 112 f.

5 "The sum of this matter is this: from the abovementioned, and many other passages of Scripture (Phil. ii. 12, Matt. xxii. 14, Matt. vii. 14, Luke xiii. 24), it seems plain, that our salvation depends upon the sincerity and perfection of our endeavours to obtain it.

"Weak and imperfect men. shall, notwithstanding their frailties and defects, be received, as having pleased God, if they have done their utmost to please him." *Ib.*, p. 23.

6 *Ib.*, p. 213.

7 *Ib.*, p. 212.

8 *Ib.*, p. 212.

9 *Ib.*, p. 213.

10 See *ib.*, p. 334.

11 *Ib.*, p. 224: "To have a true idea of Christianity, we must not consider our Blessed Lord as suffering in our stead, but as our Representative, acting in our name, and with such particular merit, as to make our joining with Him acceptable into God.

"He suffered, and was a Sacrifice, to make our sufferings and sacrifice of ourselves fit to be received by God." Cf. p. 335.

12 *Ib.*, p. 334.

13 *Ib.*, p. 335.

14 See *Journal* for 24 May 1738 and the days immediately before. *The Journal of John Wesley*, 1, p. 464 ff.

Cf. also *ib.*, for 22 April 1738, p. 454. It is true that as early as in the sermon on The Circumcision of the Heart, 1733, Wesley had expressed belief in Christ's atonement, but the statement of personal conviction of atonement and forgiveness is a later addition. The Works of John Wesley, V, p. 205. See SUGDEN'S introduction to this sermon, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 265.

15 Letter to Law, 20 May 1738, *The Letters of John Wesley*, I, p. 241.

16 The two principles Law says he has been governed by, namely "'Without Me ye can do nothing'" and "'If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me,'" may, Wesley thinks, imply this third maxim on the Atonement, although it is not expressly stated. *Ib.*, p. 241.

17 See Journal for this earlier period, *The Journal of John Wesley*, 1, *passim*.

18 In the criticism of the mystics in the preface to *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739, *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, 1, p. xx.

19 *Ib.*, p. XIX f. Here Wesley objects to the mystics: "They speak largely and well against expecting to be accepted of God for our virtuous actions; and then teach, that we are to be accepted for our virtuous habits or tempers. Still the ground of our acceptance is placed in ourselves. The difference is only this: Common writers suppose we are to be justified for the sake of our outward righteousness. These suppose we are to be justified for the sake of our inward righteousness: whereas, in truth, we are no more justified for the sake of one than of the other. For neither our own inward nor outward righteousness is the ground of our justification. Holiness of heart, as well as holiness of life, is not the cause, but the affect of it."

20 *Ib.*, p. XX: "And even the condition of it is not (as they suppose) our holiness of heart or life: but our faith alone; faith contradistinguished from holiness as well as from good works. Other foundation therefore can no man lay, without being an adversary to Christ and His Gospel, than faith alone, faith, though necessarily producing both, yet not including either good works or holiness." See also Journal for 13 Sept. 1739, *The Journal of John Wesley*, II, p. 275.

21 See the latter half of this chapter, where the place of sanctification in salvation is discussed, and particularly the fifth chapter.

22 Although, as we have seen, sin and guilt play their part in Law's conception of man, he cannot, like Wesley, assert natural man's total depravity. Thus, in Law, nature and grace are not necessarily incompatible; "the religion of the gospel" can be regarded as "only the refinement and exaltation of our best faculties." LAW, *Serious Call*, p. 53.

23 *The Book of Common Prayer*, Articles of Religion, Art. II.

24 *Ib.*, Art. XXXI.

25 *The Book of Common Prayer*, Art. XI.

26 In my exposition of the idea of atonement I have made use of the new perspective indicated by MANDEL in *Christliche Versöhnungslehre*, adumbrated by AULÉN in *Christus Victor*, and most fully expounded by LINDROTH in *Försoningen*.

The theory is that concentration on 'objective' or 'subjective' atonement has involved neglect of the 'dualistic-dramatic' view. The last is the 'classic' view. It means that atonement is seen as a continuous act of God Himself. The legal order is overruled. The relation of man to God is viewed in the light of grace. Christ functions as the representative of God in the act of atonement. The Atonement is regarded as the victorious outcome of a divine struggle, a work by which God in Christ defeats the evil powers of the world, sin, death, the devil, the law, and God's wrath, thus reconciling the world to Himself. And since these evil powers are also regarded as subservient to God's punitive will, God Himself is reconciled too. The essence of the view is that God reconciles and is at the same time reconciled. He is simultaneously both the object and the subject of atonement. Luther is said to have held this 'classic' view. Cf. LINDROTH'S earlier work *Katolsk och evangelisk kristendomssyn*, p. 165 f., 171 ff.; BRING, *Dualismen hos Luther*, p. 67 ff. On the other hand VON ENGSTRÖM in *Luthers trosbegrepp*, p. 95 ff., disagrees and brings out Anselmian elements in Luther.

In contrast to this classic view, in which atonement is an uninterrupted work of God and an interruption of the legal order, the so-called objective view regards it as an interrupted work of God, the legal order remaining unbroken. The Atonement is thought to rest on God's initiative, but this is interrupted in the actual work of atonement since here Christ is regarded as acting as the representative of man before God. Christ's work is seen as a satisfaction made to God by Christ *qua homo*. This theory emerges in the orthodox doctrine of satisfaction. Some essential features of the orthodox view are found in Anselm, although unlike Anselm the orthodox theologians regard the suffering and punishment of Christ as a satisfaction and satisfaction as comprising both His active and His passive obedience. LINDROTH, who has subjected Anselm's view of the Atonement to close scrutiny and shown how he differs from Melanchthon and Orthodoxy, maintains in particular that in Anselm as in the classic view the Atonement has cosmic significance, whereas in Orthodoxy it has a more individually legalistic and personal character (*Försoningen*, p. 147 f., 364).

27 Note the resemblance to Melanchthon. See LINDROTH, *op. cit.*, p. 257 ff., 274 ff.; BRING, *Förhållandet mellan tro och gärningar inom luthersk teologi*, p. 71, 85, 97 f. Recently it has been shown that in important respects Melanchthon differs from Luther and begins the development towards Lutheran orthodoxy. Lindroth writes that "the orthodox outlook was determined by Melanchthon's legalistic and anthropocentric modifications of Luther's doctrine of atonement and justification." *Op. cit.*, p. 315. (Translated.) Melanchthon had exerted a direct historical influence on the formation of the Thirty-nine Articles, and it is natural that his view of atonement should assert itself here. For this influence, see *Corp. Conf., Die Kirche von England*, p. LXXXVI ff., XCVII.

28 AULÉN, *Christus Victor*, p. 54 f., 144 ff. LINDROTH, however, points out the great differences between Anselm's view and that of Melanchthon and Lutheran orthodoxy. *Op. cit.*, p. 361. Cf. above.

29 *Corp. Conf., Die Kirche von England*, p. 449.

30 *Ib.*, p. 450.

31 *Ib.*, p. 450.

32 *Ib.*, p. 451.

33 *Ib.*, p. 451. The rational element is evident. Cf. the idea of satisfaction in Anselm. See LINDROTH, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

34 *Ib.*, p. 451: "Objection. But here may man's reason be astonished, receiving, after this fashion: If a ransom be paid for our redemption, then it is not given us freely. For a prisoner, that payeth his ransom, is not let go

freely; for if he go freely, then he goeth without ransom: for what is it else to go freely, than to be set at liberty without payment of ransom?

Answer. This reason is satisfied by the great wisdom of God in this mystery of our redemption, who hath so tempered his justice and mercy together, that he would neither by his justice condemn us unto the everlasting captivity of the devil, and his prison of hell, remediless for ever without mercy, nor by his mercy deliver us clearly, without justice, or payment of a just ransom; but with his endless mercy he joined his most upright and equal justice. His great mercy he shewed unto us in delivering us from our former captivity, without requiring of any ransom to be paid, or amends to be made upon our parts, which thing by us had been impossible to be done. And whereas it lay not in us to do that, he provided a ransom for us, that was, the most precious body and blood of his own most dear and best beloved Son Jesus Christ, who, besides this ransom, fulfilled the law for us perfectly. And so the justice of God and his mercy did embrace together, and fulfilled the mystery of our redemption."

35 Some sentences in the third, eighth, and tenth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans are annotated as follows: "In these foresaid places, the Apostle touches specially three things, which must go together in our justification. Upon God's part, his great mercy and grace, upon Christ's part, justice, that is, the satisfaction of God's justice, or the price of our redemption, by the offering of his body, and shedding of his blood, with fulfilling of the law perfectly and throughly; and upon our part, true and lively faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, which yet is not ours, but by God's working in us; so that in our justification is not only God's mercy and grace, but also his justice, which the Apostle calleth the justice of God, and it consisteth in paying out ransom, and fulfilling of the law: and so the grace of God doth not shut out the justice of God in our justification, but only shutteth out the justice of man, that is to say, the justice of our works, as to the merits of deserving our justification." *Ib.*, p. 452. See also *ib.*, p. 454.

36 See the articles II, IX, XX, Corp. Cord., Die Bischöfliche Methodistenkirche, pp. 10, 12, 15 f.

37 Justification by Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 118 f. Cf. A Dialogue between an Antinomian and His Friend, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 267: "Friend. -- I behove, that, by that one offering, he made a full satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." Cf. also A Second Dialogue between an Antinomian and His Friend, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 277: "Friend. -- I believe he made, by that one oblation of himself, once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

38 *Ib.*, p. 127.

39 The Righteousness of Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 138 f.

40 *Ib.*, p. 145 f.

41 On account of his "inward and outward wickedness" man is "guilty of everlasting death." "It is just that the sentence should now take place. Dost thou see, dost thou feel this? Art thou thoroughly convinced that thou deservest God's wrath, and everlasting damnation? ...

"And what wilt thou do to appease the wrath of God, to atone for all thy sins, and to escape the punishment thou hast so justly deserved? Alas, thou canst do nothing; nothing that will in any wise make amends to God for one evil work, or word, or thought. If thou couldest now do all things well, if from this very hour till thy soul should return to God thou couldest perform perfect, uninterrupted obedience, even this would not atone for what is past. The not increasing thy debt would not discharge it. It would still remain as great as ever.

Yea, the present and future obedience of all the men upon earth, and all the angels in heaven, would never make satisfaction to the justice of God for one single sin. How vain, then, was the thought of atoning for thy sins, by anything thou couldest do! It costeth far more to redeem one soul, than all mankind is able to pay. So that were there no other help for a guilty sinner, without doubt he must have perished everlastingly." The Way to the Kingdom, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 157 f.

42 *Ib.*, p. 159.

43 The Sermon on the Mount: 1, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 324.

44 The Sermon on the Mount: 1, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 327.

45 A Farther Appeal, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 54. In his sermon on The Lord Our Righteousness, 1765, Wesley expresses agreement with the homilies of the Church of England: "And this is the doctrine which I have constantly believed and taught, for near eight-and-twenty years. This I published to all the world in the year 1738, and ten or twelve times since, in those words, and many others to the same effect, extracted from the Homilies of our Church: 'These things must necessarily go together in our justification: upon God's part, His great mercy and grace: upon Christ's part, the satisfaction of God's justice; and on our part, faith in the merits of Christ. So that the grace of God doth not shut out the righteousness of God in our justification, but only shutteth out the righteousness of man, as to *deserving* our justification.' 'That we are justified by faith alone, is spoken to take away clearly all merit of our works, and wholly to ascribe the *merit* and *deserving* of our justification to Christ only. Our justification comes freely of the mere mercy of God. For whereas all the world was not able to pay any part toward our ransom, it pleased Him, without any of our deserving, to prepare for us Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom might be paid, and His justice satisfied. Christ, therefore, is now the righteousness of all them that truly believe in Him., " The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 430 f.

46 See the explanation of Rom. iv. 5 in Notes, 1755.

47 "But His obedience implied more than all this: it implied not only doing, but suffering; suffering the whole will of God, from the time He came into the world, till 'He bore our sins in His own body upon the tree'; yea, till having made a full atonement for them, 'He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.' This is usually termed the passive righteousness of Christ; the former, His active righteousness. But as the active and passive righteousness of Christ were never, in fact, separated from each other, so we never need separate them at all, either in speaking or even in thinking. And it is with regard to both these conjointly, that Jesus is called 'the Lord our Righteousness'." The Lord our Righteousness, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 427 f.

48 "But I do not apprehend that the divine righteousness of Christ is immediately concerned in the present question. I believe few, if any, do now contend for the imputation of this righteousness to us. Whoever believes the doctrine of imputation, understands it chiefly, if not solely, of His human righteousness.

"The human righteousness of Christ belongs to Him in His human nature; as He is the 'Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus'." *Ib.*, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 427. See further p. 427 f.

49 The Law Established through Faith: 11, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 11, p. 76.

50 Wesley is full of praise for the famous work An Exposition of the Creed by the orthodox bishop JOHN PEARSON (1612-1686). See especially Journal for 23 March 1749, The Journal of John Wesley, III, p. 391 and

his letter of 13 May 1764, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 243.

In Pearson's work, the sixth and enlarged edition of which was published in 1692, atonement is presented in the form of satisfaction. Remission of sins "containeth in it a Reconciliation of an offended God, and a Satisfaction unto a just God; it containeth a Reconciliation, as without which God cannot be conceived to remit; it comprehendeth a Satisfaction, as without which God was resolved not to be reconciled." *Ib.*, p. 364. "If then we consider together, on our side the nature and obligation of sin, in Christ the satisfaction made, and reconciliation wrought, we shall easily perceive how God forgiveth sins, and in what Remission of them consisteth. Man being in all conditions under some Law of God, who both Sovereign power and dominion over him, and therefore owing absolute obedience to that Law, whensoever any way he transgresseth that Law, or deviateth from that Rule, he becomes thereby a sinner, and contracteth a guilt which is an obligation to endure a punishment proportionable to his offence; and God who is the Lawgiver and Sovereign, becoming now the party wronged and offender, hath a most just right to punish men as an offender. But Christ taking upon him the nature of man, and offering himself a sacrifice for sin, giveth that unto God for and instead of the eternal death of man, which is more valuable and acceptable to God than that death could be, and so maketh a sufficient compensation and full satisfaction for the sins of man; which God accepting, becometh reconciled unto us, and for the punishment which Christ endured, taketh off our obligation to eternal punishment.

"Thus man who violated by sinning the Law of God, and by that violation offended God, and was thereby obliged to undergo the punishment due unto the sin, and to be inflicted by the wrath of God, is, by the price of the most precious blood of Christ, given and accepted in full compensation and satisfaction for the punishment which was due, restored unto the favour of God, who being thus satisfied, and upon such satisfaction reconciled, is faithful and just to take off an obligation unto punishment from the sinner; and in this act of God consisteth the forgiveness of sins." *Ib.*, p. 366 f. See also p. 74, 216, 365 ff., 368, 370.

Even such a theologian as Archbishop John Tillotson, Pearson's contemporary, can maintain the principle of satisfaction in his exposition of atonement. See TILLOTSON, *The Works*, Sermon XLVII, p. 560. Cf. HUNT, *Religious Thought in England*, 11, p. 101 f.

51 Letter to William Law, 6 Jan. 1756, *The Letters of John Wesley*, III, p. 351 f. Unlike the mystics whom Law considered authorities, Wesley determines to base his views on Scripture alone, especially St. Paul: "In matters of religion I regard no writers but the inspired. Tauler, Behmen, and an whole army of Mystic authors are with me nothing to St. Paul. In every point I appeal 'to the law and the testimony', and value no authority but this." *Ib.*, p. 332.

52 *Ib.*, p. 353.

53 *Ib.*, p. 353.

54 *Ib.*, p. 352.

55 *Ib.*, p. 354. Quot.

56 See *ib.*, p. 357, 353 f. Quot.

57 *Ib.*, p. 346.

58 *Ib.*, p. 346 f.

59 lb., p. 346.

60 lb., p. 348 ff.

61 lb., p. 350.

62 lb., p. 349: "And yet we cannot say even as to them, 'It is nothing but His love', It is mercy mixed with justice."

63 lb., p. 346.

64 lb., p. 346.

65 lb., p. 349.

66 Cf. the letter of 7 Febr. 1778, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VI, p. 298: "But it is certain, had God never been angry, He could never have been reconciled. So that, in affirming this, Mr Law strikes at the very root of the Atonement, and finds a very short method of converting Deists. Although, therefore, I do not term God, as Mr Law supposes, 'a wrathful Being', which conveys a wrong idea; yet I firmly believe He was angry with all mankind, and that He was reconciled to them by the death of His Son. And I know He was angry with me till I believed in the Son of His love; and yet this is no impeachment to His mercy, that He is just as well as merciful."

67 See BECKER, *Zinzendorf im Verhältnis zu Philosophie und Kirchentum. seiner Zeit*, p. 278 ff.;  
UTTENDÖRFER, *Zinzendorfs religiöse Grundgedanken*, p. 61. Cf. SPANGENBERG, *Idea fidei fratrum*, p. 149 ff.

68 For Zinzendorf's view, see UTTENDÖRFER, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

69 "It may be farther considered, that it was of mere grace, of free love, of undeserved mercy, that God hath vouchsafed to sinful man any way of reconciliation with Himself; that we were not cut away from His hand, and utterly blotted out of His remembrance. Therefore, whatever method He is pleased to appoint, of His tender mercy, of His unmerited goodness, whereby His enemies, who have so deeply revolted from Him, so long and obstinately rebelled against Him, may still find favour in His sight, it is doubtless our wisdom to accept it with all thankfulness." *The Righteousness of Faith*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 143.

70 Wesley often quoted the words in I. John: "We love God for he has first loved us." For their bearing on the Atonement, see *The Way to the Kingdom*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 160.

71 The sinful and guilty man has "nothing to plead, nothing to offer to God, but only the merits of His wellbeloved Son, 'who loved *thee* and gave Himself for *thee*!' " *The Righteousness of Faith*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 146. See also *The Way to the Kingdom*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 157 ff. Cf. *Minutes 1746, The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 286 f., where Wesley says that man can build on Christ only when he has lost his own righteousness. Cf. the issue in Luther and the Augsburg Confession, see LINDROTH, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

72 "All that has been said, all that can be said, on these subjects, centres in this point: The fall of Adam

produced the death of Christ ... If God had prevented the fall of man, 'the Word' had never been 'made flesh', nor had we ever 'seen his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father'... Unless 'by one man judgment had come upon all men to condemnation', neither angels nor men could ever have known 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'." The sermon on God's Love to Fallen Man, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 239.

73 *The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 188.

74 Thus this view is in harmony with the so-called classic idea of atonement. See AULÉN, *op. cit.*, p. 20 ff. Cf. above.

75 *Scriptural Christianity*, delivered in 1744, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 95. This idea of atonement as an unbroken, continuous work of God is closely related to the contention that justifying faith involves the belief that "God 'was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.'" See *A Farther Appeal*, 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 48; *Justification by Faith*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 125; *The Sermon on the Mount: IX*, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 498. Cf. *Notes*, 1755, U. Cor. v. 19. But that this idea does not prevent the view of Christ's act of atonement as a work distinct from God's, whereby this must chiefly be considered as a satisfaction given by Christ to God on behalf of men, is shown in *The Law Established through Faith: 11*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 11, p. 76.

76 *The Law Established through Faith: 11*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 76 f.

77 See *The Almost Christian*, delivered in 1741, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 63; *A Farther Appeal*, 1, 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 48; *Justification by Faith*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 130; *The Way to the Kingdom*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 160; *The Sermon on the Mount: 1*, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley* 1, p. 328; *The Sermon on the Mount: IX*, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 508.

78 *Letter to James Hervey*, 15 Oct. 1756, *The Letters of John Wesley*, III, p. 371 ff.

79 *ib.*, *The Letters of John Wesley*, 111, p. 373. Wesley finds that the latter is not explicit in the Scriptures: "If He was a substitute as to penal sufferings, why not as to justifying obedience? The former is expressly asserted in Scripture; the latter is not expressly asserted there."

80 *ib.*, p. 377 f.: "By Christ's sufferings alone the law was not satisfied'. Yes, it was; for it required only the alternative, Obey or die. It required no man to obey and die too. If any man had perfectly obeyed, He would not have died. 'Where the Scripture ascribes the whole of our salvation to the death of Christ a part of His humiliation is put for the whole'. I cannot allow this without some proof. 'He was obedient unto death' is no proof at all, as it does not necessarily imply any more than that He died in obedience to the Father. In some texts there is a necessity of taking a part for the whole; but in these there is no such necessity."

81 *ib.*, p. 377 f.

82 *ib.*, p. 379. But that Wesley can also expressly mention both Christ's active and passive obedience as the object of faith and the foundation of salvation is seen in *The Sermon on the Mount: XIII*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 11, p. 30. See also *The Lord Our Righteousness*, delivered in 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 11, p. 427, 430, 432 ff. Yet that only Christ's death had redemptory significance is again seen in *Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's "Review of All the Doctrines Taught by Mr. John Wesley," 1772*, *The*

Works of John Wesley, X, p. 386. "I cannot prove, that it was requisite for Christ to fulfil the moral law in order to his purchasing redemption for us. By his sufferings alone the law was satisfied'. Undoubtedly it was. Therefore, although I believe Christ fulfilled God's law, yet I do not affirm he did this to purchase redemption for us. This was done by his dying in our stead."

83 lb., p. 377.

84 The Lord our Righteousness, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 11, p. 430: "But in what sense is this righteousness imputed to believers? In this: all believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of anything in them, or of anything that ever was, that is, or ever can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them." Cf. Notes, 1755, Rom. iv. 9.

Wesley repudiates the notion that God should consider man just only because Christ is just: "Least of all does justification imply, that God is deceived in those whom He justifies; that He thinks them to be what, in fact, they are not; that He accounts them to be otherwise than they are. It does by no means imply, that God judges concerning us contrary to the real nature of things; that He esteems us better than we really are, or believes us righteous when we are unrighteous. Surely no. The judgement of the all-wise God is always according to truth. Neither can it ever consist with his unerring wisdom, to think that I am innocent, to judge that I am righteous or holy, because another is so. He can no more, in this manner, confound me with Christ than with David or Abraham." Justification by Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 120.

85 lb., p. 433 f. Cf. the declaration in Thoughts on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ, 1762, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 313: "But is not Christ termed 'our righteousness'? He is: 'This is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness'. (Jer. xxiii. 6.) And is not the plain, indisputable meaning of this scripture, He shall be what he is called, the sole Purchaser, the sole meritorious Cause, both of our justification and sanctification?" See also the letter to James Hervey of 15 Oct. 1756, The Letters of John Wesley, III, p. 375 f.: "There are but two methods whereby any can be justified -- either by a perfect obedience to the law, or because Christ hath kept the law in our stead'. You should say, 'Or by faith in Christ'. I then answer, This is true; and fallen man is justified, not by perfect obedience, but by faith. What Christ has done is the foundation of our justification, not the term or condition Of it."

86 lb., p. 432.

87 lb., p. 438. He fears that "any should use the phrase, 'The righteousness of Christ', or 'The righteousness of Christ is imputed to me', as a cover for his unrighteousness. We have known this done a thousand times ... And thus, though a man be as far from the practise as from the tempers of a Christian; though he neither has the mind which was in Christ, nor in any respect walks as He walked; yet he has armour of proof against all conviction, in what he calls 'the righteousness of Christ'."

88 Letter to James Hervey, 15 Oct. 1756, The Letters of John Wesley, III, p. 386. Cf. LINDROTH'S Criticism of the legalistic theory fundamental in the orthodox view of atonement: "If Christ's work of satisfaction is defined as an active obedience, it must be assumed that it is man who is called upon to fulfil the law. But if this is so, how is it possible, retaining the legalistic view fundamental in Orthodoxy, for another, for Christ, to fulfil this requirement vicariously? For, just as vicarious punishment means that man is absolved from punishment, so active and vicarious fulfilment of the law must mean that he is released from the obligation to obey it. Yet such a conclusion naturally Conflicts with the basic legalism of Orthodoxy. Such is the futility of defining Christ's work of atonement as a vicarious *obedientia activa*." (Translated.) Op. cit., p. 324.

89 LINDROTH, op. cit., p. 309 f.; AULÉN, op. cit. p. 145 ff.

90 See the description of the awakened man's struggle under the law in connection with Rom. vii. in *The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 189 f.

91 Wesley sharply criticizes Luther's commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, which he finds "deeply tinctured with mysticism throughout, and hence often dangerously wrong." He says further: "Again, how blasphemously does he speak of good works and of the law of God -- constantly coupling the law with sin, death, hell, or the devil; and teaching that Christ delivers us from them alike. Whereas it can no more be proved by Scripture that Christ delivers us from the law of God than that He delivers us from holiness or from heaven. Here (I apprehend) is the real spring of the grand error of the Moravians. They follow Luther, for better, for worse. Hence their 'No works; no law; no commandments'. But who art thou that 'speakest evil of the law, and judgest the law'." *Journal for 15 June 1741*, *The Journal of John Wesley*, 11, p. 467.

"Who art thou, O man, that 'judgest the law, and speakest evil of the law'? -- that rankest it with sin, Satan, and death, and sendest the mall to hell together? . . . A judge of that which God hath ordained to judge thee! So thou hast set up thyself in the judgment-seat of Christ, and cast down the rule whereby he will judge the world!" *The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 56.

92 *The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 11, p. 45.

93 *Ib.*, p. 47. A platonizing tendency is apparent when Wesley further describes the law as the divine virtue and wisdom assuming a visible form. "If virtue", said the ancient Heathen, 'could assume such a shape as that we could behold her with our eyes, what wonderful love would she excite in us! If virtue could do this! It is done already. The law of God is all virtues in one, in such a shape as to be beheld with open face by all those whose eyes God hath enlightened. What is the law but divine virtue and wisdom assuming a visible form? What is it but the original ideas of truth and good, which were lodged in the uncreated mind from eternity, now drawn forth and clothed with such a vehicle as to appear even to human understanding." *Ib.*, p. 45 f. Cf. SUGDEN'S commentary on this passage.

94 *Ib.*, p. 46. For the law as an expression of reason, see also below, the fifth chapter.

95 In conjunction with the text treated in this sermon, Rom. vii. 12.

96 *Ib.*, p. 47.

97 *Ib.*, p. 47 f.

98 *Ib.*, p. 48.

99 *Ib.*, p. 48.

100 *Ib.*, p. 49 f. Cf. below the fifth chapter.

101 *Ib.*, p. 49.

102 *Ib.*, p. 50.

103 *Ib.*, p. 49 f. Wesley maintains that, as God and His will cannot be kept apart, the old question whether a

thing is right because God wills it, or whether God wills it because it is right, has no meaning. "It seems, then, that the whole difficulty arises from considering God's will as distinct from God: otherwise it vanishes away. For none can doubt but God is the cause of the law of God. But the will of God is God Himself. It is God considered as willing thus or thus. Consequently, to say that the will of God, or that God Himself, is the cause of the law, is one and the same thing." *Ib.*, p. 49 f.

104 *Ib.*, p. 50 f.

105 *Ib.*, p. 51.

106 *Ib.*, p. 51.

107 See A Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend, 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, X, p. 269; A Second Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend, 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, X, p. 279; The Justification by Faith, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 125.

108 The Sermon on the Mount: V, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 399 f.: "The ritual or ceremonial law, delivered by Moses to the children of Israel, containing all the injunctions and ordinances which related to the old sacrifices and service of the temple, our Lord indeed did come to destroy, to dissolve, and utterly abolish. To this bear all the Apostles witness; not only Barnabas and Paul, who vehemently withstood those who taught that Christians ought 'to keep the law of Moses' (Acts XV. 5); not only St. Peter, who termed the insisting on this, on the observance of the ritual law, a 'tempting God', and 'putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers', saith he, 'nor we, were able to bear'; but all the Apostles, elders, and brethren, being assembled with one accord (verse 22), declared, that to command them to keep this law, was to 'subvert their souls'; and that 'it seemed good to the Holy Ghost' and to them, to lay no such burden upon them (verse 28). This 'hand-writing of ordinances our Lord did blot out, take away, and nail to His cross.'" Cf. The Law Established through Faith: 1, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 11, p. 59 f.

109 The Law Established through Faith: 11, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 73.

110 A Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend, 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, X, p. 269 f.

111 The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 40 f. Here Wesley apparently holds a typical Calvinist view, one also found in Chapter VII of the Westminster Confession in the reference to the two covenants: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. The latter is divided into two separate dispensations: the Old and the New Testament. In the O. T. the covenant "was administered by Promises, Prophecies, Sacrifices, Circumcision, the Paschal Lamb, and other Types and Ordinances delivered to the People of the Jews, an foreshadowing Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious through the Operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the Elect in Faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full Remission of Sins, and eternal Salvation." In the N. T., "when Christ the Substance, was exhibited" and this covenant was dispensed in other Ordinances, "it is held forth in more Fulness, Evidence, and spiritual Efficacy, to all Nations, both Jews and Gentiles ... There are not therefore two Covenants of Grace differing in Substance, but one and the same under various Dispensations." K. MÜLLER'S text, *Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformierten Kirche*, p. 559 f.

112 The Law Established through Faith: 1, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 68. Cf. the second sermon on the same subject, *ib.*, p. 73.

113 The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 54.

114 Cf. The Sermon of the Salvation, Corp. Conf., Die Kirche von England, p. 453. Justification by faith alone does not exclude "repentance, hope, love, dread, and fear of God, to be joined with faith in every man that is justified; but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying." Wesley follows this homily. See The Principles of a Methodist, 1742, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 362.

115 A Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 271.

116 A Second Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 279.

117 *Ib.*, p. 280.

118 The Law Established through Faith: I, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 68.

119 *Ib.*, p. 66. Cf. the rejection of Antinomianism in Minutes 1744, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 278. At the final justification, at the Last Judgment, men will be judged according to works, Minutes 1746, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 289. See below the last chapter.

120 The height, depth, length, and breadth of this law God alone can manifest by his Spirit. The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 44. The Sermon on the Mount expresses the moral commandments clearly, showing that it is not only a question of outward acts, but also of inward temper. Cf. *ib.*, p. 55. See further The Law Established through Faith: II, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 11, p. 74 f. Above all it is the law of love that is in question here. It is this law that is established through faith. Justification by Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 125; The Law Established through Faith: 11, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 11, p. 80.

121 The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 52.

122 *Ib.*, p. 52 f.

123 *Ib.*, p. 53: "The third use of the law is, to keep us alive. It is the grand means whereby the blessed Spirit prepares the believer for larger communications of the life of God."

124 *Ib.*, p. 54.

125 On the place of the law in the Christian life in Calvin, see OLSSON, Calvin och reformationens teologi, I, p. 521 ff.

126 See *ib.*, p. 55.

127 *Ib.*, p. 55 f.

128 See The Law Established through Faith: V, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 80.

129 "From all this we may learn that there is no contrariety at all between the law and the gospel; that there

is no need for the law to pass away, in order to the establishing the gospel. Indeed neither of them supersedes the other, but they agree perfectly well together. Yea, the very same words, considered in different respects, are parts both of the law and of the gospel: if they are considered as commandments, they are parts of the law; if as promises, of the gospel. Thus, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart', when considered as a commandment, is a branch of the law; when regarded as a promise, is an essential part of the gospel -- the gospel being no other than the commands of the law, proposed by way of promise. Accordingly, poverty of spirit, purity of heart, and whatever else is enjoined in the holy law of God, are no other, when viewed in a gospel light, than so many great and precious promises." The Sermon on the Mount: V, 1748 The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 403. See further in the fifth chapter.

130 The importance Wesley ascribed to the law led, shortly after the new insight into the doctrine of justification, to the breach with Zinzendorf and the Moravian Brethren. See Journal for 26 and 27 June 1740, The Journal of John Wesley, II, p. 360 f.; the letter to Herrnhut, 8 Aug. 1740, The Letters of John Wesley, I, p. 345 ff. Cf. Queries, 1755, p. 17 ff.

In accordance with the first use of the law, the law shall, in the Christian appeal, serve as a means of awakening man. Generally, Wesley says, men comprehend their sin by listening to the demands of Christ's law, not by the Gospel. "There may have been here and there an exempt case. One in a thousand may have been awakened by the gospel: but this is no general rule: the ordinary method of God is, to convict sinners by the law, and that only. The gospel is not the means which God hath ordained, or which our Lord Himself used, for this end." The Law Established through Faith: 1, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 61. For the preaching of the law and the gospel to believers, see *ib.*, p. 64 f. Wesley expounds the question of the law and the gospel in preaching with clarity and fulness in a letter of 20 Dec. 1751, The Letters of John Wesley, III, p. 79 ff.

131 Salvation by Faith, 1738, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 45.

132 See The Law Established through Faith: 11, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 76 f.

133 Justification by Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 119. Cf. Notes, 1755, Rom. iv. 5.

134 Salvation by Faith, delivered in 1738, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 45: "This then is the salvation which is through faith, even in the present world: a salvation from sin, and the consequences of sin, both often expressed in the word *justification*; which, taken in the largest sense, implies a deliverance from guilt and punishment, by the atonement of Christ actually applied to the soul of the sinner now believing on Him, and a deliverance from the [whole body] of sin, through Christ *formed in his heart*. So that he who is thus justified, or saved by faith, is indeed *born again*. He is *born again of the Spirit* unto a new life, which 'is hid with Christ in God'." Cf. however Journal, 13 Sept. 1739, where justification and sanctification are said to be "wholly distinct." The Journal of John Wesley, II, p. 275.

135 Justification by Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 119. "So that," Wesley continues, "although some rare instances may be found, wherein the term justified or justification is used in so wide a sense as to include sanctification also; yet, in general use, they are sufficiently distinguished from each other, both by St. Paul and the other writers." *Ib.*, p. 119.

Here justification is said to imply remission of sins. "The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is that act of God the Father, whereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of His Son, He 'showeth forth His righteousness' (or mercy) 'by the remission of the sins that are past'. This is the easy, natural account of it given by St. Paul, throughout this whole epistle [Rom.]." *Ib.*, p. 120 f.

136 Cf. the objectively judicial character of justification in Notes, 1755, Rom. v. 18: "Justification of life is that Sentence of God, by which a Sinner under Sentence of Death is adjudged to Life."

137 Here the aim is merely to draw attention to the fundamental relation between the relative change and the real change and not to enter more particularly into the process of sanctification. For this, see next chapter.

138 The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 299 f. Cf. Notes 1755, Rom. iv. 9. "*Faith was imputed to Abraham, for righteousness* -- This is fully consistent with our being justified, thro' the Imputation of the Righteousness of *Christ*, that is, our being pardoned and accepted by God upon our believing, for the sake of what *Christ* hath done and suffered. For tho' this, and this alone be the meritorious Cause of our Acceptance with God, yet Faith may be said to be *imputed to us for righteousness*, as it is the sole Condition of our Acceptance. We may observe here, *Forgiveness, not imputing sin and imputing righteousness*, are all one."

Wesley points out the intimate connection between justification, new birth, and faith. They belong necessarily together. Where one is, the two others also are. Yet they may differ in meaning. Although, Wesley says, the words "*regenerate, justified, or believers* have not "precisely the same meaning (the first implying an inward, actual change, the second a relative one, and the third the means whereby both the one and the other are wrought), yet they come to one and the same thing; as every one that believes, is both justified and born of God." On Sin in Believers, 1763, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 365.

139 Logically justification precedes new birth. "If any doctrines within the whole compass of Christianity may be properly termed 'fundamental', they are doubtless these two, -- the doctrine of justification, and that of the new birth: the former relating to that great work which God does *for us*, in forgiving our sins; the latter, to the great work which God does *in us*, in renewing our fallen nature. In order of time, neither of these is before the other; in the moment we are justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also 'born of the Spirit'; but in order of *thinking*, as it is termed, justification precedes the new birth. We first conceive His wrath to be turned away, and then His Spirit to work in our hearts." The New Birth, 1760, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 226 f.

The real change involved in the New Birth is thus defined by Wesley: "It is that great change which God works in the soul when He brings it into life; when He raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is 'created anew in Christ Jesus'; when it is 'renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness'; when the love of the world is changed into the love of God; pride into humility; passion into meekness; hatred, envy, malice, into a sincere, tender, disinterested love for all mankind. In a word, it is that change whereby the earthly, sensual, devilish mind is turned into the 'mind which was in Christ Jesus'. This is the nature of the new birth: 'so is every one that is born of the Spirit'." *Ib.*, p. 234.

140 The Scripture Way of Salvation, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 445 f. Cf. the sermon Working Out Our Own Salvation, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 509: "By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God."

141 It was during the reading of Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans that Wesley had his evangelical experience of salvation. See Journal, 24 May 1738, The Journal of John Wesley, 1, p. 475 f. In his university sermon on Salvation by Faith, delivered on 11 June of the same year, he emphasises his agreement with Luther. The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 51. In Preface to a Treatise on Justification, Extracted

from Mr John Goodwin, 1765, he maintains that his view on salvation has not changed. The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 339. Cf. also the letter to John Newton 14 May 1765, in which he also asserts his agreement with the original Reformed conception, although here he refers to Calvin as its representative. The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 298. Finally, in the sermon on The Wedding Garment, 1790, he says: "Such has been my judgement for these threescore years, without any material alteration. Only, about fifty years ago I had a clearer view than before of justification by faith; and in this, from that very hour, I never varied, no, not an hair's breadth." The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 317.

142 Thus CELL, VON EICKEN, SCOTT, . SCHMIDT, LERCH, and LANG. See above p. 11 ff.

143 See Salvation by Faith, 1738, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 37 f., 47 f.

144 This faith, he says, is not only that of the heathens, or that of the devil, or that of the Apostles during Christ's life on Earth. From the heathen's faith it differs by being "a faith in Christ", and from the devil's faith "it is fully distinguished by this: it is not barely a speculative, rational thing, a cold, lifeless assent, a train of ideas in the head; but also a disposition of the heart. For thus saith the Scripture, 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness'; and, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved'." It differs from the faith of the Apostles during Christ's life on earth by acknowledging "the necessity and merit of His death, and the power of His resurrection. It acknowledges His death as the only sufficient means of redeeming man from death eternal, and His resurrection as the restoration of us all to life and immortality; inasmuch as He 'was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification'. Christian faith is, then, not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ; a trust in the merits of His life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon Him as our atonement and our life, as *given for us, and living in us.*" Salvation by Faith, 1738, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 38 ff.

145 Cf. The Principles of a Methodist, 1742, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 362. While in general faith is said to be "a divine, supernatural , *evidence* or *conviction*, 'of things not seen', not discoverable by our bodily senses, as being either past, future, or spiritual, justifying faith implies," on the other hand, "not only a divine evidence or conviction that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself', but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for my sins, that He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*." Justification by Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 125. The same definition is given in The Scripture Way of Salvation, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 449. Cf. The Marks of the New Birth, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 284 f. and letter, 1 Nov. 1757, The Letters of John Wesley, III, p. 232.

146 Salvation by Faith, 1738, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 38.

147 Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1739, The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley, I, p. xx. Cf. The Principles of a Methodist, 1742, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 362 f.

148 Justification by Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 122.

149 *Ib.*, p. 123.

150 *Ib.*, p. 122.

151 *Ib.*, p. 123. "Perhaps those who doubt of this have not duly considered the weighty reason which is here assigned, why no works done before justification can be truly and properly good. The argument plainly runs

thus: --

- No works are good, which are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done:
- But no works done before justification are done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done:
- Therefore, no works done before justification are good.

The first proposition is self-evident; and the second -- that no works done before justification are done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done -- will appear equally plain and undeniable, if we only consider, God hath willed and commanded, that *all our works should be done in charity* ( ), in love, in that love to God which produces love to all mankind. But none of our works can be done in this love, while the love of the Father (of God as our Father) is not in us; and this love cannot be in us till we receive the 'Spirit of adoption, crying in our hearts, Abba, Father'. If, therefore, God doth not *justify the ungodly*, and him that (in this sense) *worketh not*, then hath Christ died in vain; then, notwithstanding His death, can no flesh living be justied." *Ib.*, p. 124.

152 LANG points out the resemblance to Bunyan, who, he thinks, was not influenced by Cocceius, but followed the line of thought found in Chapter VII of the Westminster Confession. *Puritanismus and Pietismus*, p. 257, 339. See the text of this chapter in K. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, p. 558 f.

153 See *The Righteousness of Faith*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 132 ff.

154 The covenant of works was not established by Moses but by Adam in paradise. The covenant of grace was established by God through Christ immediately afterwards. This was partly manifested after Adam's fall, in the promise in Gen. iii. 15; it was revealed rather more clearly to Abraham (Gen. xxii. 16, 18) and still more clearly to David and the prophets. With Christ the gospel was fully revealed. *Ib.*, p. 136. Cf. Notes, 1755, 1 Tim. i. 10.

155 *Ib.*, p. 138.

156 *Ib.*, p. 138 f.

157 *Ib.*, p. 143 f.

158 See *The Marks of the New Birth*, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 284 f.

159 See *Satan's Devices*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 194.

160 *The Lord Our Righteousness*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 11, p. 430.

161 Cf. above. See further LINDROTH, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

162 V. EICKEN thinks that Wesley is at one with Luther, but he has not taken into consideration the relations between the latter and Melanchthon. See *op. cit.*, p. 28 ff., 37.

163 See above. Cf. LERCH, *Op. Cit.*, p. 58 f.

164 See the difference between Luther and Melanchthon in LINDROTH, *op. Cit.*, p. 242 f.; JOSEFSON, *Ödmjukhet och tro*, p. 127, 179.

165 See OLSSON, *op. cit.*, p. 461 ff.; 466 ff.

166 See LINDROTH, *Op. cit.*, p. 259, 273 ff., 300.

167 *Ib.*, p. 243 ff.

168 BRING, *Dualismen hos Luther*, p. 172 f.

169 LINDROTH, *Op. cit.*, pp. 243, 307 f., 314 f.

170 For this, see the following chapter.

171 This is particularly evident in the earlier evangelical sermons. In *Salvation by Faith*, delivered in 1738, (The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 47 f.) Wesley says: "Of yourselves cometh neither your faith nor your salvation: 'it is the gift of God'; the free, undeserved gift; the faith through which ye are saved, as well as the salvation which He of His own good pleasure, His mere favour, annexes thereto. That ye believe, is one instance of His grace; that believing ye are saved, another. 'Not of works, lest any man should boast'. For all our works, all our righteousness, which were before our believing, merited nothing of God but condemnation; so far were they from deserving faith, which therefore, whenever given, is not of works. Neither is salvation of the works we do when we believe; for it is then God that worketh in us: and therefore, that He giveth us a reward for what He Himself worketh, only commendeth the riches of His mercy, but leaveth us nothing whereof to glory." Cf. *Justification by Faith*, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 127 ff.: "It does not become poor, guilty, sinful worms, who receive whatsoever blessings they enjoy (from the least drop of water that cools our tongue, to the immense riches of glory in eternity), of grace, of mere favour, and not of debt, to ask of God the reasons of His conduct. It is not meet for us to call Him in question, 'who giveth account to none of His ways'; to demand, Why didst Thou make faith the condition, the only condition, of justification? Wherefore didst Thou decree, *He that believeth*, and he only, *shall be saved*? This is the very point on which St. Paul so strongly insists in the ninth chapter of this Epistle, viz. that the terms of pardon and acceptance must depend, not on us, but on *Him that calleth us*: that there is no *unrighteousness with God*, in fixing His own terms, not according to ours, but His own good pleasure; who may justly say, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy', namely, on him who believeth in Jesus. 'So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth', to choose the condition on which he shall find acceptance, 'but of God that showeth mercy'; that accepteth none at all, but of His own free love, His unmerited goodness. 'Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy', viz. on those who believe on the Son of His love; 'and whom He will', that is, those who believe not, 'He hardeneth', leaves at last to the hardness of their hearts." See further *The Righteousness of Faith*, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 143 ff.

172 See Corp. Conf., *Die Kirche von England*, p. 185 f., 277, 303 f., 306 f., 315 f Cf. Wesley's own declaration in *A farther Appeal*, p. 51 f.

173 *Justification by Faith*, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 125.

174 See *The Way to the Kingdom*, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 158 f.

175 See *Justification by Faith*, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 126 f. This sermon was obviously delivered several years before it was printed and published in the first volume of sermons in 1746. See SUGDEN'S introduction, *ib.*, p. 112.

176 The Principles of a Methodist, 1742, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 312.

177 Salvation by Faith, delivered in 1738, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 37 f.

178 The Principles of a Methodist, 1742, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 361. Cf. above p. 89.

179 Minutes 1744, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 278.

180 *Ib.*, p. 276.

181 *Ib.*, p. 275 f.

182 *Ib.*, p. 277.

183 Minutes 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 281 f. Wesley also speaks more favourably of good works before justification than he has done earlier: "Q. 7. Have we duly considered the case of Cornelius? Was he not in the favour of God, when his 'prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God'? that is, before he believed in Christ? A. It does seem that he was, in some degree. But we speak not of those who have not heard the gospel. Q. 8. But were those works of his 'splendid sins'? A. No; nor were they done without the grace of Christ. Q. 9. How then can we maintain, that all works done before we have a sense of the pardoning love of God are sin, and, as such, an abomination to Him? A. The works of him who has heard the gospel, and does not believe, are not done as God hath 'willed and commanded them to be done'. And yet we know not how to say that they are an abomination to the Lord in him who feareth God, and, from that principle, does the best he can." The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 283. This is pointed out by SUGDEN. See his note 2 in The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 37. Cf. Wesley's commentary on Acts x. 4 in Notes, 1755, which Sugden also refers to, *ib.*, p. 37 f.: "*Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God -- Dare any Man say, These were only splendid Sins? Or that they were an Abomination before God? And yet it is certain, in the Christian Sense, Cornelius was then an Unbeliever. He had not then Faith in Christ. So certain it is, that every one who seeks Faith in Christ, should seek it in Prayer, and doing Good to all Men: Tho' in Strictness, what is not exactly according to the Divine Rule, must stand in need of Divine Favour and Indulgence.*"

184 A Farther Appeal, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 56 f. For the emergence of the theocentric attitude, see The Righteousness of Faith, published in 1746 but delivered earlier. The idea of grace is here so strongly accentuated that repentance can coincide with faith. "Do not say, 'But I am not *contrite enough*: I am not *sensible enough* of my sins'. I know it. I would to God thou wert more *sensible* of them, more *contrite* a thousand fold than thou art. But do not stay for this. It may be, God will make thee so, not before thou believest, but by believing. It may be, thou wilt not weep much till thou lovest much because thou hast had much forgiven. In the meantime look unto Jesus. Behold, how He loveth thee! What could He have done more for thee which He hath not done? ... Look steadily upon Him, till He looks on thee, and breaks thy hard heart. Then shall thy 'head' be 'waters' and thy 'eyes fountains of tears'." The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 144 f. Wesley also mentions the fruits of repentance, but only in passing. "Nor yet do thou say, 'I must *do* something more *before* I come to Christ'. I grant, supposing thy Lord should delay His coming, it were meet and right to wait for His appearing, in doing, so far as thou hast power, whatsoever He hath commanded thee. But there is no necessity for making such a supposition. How knowest thou that He will delay? Perhaps He will appear, as the dayspring from on high, before the morning light. O do not set Him a time! Expect Him every hour. Now He is nigh! even at the door!" *Ib.*, p. 145.

185 The Scripture Way of Salvation, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 451 f.: "God does

undoubtedly command us both to repent, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; which if we willingly neglect, we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all: therefore both repentance, and fruits meet for repentance, are, in some sense, necessary to justification. But they are not necessary in the *same sense* with faith, nor in the *same degree*. Not in the *same degree*; for those fruits are only necessary *conditionally*; if there be time and opportunity for them. Otherwise a man may be justified without them, as was the *thief* upon the cross (if we may call him so; for a late writer has discovered that he was no thief, but a very honest and respectable person!); but he cannot be justified without faith; this is impossible. Likewise, let a man have ever so much repentance, or ever so many of the fruits meet for repentance, yet all this does not at all avail; he is not justified till he believes. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less repentance, he is justified. -- Not in the *same sense*; for repentance and its fruits are only *remotely* necessary; necessary in order to faith; whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to justification. It remains, that faith is the only condition *which is immediately* and *proximately* necessary to justification."

Cf. Preface to A Treatise on Justification, 1765, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 322: "The terms of acceptance for fallen man are, repentance and faith. 'Repent ye, and believe the gospel'."

186 See Minutes 1770, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 337 f.

187 *Ib.*, p. 337.

188 The declarations at this 1770 London conference were not sufficiently clearly formulated and could give rise to misunderstanding. Wesley admits as much himself. See the promulgation of the following year, which expressed the doctrines of the conference with greater precision. The Journal of John Wesley, V, p. 427 (facsimile). See the last chapter below.

189 The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 337.

190 Letter to Several Preachers and Friends, 10 July 1771, The Letters of John Wesley, V, p. 263. That Wesley's view as to how justification is attained, has not undergone any essential change, is shown by his later declarations. See Some Remarks on Mr Hill's 'Review of All Doctrines Taught by Mr John Wesley', 1772. Here, as before, Wesley distinguishes between the condition and the meritorious cause. Christ's justice constitutes the latter, faith the former. Faith is not that, he says, *for* which we are accepted by God but that *through* which we are accepted. The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 390.

191 If anyone voluntarily neglects good works, he cannot "continue in faith or in the favour of God." The Scripture Way of Salvation, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 11, p. 454.

Wesley's statement (Minutes 1770) that "every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well as *from* life" (The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 337) need not, in itself, imply, as IMPETA, (De Leer der Heiliging en Volmaking bij Wesley en Fletcher, p. 401) thinks, a fundamental deviation from his earlier attitude.

192 Minutes 1770, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 337 f. The last statement in the preceding note probably refers to this, as do the words: "We are rewarded according to our words, yea, because of our works."

193 See the following chapters, especially the last.

194 See further the sermon On Working Out Our Own Salvation, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 513.

195 Cf. also the relations between atonement, justification and sanctification, as expressed in the commentary on Rom. iv. 5 in Notes, 1755: "*But to him that worketh not -- It being impossible he should without Faith, but believeth -- his faith is imputed to him for righteousness -- Therefore God's affirming of Abraham, that Faith was imputed to him for righteousness, plainly shows, that he worked not; or in other Words, that he was not justified by Works, but by Faith only. Hence we see plainly, how groundless that Opinion is, that Holiness or Sanctification is previous to our Justification. For the Sinner being first convinced of his Sin and Danger by the Spirit of God, stands trembling before the awful Tribunal of divine Justice; and has nothing to plead, but his own Guilt and the Merits of a Mediator. Christ here interposes. Justice is satisfied: The Sin is remitted, and Pardon is sealed to the Soul, by a divine Faith wrought by the Holy Ghost, who then begins the great work of inward Sanctification. Thus God justifies the ungodly; and yet remains just, and true to all his Attributes! But let none hence presume to continue in Sin. For to the impenitent God is a Consuming fire. On him that justifieth the ungodly -- If a Man could possibly be made holy before he was justified, it would entirely set his Justification aside; seeing he could not, in the very Nature of the Thing, be justified, if he were not, at that very time, ungodly.*"

196 Cf. the same tendency in Calvin. See OLSSON, Op. Cit., p. 519 f.

197 Salvation by Faith, delivered 1738, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 41 ff. As early as 1738, with the religious crisis and the resulting change of attitude, we find the idea of a real change occupying an important place in the conception of salvation. Influenced by Peter Böhler and an intense study of the New Testament in Greek, Wesley had become convinced that happiness and holiness were the fruits of a living faith. Besides peace, victory over sin was essential for such a faith. See The Journal of John Wesley, I, p. 447, 454. Wesley's experience on 24 May 1738 fitted in, moreover, with the references to change in Luther's Epistle to the Romans: "About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." And in the following words Wesley speaks of the real change: "I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me." The Journal of John Wesley, I, p. 475 f. See also the letter to his brother Samuel, 30 Oct. 1738, in which he says that by a Christian he means "one who so believes in Christ ... that sin hath no more dominion over him." The Letters of John Wesley, I, p. 262.

198 Salvation by Faith, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 45.

199 Ib., p. 46.

200 The Principles of a Methodist, 1742, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 363.

201 A Farther Appeal, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 47.

202 Sermon on the Mount: V, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 409 f.

203 A Blow at the Root, 1762, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 366. Cf. letter 16 Sept. 1774, The Letters of John Wesley, VI, p. 113. In England Wesley thinks the greatest obstacle is Antinomianism. "But God," he continues, "has already lifted up His standard, and He will maintain His own cause. In the present dispensation He is undoubtedly aiming at that point, to spread holiness over the land. It is our wisdom to have this always in view, inward and outward holiness. A thousand things will be presented by men and devils to divert us from our point. These we are to watch against continually, as they will be continually changing

their shape."

204 The Law Established through Faith: 11, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 77 ff.

205 *Ib.*, p. 77.

206 The Lord Our Righteousness, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 439: "Cry aloud (is there not a cause?) that for this very end the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, that 'the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us'; and that we may 'live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world'."

207 The Almost Christian, delivered in 1741, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 63 f.

208 *Ib.*, p. 61 ff.

209 A Farther Appeal, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 123.

210 The First Fruits of the Spirit, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 164 f. It is characteristic of the ethical trend of Wesley's Christianity that he does not point to the gifts of the Spirit but to the fruits according to Gal. v. 22 f. Cf. Scriptural Christianity, delivered 1744, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 94.

211 *Ib.*, p. 165 f.

212 "Thou art not only made free from Jewish ceremonies, from the guilt of sin, and the fear of hell (these are so far from being the whole, that they are the least and lowest part of Christian liberty); but, what is infinitely more, from the power of sin, from serving the devil, from offending God. O stand fast in this liberty: in comparison of which, all the rest is not even worthy to be named! Stand fast in loving God with all thy heart, and serving Him with all thy strength! This is perfect freedom; thus to keep His law, and to walk in all His commandments blameless." The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 11, p. 56 f.

213 The Nature of Enthusiasm, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 91 f.

214 See Scriptural Christianity, delivered in 1744, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 94 ff.

215 An Earnest Appeal, 1743, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 3. Cf. *ib.*, p. 8: "what religion do I preach? The religion of love; the law of kindness brought to light by the gospel." In The Way to the Kingdom, 1746, true religion is summed up in "righteousness" or "holiness" and "happiness." The former comprises love to God and fellow creatures; the latter implies peace, assurance of adoption, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 148 ff.

216 The Sermon on the Mount: I, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 319.

217 The Sermon on the Mount: III, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 377, treating Matthew v. 8-12.

218 See the preceding chapter.

219 Original Sin, 1760, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 223 f.

220 *Ib.*, p. 225.

221 See *The Character of a Methodist*, 1742, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 341 ff.

222 The Methodists are especially characterized, he says in *Advice to the People Called Methodists*, 1745, by the fact that they "so strenuously and continually insist on the absolute necessity of universal holiness both in heart and life." *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 353. Cf. *Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained*, 1746, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 472: "Our main doctrines, which include all the rest, are three, -- that of repentance, of faith, and of holiness. The first of these we account, as it were, the porch of religion; the next, the door; the third, religion itself." See also pp. 474, 477.

God's aim in awakening the Methodists is said to be: "Not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land." *The Large Minutes*, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 299. Methodism is "the doctrine of heart-holiness." *Minutes 1770*, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 336. Cf. also the letter, 28 Dec. 1773: "We [the Methodists] set out upon two principles: (1) None go to heaven without holiness of heart and life; (2) whosoever follows after this (whatever his opinions be) is my 'brother and sister and mother'. And we have not swerved an hair's breadth from either one or the other of these to this day." *The Letters of John Wesley*, VI, p. 61.

In his *Sermon at the Foundation of City Road Chapel*, delivered in 1777, Wesley defines Methodism thus: "'What does this new word mean? Is it not a new religion? This is a very common, nay, almost an universal, supposition; but nothing can be more remote from the truth. It is a mistake all over. Methodism, so called, is the old religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of the primitive Church, the religion of the Church of England. This old religion (as I observed in the 'Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion',) is no other than love, the love of God and of all mankind; the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us, -- as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth as our own soul. This love is the great medicine of life; the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world; all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness going hand in hand; there is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering, the whole image of God; and, at the same time, a 'peace that passeth all understanding', with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory'. This religion of love, and joy, and peace, has its seat in the inmost soul; but is ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing up, not only in all innocence, (for love worketh no ill to his neighbour,) but, likewise, in every kind of beneficence, -- spreading virtue and happiness to all around it." *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 423 f.

Finally, the reader is referred to *Thoughts upon Methodism*, 1786. The essence of Methodism is "holiness of heart and life; the circumstantials all point to this." *The Works of John Wesley*, XIII, p. 260. The following points are fundamental in the doctrine of the Methodists: "That the Bible is the whole and sole rule both of Christian faith and practice. Hence they learned, (1.) That religion is an inward principle; that it is no other than the mind that was in Christ; or, in other words, the renewal of the soul after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. (2.) That this can never be wrought in us, but by the power of the Holy Ghost. (3.) That we receive this, and every other blessing, merely for the sake of Christ: And, (4.) That whosoever hath the mind that was in Christ, the same is our brother, and sister, and mother." *Ib.*, p. 258.

# Wesley and Sanctification

by

**Harald Lindström**

---

## CHAPTER THREE

### SANCTIFICATION AND THE ORDER OF SALVATION

#### I

#### *General Survey of the Order of Salvation.*

We take a further step, passing on to investigate the function of sanctification and its structure in Wesley's doctrine of salvation. The question to be answered may be expressed thus: How in Wesley's view is salvation realized in the individual? We must try to see how he describes the whole order through which salvation is realized and what place and structure he attributes to sanctification in this process.

It has often been maintained that revivalism and conversion are the typical features in Wesley and Methodism; and these basic elements are supplemented with Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection. The New Birth and complete sanctification have been looked upon as two isolated phenomena unconnected organically with his doctrine of salvation as a whole. Because he maintains that both are conferred upon man in a single instant, only the instantaneous element in salvation has received attention. Thus the fact that Wesley also sees salvation as a gradual development has been overlooked. Actually the idea of a gradual development is a most prominent element in his conception of salvation, and indeed in his thought generally. What happens is that these two elements, the instantaneous and the gradual, are merged, and the order of salvation peculiar to Wesley is the outcome of this mergence. Salvation is seen as a process by which man passes through a series of successive stages, each stage representing a different and higher level.

This enlargement of the conception of salvation and the importance of sanctification in it will be seen even if we do nothing more than run over the terms used to denote the different meanings of salvation. The word 'salvation' itself is used in two principal senses: first, to signify Christian salvation proper, and, secondly, in a wider sense. In the former sense Wesley can use it to embrace the whole range of Christian salvation proper, both present and final salvation: salvation in its inception, continuation, and conclusion<sup>1</sup>; usually, however, he confines it to present salvation, which comprises justification and sanctification<sup>2</sup>, and the emphasis may be laid on sanctification<sup>3</sup>. In the latter sense the word covers all the work of grace in man. In this sense salvation is thought to begin with the effects of prevenient grace, that is before the bestowal of Christian saving grace proper, and to include the whole of the later process of salvation which terminates in glorification.<sup>4</sup> Wesley can also use the term to denote God's entire plan of salvation prior to any subjective

workings; here he is thinking of salvation as something springing from God's foreknowledge and from His conditional predestination.<sup>5</sup>

Following the orthodox view Wesley places the commencement of the Christian life in man at baptism. In this he shares the doctrine of the Church of England that through baptism man is justified and regenerated. The attribution of this significance to baptism is of course a logical consequence of the orthodox doctrine of original sin. The infant, which by birth is totally corrupt, must be freed from its guilt and re-born before it can enter into fellowship with God. This takes place at baptism. Thus Wesley can subscribe to the tenet that "there is a justification conveyed to us in our baptism, or, properly, this state is then begun."<sup>6</sup> Baptism is said to be "the ordinary instrument of our justification."<sup>7</sup> Through it man benefits from the merits of the life and death of Christ.<sup>8</sup> Original guilt is washed away "by the application of the merits of Christ's death"<sup>9</sup> and man is regenerated<sup>10</sup>. By baptism we enter into covenant with God and are admitted into the Church.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Wesley believed that the whole practice of infant baptism rested on the assumption that by it the child was regenerated.<sup>12</sup>

But side by side with this outlook, Wesley also shows a pietistic tendency. The grace accorded to man in baptism can be lost. And it is precisely this situation, when man has forfeited the state of grace, that Wesley concentrates on in his preaching. "Lean no more," he says, "on the staff of that broken reed, that ye *were* born again in baptism. Who denies that ye were then made children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven? But, notwithstanding this, ye are now children of the devil. Therefore, ye must be born again. And let not Satan put it into your heart to cavil at a word, when the thing is clear. Ye have heard what are the marks of the children of God: all ye who have them not on your souls, baptized or unbaptized, must needs receive them, or without doubt ye will perish everlastingly. And if ye have been baptized, your only hope is this, -- that those who were made the children of God by baptism, but are now the children of the devil, may yet again receive 'power to become the sons of God'; that they may receive again what they have lost, even the 'Spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father!'"<sup>13</sup> The stress is on the New Birth, instead of on baptism.

The prominence thus given to the former is a consequence of Wesley's general empirical leaning. This also appears in his belief about the means of grace. The outward means is not to be identified with grace. The notion that grace works *ex opere operato* is sharply repudiated. The means of grace, moreover, are subordinated to its end, which is the regeneration of man.<sup>14</sup> The same approach is seen in his presentation of the sacraments. A sacrament, he says, consists of two parts: the outward, visible sign and the inward, invisible grace which it signifies. Thus the two are distinguished. As to baptism, Wesley distinguishes between the outward act of baptism and new birth. The former is a human act; the latter a change wrought by God in the soul. The former is not always accompanied by the latter. It is in infant, but not in adult, baptism.<sup>15</sup> All who are baptised at a mature age are not simultaneously regenerated. This is proved by experience: "divers of those who were children of the devil before they were baptized continue the same after baptism."<sup>16</sup> The administration of baptism is thus pushed into the background and the emphasis laid on real change, which is manifested in the Christian life.

With regard to baptism Wesley to some extent departs from the view represented by the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.<sup>17</sup> Yet a certain orthodox element is retained: he never

relinquished the tenet that through baptism the child is regenerated.<sup>18</sup> The difference lies in his distinction in principle between baptism by the Spirit and baptism by water, with the emphasis on the former. For this reason he did not regard baptism as a starting point of the new life in the same way as justification and the New Birth.<sup>19</sup>

Wesley's idea of the order of salvation during the first period after 1738 is most clearly and fully expressed in a sermon entitled *The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption* (1746). Here man is described in three states: the natural state, the legal state, and the evangelical state or the state of love. The different situations of man in these three states are as follows:

<i>The natural state</i>	<i>The legal state</i>	<i>The evangelical state</i>
Man sleeps in death	Is awakened	Is a child of God
Neither fears nor loves God	Fears God	Loves God
Has no light in the things of God, walks in utter darkness	Sees the painful light of hell	Sees the joyous light of heaven
Has false peace	Has no peace	Enjoys true peace
Has fancied liberty	Is in bondage	Enjoys true liberty
Sins willingly	Sins unwillingly	Does not sin

*Concluding:*

Neither conquers nor fights	Fights but does not conquer	Fights and conquers; is more than conqueror. <sup>20</sup>
-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---

These states are often "mingled together, and in some measure meet in one and the same person."<sup>21</sup> The legal is often mingled with the natural state, and the evangelical with the legal.<sup>22</sup> In agreement with the distinction made between the legal and the evangelical state, however, the Apostle's account of man's struggle in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is understood to apply to man under the law, not to the true believer.<sup>23</sup>

This, then, is the order in which God leads a sinner to salvation. First, before he partakes of saving faith, conviction of sin and guilt is awakened in him.<sup>24</sup> In the period immediately after Wesley's evangelical conversion we find him attending particularly to repentance before justification and faith in his portrayal of the way of salvation.<sup>25</sup> As a result the way is briefly described as compared with later delineations. The gradual development does not emerge so clearly as it does later on. Even as early as this, however, Wesley takes his stand against Moravianism, declaring that there are degrees of faith.<sup>26</sup>

Later on it is preeminently the gradual aspect that is manifested in his exposition of the Christian life, and with far greater force. In the table above, the Christian life is represented in the evangelical state as a single stage, a single undifferentiated unit. The difference between the New Birth and entire sanctification does not find expression. In the period immediately after 1738 Wesley sometimes describes the Christian life without distinguishing in any way between them. The regenerate man is sometimes presented as completely sanctified; or at any rate no reservations are explicitly stated. Accordingly, some of the traits cited above as pertaining to the evangelical state, apply only to the fully sanctified.<sup>27</sup> Later the distinction between new birth and entire sanctification, which nevertheless was never entirely absent even during the earliest evangelical period<sup>28</sup>, is clearly stated and constitutes a typical feature of his doctrine of sanctification. The picture of the Christian life is now fuller; sanctification is described as an organic development, the believer growing from a child to a young man, and then to a father in Christ.<sup>29</sup>

Yet even in the later period Wesley can hardly be said to have defined the order of salvation in such detail that every step on the path is explicit and definite. Sometimes he deals only with the way up to the new life, perhaps touching upon sanctification, but not dwelling on it. In a survey of the order of salvation in *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (1755), it is presented as follows: 1) Bondage to sin. 2) The knowledge of sin by the law; a sense of God's wrath; inward death. 3) The revelation of the righteousness of God in Christ through the gospel. 4) The centre of all, faith, embracing that righteousness. 5) Justification, whereby God forgives all past sin, and freely accepts the sinner. 6) The gift of the Holy Ghost; a sense of God's love; new inward life. 7) The free service of righteousness.<sup>30</sup> Sometimes, on the other hand, "the whole process of the work of God, from the end to the beginning," is summed up thus: 1) God's foreknowledge of the believers. 2) Predestination. 3) Justification. 4) Sanctification. 5) Glorification.<sup>31</sup> We find a fairly detailed account of the way of salvation, however, in the sermon called *The Scripture Way of Salvation*

(1765). In this sermon, which deals chiefly with justification and sanctification, the following factors predominate: 1) The operation of prevenient grace. 2) Repentance previous to justification. 3) Justification or forgiveness. 4) The New Birth. 5) Repentance after justification and the gradually proceeding work of sanctification. 6) Entire sanctification.<sup>32</sup>

## II

### *The Stages.*

In the broadest sense, as we have seen, sanctification can be said to begin with the operation in man of prevenient grace. This grace comprises "all the drawings of the Father -- the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more<sup>33</sup>;" and further "the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him." All these workings of grace "imply some tendency toward life; some degree of salvation; the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God."<sup>34</sup>

The next factor in the process of salvation is the operation of "convincing grace," which is properly the first real step on the way to salvation. This is the first repentance, repentance before justification.<sup>35</sup> It involves conviction of sin. Man attains knowledge of himself and accepts the overwhelming evidence of his sin and guilt. He becomes fully convinced that he deserves nothing but the wrath and eternal condemnation of God.<sup>36</sup> This state can also be described as incipient poverty of spirit.<sup>37</sup> Self-knowledge is accompanied by an inchoate humility, although this is not the true Christian humility, which springs from the sense of being loved by and reconciled with God.<sup>38</sup> In this state there is therefore a gradual development. Man can deepen his sense of repentance.<sup>39</sup> He sees more and more of "the evil tempers" which spring from original sin.<sup>40</sup>

This repentance is seen in its fruits. Repentance involves such "conviction of sin" that it produces "real desires and sincere resolutions of amendment."<sup>41</sup> Other fruits are that man forgives his brother, ceases to do what is evil and instead does what is good, employs the means of grace ordained by God, and generally obeys after the measure of grace he has received.<sup>42</sup> These fruits can also be described as an outward change of the whole form of life. Whereas in the natural state man might outwardly seem pious, now, in the light of his knowledge of sin, his earlier surface religion must appear execrable hypocrisy.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, the outward change which is a result of this repentance, springs from a penitent state of mind.<sup>44</sup>

From saving faith, justification and new birth ensue. And it is now that salvation in the strict sense begins. Justification and the New Birth are bestowed on man in a single instant. As we have seen above, justification constitutes "a relative change," the New Birth "a real change." The former involves liberation from the guilt of sin, the latter liberation from the inherent power of sin.

Thus justification, which together with the forgiveness of sins implies the acceptance by God conjoined with it, belongs to the objective side of salvation. It expresses the new relationship between man and God, in that man now enjoys God's favour instead of being subject to his wrath. On the other hand the New Birth involves the subjective operation of the Spirit in man, in that he is

freed from the power of sin while God's love flows into his heart. Thus it is accompanied by an inward change as well. Man begins to experience "inward religion."<sup>45</sup> The forgiveness of sins takes place simultaneously with the New Birth, but as we have seen they are logically distinguishable.<sup>46</sup>

The Christian life which now supervenes is often described by Wesley by analogy with natural and human life in general. He sees it as a gradual growth. Nevertheless, the actual supervention of the new life, and its maturity, is regarded as an instantaneous event. The frontier between death and life or -- to use one of Wesley's metaphors which covers the preparatory phase as well -- between embryonic existence and entry into the world, is crossed in a single moment.

Justification and new birth are also accompanied by assurance. This rests first and foremost on direct testimony by the Holy Spirit, through which man becomes aware of God's love for him and that He is now reconciled.<sup>47</sup> It rests also on indirect testimony, called the witness of man's own spirit. The latter is consciousness of possessing the fruits of the Spirit and the deduction that one is a child of God.<sup>48</sup> This latter testimony must be preceded by the former. That is to say: the consciousness imparted through the testimony of the Holy Spirit that God loves man is a necessary condition of man loving God. This latter love, moreover, is the source of all sanctity in heart and life, and such sanctity must exist before it is felt.<sup>49</sup>

Thus a gradual development, a progression in sanctification, is envisaged after the instantaneous supervention of justification and the New Birth. This development is regarded as analogous to that before justification and new birth. Just as repentance and faith were necessary to instill the Christian life, so another repentance and another faith are necessary to its retention and growth.<sup>50</sup> Repentance before justification is thus supplemented by repentance after justification. The latter is conditioned by the continued presence of sin in the Christian after new birth, although it is no longer supreme. Nature and grace, i. e., the flesh and the spirit, are still at war in him. His will is not fully subordinated to the will of God.<sup>51</sup> Like the earlier repentance, this one does not involve a change from sin to holiness, but it does involve man's knowledge of himself and his sinfulness. By this is meant awareness of remaining sin and of one's utter inability to do good on the basis of one's own resources or to deliver oneself by one's own strength from sin and guilt.<sup>52</sup> Unlike the earlier repentance, however, this consciousness of sin is accompanied by consciousness of acceptance by God. Although even the believer deserves only damnation, he is nevertheless redeemed from it because of the Atonement.<sup>53</sup> Therefore he has "no guilt, no sense of condemnation, no consciousness of the wrath of God."<sup>54</sup>

This repentance too is seen in its fruits. These are divided into two kinds: works of piety and works of mercy. Among the former are to be counted: public prayer, private prayer, and "praying in our closet," receiving the supper of our Lord, searching the Scriptures by hearing, reading, or meditating on the Word, and also "using such a measure of fasting or abstinence as our bodily health allows." The works of mercy manifest themselves in acts of love towards our neighbour, with regard both to his body and his soul.<sup>55</sup>

The knowledge of sin remaining after justification is necessary if man is to walk the path of sanctification. Without this knowledge there can be no repentance, and without it man cannot be fully sanctified.<sup>56</sup> Nor may man voluntarily neglect good works. If he does, he cannot expect ever to be fully sanctified. He cannot grow in grace, he cannot even retain the grace already accorded to

him.<sup>57</sup> Thus obedience is necessary to the development of the Christian life. If the new life is to persist and grow, activity on God's part must always be accompanied by activity on man's part. In its relation to entire sanctification this obedience in good works is seen principally as a kind of active waiting. "This is the way," we are told, "wherein God hath appointed His children to wait for complete salvation."<sup>58</sup>

Although this repentance and its fruits are considered necessary to entire sanctification, they are nevertheless not thought necessary to the same extent or in the same sense as faith. They are only "*conditionally*" and "*remotely*" necessary, whereas faith is "*immediately*" and "*directly*" necessary.<sup>59</sup> They have the same function in relation to faith as they had in the case of earlier repentance.<sup>60</sup> Whereas the faith by which man is justified, implies conviction of the work of atonement applied to himself<sup>61</sup>, the faith by which he partakes of complete sanctification implies conviction of God's promise and power to redeem him from all sin and perfect him in love, and of His power and willingness to do this without delay, to do it now<sup>62</sup>. To this is added the conviction that God actually does do it.<sup>63</sup>

After a gradual development in sanctification the Christian life will attain fruition in complete sanctification or Christian perfection. This is thought to supervene in a moment, bestowed on man by sanctifying faith. As compared with justification and new birth, complete sanctification constitutes a higher stage in the new life. When a Christian has been freed by the New Birth from the power of sin, he is freed from the root of sin as well by complete sanctification. Thus all sin is washed away.<sup>64</sup> There still remains, however, some imperfection, which is inseparable from human life.<sup>65</sup> This constitutes the negative definition of Christian perfection. In a positive sense -- and this is urged by Wesley as something more essential and characteristic than the negative attribute -- it means perfect love. This will manifest itself in works. Thus complete sanctification imbues both heart and life. It will be seen both in inward and in outward righteousness.

Just as man could be convinced of his justification, he can also be convinced of his entire sanctification. As in the former case there are again both a direct and an indirect testimony. He is convinced of his entire sanctification through the witness and through the fruits of the Spirit.<sup>66</sup> After the attainment of such perfection, which Wesley thinks may happen even in this life, he envisages further development. There is, he says, "no perfection of degrees."<sup>67</sup> There is no perfection "which does not admit of a continual increase." However far a Christian may advance in sanctification "he hath still need to 'grow in grace', and daily to advance in the knowledge and love of God His Saviour." The gradual development, then, still continues. It is conceived primarily as further growth in love on the plane of entire sanctification.<sup>68</sup> The Christian life must either wax or wane. It is impossible for the Christian, even if fully sanctified, to stand still. "Yea, and when ye have attained a measure of perfect love, when God has circumcised your hearts, and enabled you to love him with all your heart and with all your soul, think not of resting there. That is impossible. You cannot stand still; you must either rise or fall; rise higher or fall lower. Therefore the voice of God to the children of Israel, to the children of God, is, 'Go forward!' 'Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forward unto those that are before, press on to the mark, for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus!'"<sup>69</sup> The Christian, even the fully sanctified Christian, must still face the possibility of being lost. Thus even such a one must still be admonished to give up his attachment to the world.<sup>70</sup>

The goal of the whole process of salvation is the entire sanctification of man. This is the condition of

final justification or final salvation and glorification beyond the grave.<sup>71</sup> As compared with this "final justification," the earlier justification implies "present justification." The two are separated and occupy different positions in the order of salvation.

This scheme of the process of salvation underwent certain modifications. Wesley did not go on stressing assurance of pardon as a necessary mark of every Christian, as he had done at first<sup>72</sup>, though he still considered it "a common privilege of the children of God<sup>73</sup>." One reason for this is the clear distinction he drew between forgiveness and the assurance of it, maintaining that the former did not necessarily involve the latter<sup>74</sup>; another reason is that later he modified the sharp distinction between the state of man under the law, or in first repentance, and in a state of grace, to such an extent as to consider the individual in the former state a Christian. In later years we find him distinguishing between the children and the servants of God. Even he who is only a servant is regarded as accepted by God. In this case saving faith can only imply "such a divine conviction of God, and the things of God, as, even in its infant state, enables every one that possesses it to 'fear God and work righteousness'." Every such believer, although only a "servant," is yet "at that very moment, in a state of acceptance."<sup>75</sup> Yet he shall not stop here, but continue till he has the faith of a son.<sup>76</sup>

### III

#### *The Process of Salvation and Sanctification.*

The idea of a gradual advance in sanctification is thus a typical feature of Wesley's view of salvation. In fact the successive element is characteristic of all his thinking. There is nothing that cannot be expressed in terms of degrees and measures. This is particularly true of inherent sin and the inherent, real change. There are degrees both of good and of evil.<sup>77</sup> There are degrees of enmity to God<sup>78</sup>, just as there are degrees of self-denial<sup>79</sup>, sincerity<sup>80</sup>, peace<sup>81</sup>, joy<sup>82</sup>, and love<sup>83</sup>. Both inward and outward holiness of mind can be expressed in degrees.<sup>84</sup> There are also degrees of faith<sup>85</sup> and of assurance of justifying faith<sup>86</sup> as well as an infinite number of degrees in the contemplation of God<sup>87</sup>. And even God's vengeance and displeasure can be counted in degrees.<sup>88</sup> There are also degrees in the favour of God.<sup>89</sup> The idea of a gradual progression in sanctification extends beyond the boundaries of the life on earth. Wesley imagines a development towards ever greater perfection even after death.<sup>90</sup>

In the process of salvation this idea of gradual development is combined with an instantaneous element. It is seen in the notion -- clearly influenced by Moravianism -- of the sudden supervention of justification and new birth, and in the higher though analogous experience of full sanctification. The gradual process is interrupted, that is, by the direct intervention of God, which in a single instant raises man to a higher plane. It is this combination of the gradual and the instantaneous that particularly distinguishes Wesley's conception of the process of salvation. Visually, it takes the form of an ascent by steps. If we include the preparations for the Christian life and its perfection after death, the process comprises the following stages, each on a separate plane: first repentance or conviction, justification (including the New Birth), sanctification (here in the sense of entire sanctification or Christian perfection), and glorification.

The same conception of salvation as an ascent by steps was applied to the organization of the

Methodist societies. They were organized in classes and bands<sup>91</sup>; there were also select bands or societies<sup>92</sup>. The members belonged to one or the other of these according to their spiritual state and experience. The first category contained those who "earnestly desired to avoid the wrath to come," the two latter the regenerate or fully sanctified. The categories corresponded to the stages in the process of salvation: first repentance (repentance before justification), justification, and entire sanctification.

We see that Wesley gives the order of salvation the form of a process aiming at the perfection of man. With this teleological aim his conception of salvation must obviously be determined principally by the idea of sanctification.

If we turn now to his view of the means of grace, we shall again see that the emphasis is laid on sanctification. The means of grace are regarded as the usual channels by which God accords to man His prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace.<sup>93</sup> Wesley is insistent that the means of grace should be used<sup>94</sup>, but at the same time he is careful to warn against their misuse. They are means and must not be turned into ends. As means they must be vigorously subordinated to their ends, the chief of which is the ethical change of man. The function of the means of grace is to "advance inward holiness<sup>95</sup>," to "conduce to the knowledge and love of God<sup>96</sup>." They are ordained "not for their own sake, but in order to the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness."<sup>97</sup> The stress is put on sanctification, not on *favor Dei* and forgiveness. Grace is here seen primarily as a *gratia infusa*, which effects a real, inherent change in the human soul. It is not the idea of solace, but the idea of power that moulds Wesley's conception of grace.

In the order of salvation sanctification has its place between justification and final salvation, It turns the Christian life into a process of change. As opposed to the relative change of justification, sanctification, as we have seen<sup>98</sup>, implies a real change. It comprises not merely the beginning of this change in the New Birth but also the subsequent development and complete sanctification. It comprises the whole process of recovery, the object of which is to restore man to the image of God.<sup>99</sup> This is the widest but also the most proper use of the word sanctification. It is also the one that corresponds best to Wesley's idea of the factual significance of sanctification. Yet although the New Birth is regarded as a part of sanctification, the latter word is frequently used to denote specifically the later gradual development.<sup>100</sup> Wesley also uses the word in an even narrower sense to denote full sanctification alone. The difference between justification and sanctification is thus not that between a relative and a real change, but between two stages or levels in the Christian life. Here justification includes the New Birth as well as forgiveness. It denotes the instantaneous ascent to a higher plane<sup>101</sup>, and the condition which then ensues<sup>102</sup>.

Sanctification in Wesley has often been restricted to this latter notion of entire sanctification, with the result that an incomplete and distorted view of its importance in his theology has obtained. Sanctification has been limited to the instantaneous experience of "the second blessing." The fact that it also comprises a gradual development of the Christian life has not been realized.<sup>103</sup> The mistake has also meant that the importance of obedience and works in sanctification has been overlooked<sup>104</sup>; as we have seen these have their place in the gradual process. The gradual and the instantaneous effects of sanctification are closely associated in Wesley. The hope of entire sanctification, far from impeding the gradual development of the Christian life, he sees as particularly important in promoting it.<sup>105</sup>

We have now established the relation of sanctification to the whole order of salvation. In doing so we have found that light has been thrown not only on the structure of sanctification but also on the connection between justification and sanctification, which we have now found to be in fact dual. Sanctification has its place between present justification or present salvation on the one hand and final justification or final salvation on the other. In the former relation justification is not a condition of sanctification. Present justification is accorded to man by a faith which does not involve any form of human holiness. In the latter relation, however, sanctification is a condition of justification, of final justification at the last judgement. It is only through sanctification that man becomes qualified for final salvation and glorification. [106](#)

The consequence of such a placing of sanctification in the order of salvation is obvious. Since sanctification is not a condition of present justification it is regarded as a result of faith. In that case the stress is laid upon faith as the ground of salvation. Sanctification is nevertheless necessary, for faith must always be active through love. Further, it is also a condition of salvation in so far as the love and obedience which derive from faith are necessary to the preservation and growth of faith. But as sanctification is considered necessary to final justification it acquires another basic meaning. Incorporated in a process of salvation aiming at the sanctity which is a necessary qualification for eternal life, it is clear that sanctification must become the dominant component in salvation.

---

## FOOTNOTES

1 Minutes 1746, W., VIII, p. 290.

2 Salvation by Faith, 1738, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, pp. 41-45; The Scripture Way of Salvation, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 11, pp. 445-448.

3 A Farther Appeal, 1745, W., VIII, p. 47: "By salvation I mean, not barely, according to the vulgar notion, deliverance from hell, or going to heaven; but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity; a recovery of the divine nature; the renewal of our souls after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and truth. This implies all holy and heavenly tempers, and, by consequence, all holiness of conversation."

4 The Scripture Way of Salvation, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 445 ff.; the sermon Working Out Our Own Salvation, 1788, W., VI, p. 509.

5 The sermon On Predestination, 1788, W., VI, p. 226 f.

6 The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained, 1746, W., VIII, p. 430. See also A Farther Appeal, 1745, W., VIII, p. 48 f.; The Marks of the New Birth, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 283.

7 A Treatise on Baptism, published 1758, W., X, p. 191.

8 *Ib.*, p. 190 f.

9 *ib.*, p. 190. Apparently an unreconciled opposition is here seen in Wesley's thinking, on the one hand man is already at birth freed from the punishment of inbred sin by the Atonement (see above p. 30), on the other hand he is not so freed until baptism.

10 *ib.*, p. 191 f.

11 *ib.*, p. 191.

12 *The New Birth*, 1760, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 238.

13 *The Marks of the New Birth*, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 296 f. Cf. *A Farther Appeal*, 1745, W, VIII, p. 48 f. It is true that also Orthodox theologians say that man can lose the grace of new birth in baptism, but they maintain that a certain baptismal effect remains. See RYDHOLM (*Läran om nådens ordning i lutherska kyrkan*, pp. 66 f., 89 f.), who points out the differences between Lutheran Orthodoxy and Pietism. On the development of "the order of grace" in Lutheran Orthodoxy and Pietism, see further HÖK, *I vad mån tillvaratar "Nåden ordning" det specifikt lutherska i vAr tro?* SvTKv, 1944, p. 177 ff.

14 *The Means of Grace*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 259 f. See below, p. 122.

15 *The New Birth*, 1760, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 238: "A man may possibly be 'born of water', and yet not be 'born of the Spirit'. There may sometimes be the outward sign, where there is not the inward grace. I do not now speak with regard to infants: it is certain our Church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole Office for the Baptism of Infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants. For neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in a person of riper years. But whatever be the case with infants, it is sure all of riper years who are baptized are not at the same time born again. 'The tree is known by its fruits.'"

16 *ib.*, p. 238 f.

17 Wesley made certain changes in his 1784 abridgement of the Thirty-nine Articles. The instrumental formulation in the Article on baptism is removed, and in the Article on the sacraments the expression "certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace" is shortened to "certain signs of grace." See Corp. Conf., *Die Kirche von England*, pp. 390, 392. Cf. Corp. Conf., *Die Bischöfliche Methodistenkirche*, p. 14.

In other respects Wesley shares the view of the sacraments expressed in the Thirty-nine Articles. The Article on the Eucharist is accepted verbatim. He puts great stress on the Eucharist, considering it a real means of grace. See *The Means of Grace*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 252 f. Sometimes he is markedly sacramental; particularly in the extract from Dr. BREVINT's *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice* prefaced to *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, 1745 (*The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, III, p. 194 ff.). Cf. Hymn XXVIII, *ib.*, p. 236.

18 See the order for infant baptism in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, 1784. COOKE'S text, in his *History of the Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, pp. 192 f., 196. This revision of the Anglican ritual, like the changes mentioned above in the articles of religion, shows clearly that Wesley repudiated the contention that the act of baptism in itself constituted new birth. Nevertheless, these alterations do not mean, as SUGDEN (*The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 282) and v. EICKEN (*Rechtfertigung und Heiligung bei Wesley*, p. 43) seem to think, that he had rejected the tenet that in baptism the child is re-born. He undoubtedly retained this belief. And this attitude is an outcome of the orthodox line in his

conception of sin.

19 He altered the title of Article XVI in the Thirty-nine Articles, "Of Sin after Baptism" to "Of Sin after Justification." WHEELER thinks that this and the change in the Article on the sacraments prove that Wesley denied the doctrine of 'baptismal regeneration' (History and Exposition of the Twenty-five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, pp. 28 f., 301 ff.) Wheeler is correct only in so far as Wesley does not identify baptism and regeneration.

20 See Wesley's summary in this sermon, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 194.

21 *Ib.*, p. 196.

22 *Ib.*, p. 196.

23 *Ib.*, p. 189 ff. Cf. Notes, 1755, Rom. vii. 7. In the eighth chapter, Wesley says, the apostle is primarily describing the state of believers. Rom. viii. 4.

24 See *The Means of Grace*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 257; *The Sermon on the Mount*: I, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, pp. 321, 323 ff.

25 Cf. above, p. 94.

26 Against Molther Wesley maintains: "There are degrees in faith, and that a man may have some degree of it before all things in him become new -- before he has the full assurance of faith, the abiding witness of the Spirit, or the clear perception that Christ dwelleth in him." Accordingly he also believes that "there is a degree of justifying faith (and consequently a state of justification) short of, and commonly antecedent to, this." *Journal*, 31 Dec. 1739, *The Journal of John Wesley* II, p. 329.

Even those who have not yet "received the Holy Ghost," and are not "believers in the full sense," he further maintained against the Moravians, ought to communicate. He considered the Lord's Supper a "means of conveying to man, either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace." It was ordained for "all those who know and feel that they want his grace, either to restrain them from sin, or to show their sins forgiven, or to renew their souls in the image of God." *A Short View of the Difference between the Moravian Brethren ... and the Reverend Mr. John and Charles Wesley*, see. ed. 1748, p. 12 f.

27 For instance, when we are told that in the evangelical state man loves God. Later, in expounding the stages of the Christian life and distinguishing between "babe in Christ" and "father in Christ," he says that the former has "Love and Fear" and the latter "Love without Fear." Notes, 1755, I. John iv. 18. The further statement that the believer does not sin must be limited to apply to the regenerate only. Residual sin is still present even in the believer. See in particular the sermon *On Sin in Believers*, 1763, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 361 ff.

28 This is easily forgotten. The early sermons, *The Almost Christian*, *Circumcision of the Heart*, and *The Witness of our own Spirit*, are quoted to show that the justified man is thought to be entirely freed from sin, and it is maintained that Wesley corrected this view in his later sermons *On Sin in Believers* and *The Repentance of Believers*. See SUGDEN, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 148; LEE, *John Wesley and Modern Religion*, p. 182 ff.

The idea of the gradual development of the Christian life and the distinction between the condition of the

regenerate and that of the entirely sanctified is not altogether absent even in the first period after 1738. In the sermon on Salvation by Faith (1738) we are told that the regenerate shall grow into " 'a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' " (The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 45). See also the preface to Hymns and Sacred Poems (1740): "*But we do not know a single instance, in any place, of a persons's receiving, in one and the same moment, remission of sins, the abiding witness of the spirit, and a new, a clean heart.*" (The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley, I, p. 202.) Here a distinction is certainly made between new birth and entire sanctification. See also the Journal for 24 June 1740 (The Journal of John Wesley, II, p. 359); here it is quite clear that Wesley does not regard the justified man to be entirely sanctified. The notion that every believer is without sin he finds is a quite new idea deriving from Zinzendorf (On Sin in Believers, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 369). Such a statement would be inexplicable if Wesley himself in an earlier period had made no distinction between the regenerate and the fully sanctified.

29 Christian Perfection, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 156 f. He refers to I. John ii. 12 ff.; Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, quoted from A Plain Account, W., XI, p. 421; letter 16 March 1771, The Letters of John Wesley, V, p. 229.

30 In a survey of the attitude of the apostle in the Epistle to the Romans, Notes, 1755, Rom. vi. 18.

31 The sermon On Predestination, 1788, W., VI, p. 229. In this summary vocation is omitted, although it is included in accordance with the text (Rom. viii. 29, 30) in the exegesis. See p. 288. In this text, Wesley says, the apostle is not describing "a chain of causes and effects," but "*the method in which God works; the order in which the several branches of salvation constantly follow each other,*" p. 226. Cf. the commentary on the text of this sermon in Notes, 1755, Rom. viii. 29 f. The apostle's statement here that God foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, glorified, does not mean, Wesley maintains, that a believer cannot fall out of grace. "He does not deny, That a Believer may fall away and be cut off, between his special Calling and his Glorification, ch. xi. 22. Neither does he deny, That many are called, who never are justified. He only affirms, That this is the Method whereby God leads us Step by Step toward Heaven."

32 The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 445 ff.

33 The Scripture Way of Salvation, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 445.

34 The sermon On Working Out Our Own Salvation, 1788, W., VI, p. 509.

35 Cf. above, p. 93 ff.

36 The Way to the Kingdom, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 157.

37 The Sermon on the Mount: I, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 323.

38 *Ib.*, p. 323, 328.

39 See A Farther Appeal, 1745, W., VIII, p. 203.

40 The Sermon on the Mount: I, 1748, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 323. Cf. letter 21 June, 1784, The Letters of John Wesley VII, p. 222.

41 A Farther Appeal, 1745, W., VIII, p. 47.

42 *Ib.*, p. 47. Cf. *The Way to the Kingdom*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, p. 159; *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 451.

43 *Ib.*, p. 203.

44 *Ib.*, p. 203. Of those who have experienced this outward change of the first repentance Wesley writes: "The drunkard commenced sober and temperate; the whoremonger abstained from adultery and fornication; the unjust from oppression and wrong. He that had been accustomed to curse and swear for many years, now swore no more. The sluggard began to work with his hands, that he might eat his own bread. The miser learned to deal his bread to the hungry, and to cover the naked with a garment. Indeed, the whole form of their life was changed: They had 'left off doing evil, and learned to do well.'" *A Farther Appeal*, 1745, W., VIII, p. 203.

45 *A Farther Appeal*, 1745, W. VIII, p. 203 f.; the sermon *On God's Vineyard*, 1788 W. VII, p. 205.

46 See above, p. 85 f.

47 Wesley maintains strongly that there is such a direct testimony distinguished from the fruit. To ground the assurance only on the fruit is to go back to justification by works. Letter, 3 April 1766, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 8.

48 *The Witness of the Spirit*, I, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, pp. 207, 210; *The Witness of the Spirit*, II, 1767, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 345 f.

49 *Ib.*, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 208; II, p. 349 f.

50 *The Repentance of Believers*, written in 1767, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 380.

51 *On Sin in Believers*, 1763, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, pp. 372 f., 375 f., 377 f.

52 *The Repentance of Believers*, written in 1767, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, pp. 380 f., 388 f.; Cf. *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 453 ff.

53 *Ib.*, p. 389.

54 *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 454.

55 *Ib.*, p. 455 f.

56 *Ib.*, p. 456: "There is no place for repentance in him who believes there is no sin either in his life or heart: consequently, there is no place for his being perfected in love, to which that repentance is indispensably necessary."

57 *Ib.*, p. 453 f.: "It is incumbent on all that are justified to be zealous of good works. And these are so necessary, that if a man willingly neglect them, he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified; he cannot grow in grace, in the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus; nay, he cannot retain the

grace he has received; he cannot continue in faith, or in the favour of God."

58 *ib.*, p. 456.

59 *ib.*, p. 456 f.

60 See above, p. 95 f.

61 *ib.*, p. 449.

62 *ib.*, p. 457 f. Cf. *The Repentance of Believers*, 1767, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 391 ff.

63 *ib.*, p. 458.

64 See the sermon *On Working Out Our Own Salvation*, 1788, *W.*, VI, p. 509.

65 See further the chapter on Christian perfection below.

66 *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1763, quoted from *A Plain Account*, *W.*, XI, pp. 420, 422.

67 *Christian Perfection*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 156.

68 *On Working Out Our Own Salvation*, 1788, *W.*, VI, p. 509.

69 The sermon *On Faith*, 1788, *W.*, VII, p. 202.

70 *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1763, quoted from *A Plain Account*, *W.*, XI, p. 422.

71 See *A Farther Appeal*, 1745, *W.*, VIII, p. 68; the sermon *On the Wedding Garment*, dat. 1790, *W.*, VII, p. 316 f.

72 *Minutes 1745* (*W.*, VIII, p. 282) like *Minutes 1747* (*W.*, VIII, p. 293) find, however, that there "may be exempt cases."

73 Letter, 31 July 1747, *The Letters of John Wesley*, II, p. 108 f.: "Because, if justifying faith *necessarily* implies such an explicit sense of pardon, then every one who has it not, and every one so long as he has it, is under the wrath and under the curse of God. But this is a supposition contrary to Scripture as well as to experience ...

"Again, the assertion that justifying faith is a sense of pardon in contrary to *reason*; it is flatly *absurd*. For how can a *sense of our having received pardon* be the *condition* of our receiving it?" In a letter c. 1790 he wrote: "When fifty years ago my brother Charles and I, in the simplicity of our hearts, told the good people of England that unless they *knew* their sins were forgiven, they were under the wrath and curse of God, I marvel, Melville, they did not stone us! The Methodists, I hope, know better now; we preach assurance as we always did, as a common privilege of the children of God; but we do not enforce it, under the pain of damnation, denounced on all who enjoy it not." Quoted from SUGDEN, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 82. Cf. KNOX, *Remarks*, p. 502 (in SOUTHEY, *Life of Wesley*, II). See Sugden's commentary, *ib.*, p. 81 f.

74 See the preceding note.

75 The sermon On Faith, 1788, W., VII, p. 199. Cf. sermon The Discoveries of Faith, dated 1788, W., VII, p. 236: "Whoever has attained this, the faith of a servant, 'feareth God, and worketh righteousness'. In consequence of which he is, in a degree, as the Apostle observes, 'accepted with Him'."

76 Sermon The Discoveries of Faith, 1788, W., VII, p. 236: "Exhort him to press on, by all possible means, till he passes 'from faith to faith'; from the faith of a *servant* to the faith of a *son*; from the spirit of bondage unto fear, to the spirit of childlike love: He will then have 'Christ revealed in his heart', enabling him to testify, 'The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*', -- the proper voice of a child of God."

77 An Answer to The Rev. Mr. Church, 1745, W., VIII, p. 387.

78 Notes, 1755, Col. i. 21.

79 The sermon On Obedience to Pastors, 1788, W., VII, p. 115.

80 *ib.*, p. 114.

81 A Farther Appeal, 1745, W., VIII, p. 107; Sermon on the Death of Mr. Fletcher, delivered 1785, W., VII, p. 433.

82 A Farther Appeal, 1745, W., VIII, p. 107.

83 *ib.*, p. 107, 111. Cf. the sermon On Family Religion, 1788, W., VII, p. 78, in which Wesley says that there are a "thousand degrees" in love.

84 Minutes 1746, W., VIII, p. 290.

85 "Babes in Christ" are thus "believers in a low degree." The First-fruits of the Spirit, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 170.

86 An Answer to The Rev. Mr. Church, 1745, W., VIII, p. 393.

87 "But we allow there may be infinite degrees in seeing God: Even as many as there are between him who sees the sun when it shines on his eye-lids closed, and him who stands with his eyes wide open in the full blaze of his beams." Minutes 1745, W., VIII, p. 282.

88 Advice to an Englishman, 1745, W., XI, p. 184.

89 Preface to A Treatise on Justification, 1765, W., X, p. 320; Cf. the sermon On Charity, 1788, W., VII, p. 50.

90 This development is imagined as everlasting. We read, for instance, in Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, quoted from A Plain Account, W., XI, p. 426: "'Q. 29. Can those who are perfect grow in grace?' 'A. Undoubtedly they can; and that not only while they are in the body, but to all eternity.'" Later,

however, the development is confined to the intermediate state when the believer is in paradise. See the sermon *Of Hell*, 1788, W., VI, p. 384: "But as happy as the souls in paradise are, they are preparing for far greater happiness. For paradise is only the porch of heaven; and it is there the spirits of just men are made perfect. It is in heaven only that there is the fulness of joy; the pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore."

91 See *Rules of the Band-societies*, drawn up 1738; *Directions Given to the Band-societies*, 1744, W., VIII, p. 272 ff.; *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, 1749, W., VIII, p. 257 ff.; *Thoughts upon Methodism*, dat. 1786, W., XIII, p. 259 f.

92 See *Thoughts upon Methodism*, dated 1786, W., XIII, p. 260. Cf. letters, 26 August 1770, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 198; 1 June 1782, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VII, p. 158; 4 July 1787, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VII, p. 392; 12 Jan. 1791, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 254 f.

93 *The Means of Grace*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 242.

94 See *ib.*, p. 245 ff.

95 *ib.*, p. 241.

96 *ib.*, p. 243.

97 *ib.*, p. 260.

98 See above, p. 84 ff.

99 For instance in *The Scripture Way of -Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 445 ff.; the sermon *On Working Out Our Own Salvation*, 1788, W., VI p. 509.

100 See *The New Birth*, 1760, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 240.

101 Letter, 21 June 1784, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VII, p. 222: "A gradual work of grace constantly precedes the instantaneous work both of justification and sanctification. But the work itself (of sanctification as well as justification) is undoubtedly instantaneous. As after a gradual conviction of the guilt and power of sin you was justified in a moment, so after a gradually increasing conviction of inbred sin you will be sanctified in a moment."

102 Letter, 19 January 1782, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VII, p. 103.

103 Wesley holds that sanctification is both "instantaneous" and "gradual." See in particular *The Large Minutes*, W., VIII, p. 328 f.

104 Especially by FLEISCH, *Zur Geschichte der Heiligungsbewegung*, I, p. 42.

105 *ib.*, p. 329: "And are there not reasons why we should insist on the instantaneous also? If there be such a blessed change before death, should we not encourage all believers to expect it? and the rather, because constant experience shows, the more earnestly they expect this, the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their soul; the more watchful they are against all sin, the more careful to grow

in grace, the more zealous of good works, and the more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God. Whereas, just the contrary effects are observed whenever this expectation ceases. They are 'saved by hope', by this hope of a total change, with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that salvation stands still, or, rather, decreases daily. Therefore whoever would advance the gradual change in believers should strongly insist on the instantaneous."

106 The sermon On the Wedding Garment, dat. 1790, W., VII, pp. 314, 316 f.

# Wesley and Sanctification

by

**Harald Lindström**

---

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

#### I

#### *The Importance and General Significance of the Doctrine.*

The importance of the idea of perfection to Wesley is indicated by his frequent mention of it: in his sermons and other writings, in his journals and letters, and in the hymn books he published with his brother Charles. He never abandoned the general position with regard to Christian perfection which derives from his introduction to practical mysticism in 1725 and was then first expressed; it is a continuous theme in his sermons and books. The year before his death he says of it: "This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up."<sup>1</sup>

This, however, is not in itself enough to prove that the idea was a necessary, integral part of his view of salvation. It might still be a feature at variance with his basic outlook or but artificially and loosely juxtaposed. Yet such is not the case. If we consider his view of the process of salvation, discussed in the previous chapter, we see that the connection between the idea of Christian perfection and his whole conception of sanctification and salvation is an inner and essential one. As being synonymous with entire sanctification Christian perfection is incorporated as one of the stages in the process of salvation. It is a higher plane in the Christian life and the condition for final justification and glorification. This fixes its place in his outlook and its general meaning. If the Christian life is regarded as a process towards the goal of perfection, the idea of perfection will be seen as a typical expression of the teleological alignment of his view of salvation. It is here that the ultimate consequences of his idea of sanctification find expression.

This is also seen in the various terms he uses to describe perfection. Following the general Christian tradition, grounded on the biblical conception of perfection (τελειότης), he employs the expression 'Christian perfection'. This is the commonest term but others are also used. For instance, the words 'second blessing'<sup>2</sup> or 'second change'<sup>3</sup> can be used as a direct designation of Christian perfection as a second or higher stage in the Christian life as compared with new birth. Or the terms 'full salvation'<sup>4</sup> or 'entire sanctification'<sup>5</sup> are resorted to, bringing out with special force its character as the maturing and goal of the Christian life. In actual fact, of course, he distinguishes between sanctification and entire sanctification, but his terminology is inconsistent. In his *Minutes* for 1747 he himself points out the distinction. St. Paul used the term 'sanctified' of all who were justified, all

true believers, and therefore, Wesley thinks, it ought not to be used of those who are saved from all sin without the addition of the qualifications 'wholly' or 'entirely'.<sup>6</sup> It is true that in practice he did not always observe the distinction, but he did in principle. Thus, and particularly in later years, 'sanctification' alone often designates Christian perfection.<sup>7</sup> With reference to its essence, it is called perfect love<sup>8</sup> or pure love<sup>9</sup>.

It was, as we have said, in 1725, under the influence of practical mysticism, that Wesley first became preoccupied with Christian perfection. On this point as in his outlook as a whole he believed himself to be at one with Anglican doctrine. He pointed to the longing for perfection and the general expression of it in the liturgy of the Church of England.<sup>10</sup> It is true that he was following the Arminian spirit of the liturgical tradition; but his view of perfection was not identical with that represented by the Thirty-nine Articles<sup>11</sup>, which reflect the Calvinistic conception<sup>12</sup>.

A preliminary general idea of Wesley's doctrine of perfection is perhaps best obtained from the angle of its relation to a practical mysticism of the type of Thomas à Kempis, and such Anglican High Churchmen as Jeremy Taylor, or William Law, who favoured the Arminian tendency in the Church. Wesley considered himself that his idea of perfection had not changed since its formulation in 1725.<sup>13</sup> At the end of his life he recorded his appreciation of the idea of sanctification in such a representative of the Roman Catholic devotional spirit as François de Sales.<sup>14</sup> Did the new Reformed outlook of 1738 have no effect, then, on his doctrine of perfection?

As in practical mysticism, Christian perfection became an essential theme in Wesley. This perfection, however, was not confined to any particular class of persons: it applied to all men. Here Wesley is in agreement with William Law, who shared this Reformed view.<sup>15</sup> The pull towards monastic piety, however, is also seen in Law<sup>16</sup>, and to a still greater extent in Taylor<sup>17</sup>. As in practical mysticism this perfection was conceived as an inherent ethical change in man and the Christian life represented as a progressive development towards it.<sup>18</sup> Such perfecting was the purpose of religion.<sup>19</sup> With Wesley as with the mystics everything was directed towards a change which would qualify man for glorification. In this general position just as in the teleological alignment of his theology, Wesley, after as well as before 1738, agrees with practical mysticism.

But the resemblance is still more pronounced. We find his definitions of perfection before and after 1738 are in some respects identical. At first he describes it as a surrender to God and obedience to Him: an inward obedience of the heart and an outward obedience of word and act. It is characterized by the fact that man is actuated by a single motive. It is also described as perfect inward and outward conformity with Christ, as a circumcision of the heart, involving purification from sin, an entire renewal of the spirit. Above all it is seen in love to God and our neighbour, the love of a whole and undivided heart.<sup>20</sup>

The three points of view which determined Wesley's description of Christian perfection are reflections of the view which appears in à Kempis, Taylor and Law. As in à Kempis we find tendencies typical of the Catholic tradition in Taylor and Law, especially in the ideal of *Imitatio Christi* and the idea of intention.<sup>21</sup> Perfection in Wesley was given the primary meanings of purity of intention<sup>22</sup>, the imitation of Christ<sup>23</sup>, and love to God and our neighbour<sup>24</sup>. Even after 1738 these are still characteristic features. Purity of intention or "a single eye," for instance, is still the mark of perfection.<sup>25</sup> The eye of the perfect man is turned to God alone, whom he loves. God is the absolute

master of his soul. All the motions of his heart are in full harmony with God's will.<sup>26</sup> His one intention is to live all the time to please<sup>27</sup> and honour<sup>28</sup> God. And this love of God is accompanied by obedience to all His commandments.<sup>29</sup>

Perfection is also still defined as the imitation of Christ. This meant possessing the temper of Christ and living as He lived, an inward and outward conformity with the will of God.<sup>30</sup> But the essence of Christian perfection he took to be love to God and our neighbour.<sup>31</sup> Against the hermitic ideal of the mystics, however, he held that human fellowship was an attribute of holiness<sup>32</sup>; and against Quietist mysticism he maintained that love of our neighbour was inseparable from love to God<sup>33</sup>. Love must be expressed in actions.<sup>34</sup> Thus, at variance with exclusively contemplative, but in agreement with practical, mysticism, Wesley contends that both inward and outward holiness are necessary.

Positively, then, perfection is firstly perfect love. Negatively it is perfect deliverance from sin. The heart is purified of all sin.<sup>35</sup> This means deliverance from "inward as well as from outward sin."<sup>36</sup> The perfect man is delivered from evil thoughts and evil tempers.<sup>37</sup> Perfect love to God "implies, that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions, are governed by pure love."<sup>38</sup> This love is accompanied by a pure heart<sup>39</sup> and liberation from all sin<sup>40</sup>.

In connection with this preliminary description of perfection reference might also be made to two epitomes by Wesley of his doctrine of perfection. The affinity to mysticism is particularly apparent in *A Plain Account on Christian Perfection* (1766). Purity of intention, the imitation of Christ, and whole-hearted love of God and our neighbour, are here specified as the factors determining perfection. "In one view," he writes, "it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, all inward as well as outward pollution. It is a renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of Him that created it. In yet another, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves."<sup>41</sup> In his sermon *On Perfection* (1788) it is defined in the following terms. It means: 1. To love God with all one's heart and one's neighbour as oneself; 2. The mind that is in Christ; 3. The fruits of the Spirit (in accordance with Gal. v.) unified; 4. The image of God, a recovery of man to the moral image of God, which consists of "righteousness and true holiness"; 5. Inward and outward righteousness, sanctity of life issuing from sanctity of heart; 6. God's sanctifying of man in spirit, soul, and body; 7. Man's own perfect consecration to God; 8. A continuous presentation through Jesus of man's thoughts and words and actions as a sacrifice to God of praise and thanksgiving; 9. Salvation from all sin.<sup>42</sup>

We see that the affinity between Wesley and practical mysticism is indeed close. To this extent his idea of perfection can be said to follow a consistent course. To this extent 1738 did not lead to deviation. Yet his doctrine of perfection was not identical with that of practical mysticism. The new outlook of 1738 did in fact occasion considerable differences.

For Law true perfection was an unattainable ideal, although a goal for human effort. The perfection possible on earth was nothing but gradual development in sanctification. Fundamental in this

perfection was "the inward Piety of the Heart and Mind."<sup>43</sup> It was synonymous with inherent personal holiness, and in this there were many degrees.<sup>44</sup> Life on earth was but "a *State of Repentance and Sorrow* for Sin."<sup>45</sup> During it man was "in a state of Probation<sup>46</sup>," and should live with the care required of a penitent sinner. His state of repentance involved a state of mortification.<sup>47</sup> The Christian life was one of moral effort and self-denial.

Up to 1738 Wesley was in full agreement with this attitude. Holiness was described as "a state of repentance and imperfection, but yet of sincerity of heart and diligent endeavour."<sup>48</sup> The Christian was called to live in singleness of heart, perfect self-renunciation, and sufferings.<sup>49</sup> Perfection was the goal of man's effort but could not be realized in this life. It was only in death that man was liberated from his sinful nature.<sup>50</sup> With the new vision of 1738, however, perfection came to be regarded as something that could and should be realized in this life.<sup>51</sup> It was now considered a gift of God and a work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>52</sup> Wesley's new view of grace had its repercussions on his doctrine of perfection as well as on his doctrine of justification. Man was justified by faith and by faith he would be fully sanctified too.<sup>53</sup> He explained the fact that perfect sanctification was not ordinarily accorded to the Christian until shortly before death<sup>54</sup> by pointing out that it was not expected earlier and therefore not prayed for in faith<sup>55</sup>.

Since the work of perfection is seen as a work of God bestowed on man through sanctifying faith it is also thought to be instantaneous; the latter being a consequence of the former. Because this entire sanctification occurs through faith and amounts to a powerful act of intervention by God Himself, it is regarded as an instantaneous work.<sup>56</sup> The instantaneous quality was motivated by the view of grace. Whereas in his view of sanctification as a gradual process Wesley is at one with practical mysticism, he diverges from it in his doctrine of perfection.

As we have already seen he made this entire sanctification one of the stages in the process of the Christian life. It became another and higher stage after new birth. A gradual and an instantaneous work were conjoined in the order of salvation. New birth, which took place instantaneously, was followed by a gradual sanctification preceding the instantaneous event of entire sanctification. A subsequent continued gradual development was thought to follow this. Whereas gradual sanctification was due to God's grace and man's obedience to it, instantaneous sanctification was considered exclusively God's own work. In this way he distinguished between gradual, and instantaneous sanctification, but to some extent the latter was nevertheless made dependent on the former. Man could not expect entire sanctification unless he had already undergone the previous gradual work of sanctification. Man, he considered, could not acquire the faith through which entire sanctification was bestowed unless he had sought it in obedience to the commandments and ordinances of God.<sup>57</sup> Thus man's activity in the preceding sanctification was linked up with a certain passivity in receiving the grace of perfection. Yet even in the work of perfection man would not be altogether passive. For it meant a total consecration or surrender by man of his whole heart to God.<sup>58</sup> This was made possible by the sanctifying grace accorded to him by God.<sup>59</sup> The connection between gradual and instantaneous sanctification is also seen in the way the hope of perfection is the motive for the gradual development.<sup>60</sup>

This modification of the idea of perfection, obviously the result of the influence of his conception of grace, did not mean, however, that perfection ceased to be a requirement. But just as the law in general was regarded by Wesley as simultaneously a gospel too, so perfection was seen

simultaneously both as a requirement and as a promise. Indeed he regarded all God's demands and commandments as at the same time promises. God gives what he commands. Wesley pointed out that a greater measure of the Holy Spirit is accorded under the Christian than under the Jewish dispensation. The Christian's possibilities of salvation are quite other than those under the Jewish dispensation. It was only after the glorification of Jesus Christ that the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit was accorded to true believers in full measure.<sup>61</sup> Wesley found support for his doctrine of perfection in Christian experience as well as in the Scriptures.<sup>62</sup>

Thus his doctrine of perfection was not quite in conformity with the outlook of practical mysticism. The line of 1725 was crossed by another dating from 1738. But neither did his doctrine of perfection agree with the view of the Reformation. To Wesley perfection was an attainable and higher stage in the Christian life after forgiveness and new birth. To Luther on the other hand forgiveness, which at the same time meant the transformation of man, was in itself the highest expression of the Christian life. He saw the ethical change of man's will as an incomplete beginning.<sup>63</sup> Morally, that is, the believer was never perfect in this life; though he could be entirely righteous in the sense that he had received forgiveness in faith and been delivered from the sentence and punishment of sin.<sup>64</sup> To the Reformers perfection was perfection in faith<sup>65</sup>, but to Wesley it was an inherent ethical perfection in love and obedience. In his *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* Melancthon sees sanctification as fulfilment of the law.<sup>66</sup> In this sanctification, made possible by faith, man will progress, though he will remain imperfect in this life.<sup>67</sup> Evangelical perfection involves growth in the fear of God, in reliance on the mercy promised in Christ, and in loyal obedience in the call.<sup>68</sup> Both Calvin and Luther thought inherent ethical perfection came only with death<sup>69</sup>, Wesley that entire sanctification could be realized during life on earth.

Wesley also disagreed with Zinzendorf. Their conversation on 3 September 1741 in Gray's Inn Gardens<sup>70</sup> throws some light on the difference between them:

Zinzendorf: I acknowledge no inherent Perfection. Christ is our only Perfection.

Wesley: I believe, the Spirit of Christ works Christian Perfection in true Christians.

Zinzendorf: By no means. All our Perfection is in Christ. Faith in the Blood of Christ, is the only Christian Perfection. The whole Christian Perfection is *imputed*, not *inherent*. We are perfect *in* Christ. We are never perfect *in ourselves*.

Wesley: Is not then every True Believer Holy?

Zinzendorf: Certainly. But he is Holy *in* Christ, not *in himself*.

Wesley: But are not his Heart and Life Holy?

Zinzendorf: Undoubtedly.

Wesley: Is he not, by Consequence, Holy *in Himself*?

Zinzendorf: No, no. Only *in Christ*. He is not Holy *in Himself*. He has no Holiness at all *in Himself*.

Wesley: Has he not the Love of God and of his Neighbour in his Heart, yea, and the whole image of God?

Zinzendorf: He has. But this is not Gospel-Holiness. Faith is Gospel-Holiness.

Wesley: You grant as much as I affirm. You own, the whole Heart, and the whole Life of a Believer are Holy, that he loves God with all his Heart, and serves him with all his Strength. I desire no more. This is all I mean by Perfection or Christian Holiness.

Zinzendorf: But this is not Holiness. A Christian is not *more* Holy, when he has *more*, nor *less* Holy when he has *less* of, this Love.

Wesley: How! Does not a believer, as he grows in Love, grow in Holiness?

Zinzendorf: In no wise. The moment he is justified, he is sanctified wholly. And he is neither more nor less Holy, from that moment, to his Death.

Wesley: Is not then a Father in Christ Holier than a New-born Babe?

Zinzendorf: No. Entire Sanctification and Entire Justification are in one and the same Instant, and neither of them admits either of Increase or Decrease.

Wesley: But does not a Believer increase (or grow) in the Love of God? Is he made Perfect in Love, as soon as he is justified?

Zinzendorf: He is. He never increases in the Love of God. He loves God entirely at that Moment, as he is entirely sanctified.

This dialogue presents Wesley's view clearly enough, but does not reflect Zinzendorf's with exactitude. The latter's remarks, as Plitt says, are polemically sharpened.<sup>71</sup> All the same, the conversation undoubtedly expresses an essential difference between the two. From Zinzendorf's point of view Wesley's attitude must obviously seem legalistic. Accordingly, he calls an inherent ethical perfection which consists of love to God and one's neighbour a legal holiness, whereas evangelical holiness is identified with faith.<sup>72</sup>

Before attempting a closer analysis of perfect sanctification, some further general features of Wesley's view of Christian perfection require our attention. Its chief mark, we have already noticed, is perfect love. It is the essence of perfection.<sup>73</sup> And the fully sanctified man is also distinguished by the inseparable fruits of that love: "rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks." This state of mind is said to be particularly characteristic of the fully sanctified.<sup>74</sup> It is regarded as the expression of his complete submission to the will of God. In later years, clearly actuated by his experiences in the Methodist revival, Wesley altered some of the extreme

statements he had made on the state of the entirely sanctified in 1740 in the preface to *Hymns and Sacred Poems*. He finds, for instance, that he had gone too far in saying that the totally sanctified did not at all need to feel any doubt or uncertainty even in particular actions, and he modifies the statement thus: "Frequently this is the case but only for a time." Similarly he also corrects the statement that the Holy Spirit every instant instructs them what they should do and say. "For a time," he says, "it may be so; but not always." He also altered the statement that they had no need of "reasoning concerning it," saying that sometimes reasoning was necessary. Later, too, he came to believe that the fully sanctified could be tempted, even grievously.<sup>75</sup> As early as 1743 in *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* he declares that perfect sanctification does not exclude temptations<sup>76</sup>, while in 1750 in a sermon entitled *Christian Perfection* he says that such perfection "belongeth not to this life<sup>77</sup>." For a long time he was inclined to believe that perfect sanctification could not be lost.<sup>78</sup> Early in the seventeen-sixties, however, he became convinced by facts that even the entirely sanctified man could fall.<sup>79</sup> The revival at Otley in 1760, for instance, must have impressed him; on this occasion several people claimed to have experienced perfect sanctification instantaneously and through faith.<sup>80</sup> However, as we have seen, Wesley had held this doctrine for a long time.<sup>81</sup>

## II

### *Christian Perfection in Greater Detail.*

A more detailed analysis of perfect sanctification calls for further scrutiny of its relation to new birth. The two are regarded as distinct stages of the Christian life. We have already seen that both are conferred on man through faith. Also, man can receive assurance of both through a testimony of the Spirit and through outward fruits. The process of sanctification after new birth is comparable to the development of natural life. The Christian shall grow from a little child to a young man and from a young man to a father.<sup>82</sup> This is due to a development in faith. Faith and sanctity are directly proportionate to one another. When man grows in faith, he grows equally in sanctity, love, humility, and meekness. He grows in every part of the image of God "till it pleases God, after he is thoroughly convinced of inbred sin, of the total corruption of his nature, to take it all away; to purify his heart and cleanse him from all unrighteousness; to fulfil that promise which he made first to his ancient people, and in them to the Israel of God in all ages: 'I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.'"<sup>83</sup> A weak faith can develop and grow strong. The fathers, the fully sanctified, are called "strong in faith."<sup>84</sup> Thus Christian Perfection could also be identified with "the full assurance of faith."<sup>85</sup>

This development in sanctification is focussed on the means and conditions of perfection. The essence of perfection and the goal of faith are, however, love. Seen in this way, therefore, the Christian life is a development in love. Perfection comes to mean perfection in love.

What, then, from this point of view, is the difference between new birth and perfect sanctification? Love has already been instilled into the heart of man at new birth. From then on there is a gradual development. This is thought to continue even after the stage of perfect sanctification until the very moment of death -- indeed after death too. There is therefore, Wesley thinks, no perfection of degrees, i.e. no perfection of concluded development.<sup>86</sup> The distinction between new birth and entire sanctification seems therefore to be nothing more than a difference of degree in a continuous

development. But if so, how can they also be described as distinct stages in the Christian life?

If we consider the definition of perfection as perfect love, it is clear that this love must be of the same kind as that granted to man at new birth. In this respect indeed Wesley could not indicate any difference. Entire sanctification is not a new kind of sanctity in relation to the earlier experience of the believer. "It does not imply any new *kind* of holiness: Let no man imagine this. From the moment we are justified, till we give up our spirits to God, love is the fulfilling of the law; of the whole evangelical law, which took place of the Adamic law, when the first promise of 'the seed of the woman' was made. Love is the sum of Christian sanctification; it is the one *kind* of holiness, which is found, only in various *degrees*, in believers who are distinguished by St. John into 'little children, young men, and fathers'." The difference between them "properly lies in the degree of love." Here there is "as great a difference in the spiritual, as in the natural sense, between fathers, young men, and babes."<sup>87</sup> Consequently, when from this point of view Wesley compares the stage of justification and new birth with that of perfect sanctification, the difference is only one of degree. The kind of life is the same in entire sanctification as in new birth.

Entire sanctification is seen more clearly as a distinct stage, higher and different from that of new birth, when we turn to perfection as liberation from sin. Entire sanctification involves a love incompatible with sin.<sup>88</sup> It is a love unmixed with sin, a pure love. Earlier sanctity was alloyed with sinful inclinations, which affected the soul. After the experience of perfect sanctification, however, there is "no mixture of any contrary affections: All is peace and harmony after."<sup>89</sup>

The difference of plane between new birth and perfect sanctification is also seen in the fact that the deliverance from sin takes place in an instant. Deliverance from sin in perfect sanctification is regarded as analogous with the entrance of death into the body. This deliverance from sin is the death of sin: "A man may be dying for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, die, till the instant the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant he lives the life of eternity. In like manner, he may be dying to sin for some time; yet he is not dead to sin, till sin is separated from his soul; and in that instant he lives the full life of love. And as the change undergone, when the body dies, is of a different kind, and infinitely greater than any we had known before, yea, such as till then it is impossible to conceive; so the change wrought, when the soul dies to sin, is of a different kind, and infinitely greater than any before, and than any can conceive till he experiences it. Yet he still grows in grace, in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and image of God; and will do so, not only till death, but to all eternity."<sup>90</sup>

In this respect the distinction is that entire sanctification brings full deliverance from sin whereas in new birth the deliverance is only partial. As we have already seen it is true that extreme statements about the regenerate state, which confuse the difference between new birth and entire sanctification, occur immediately after 1738. Later, however, when Wesley concentrates on the distinction, it emerges clearly enough. The regenerate man was nevertheless already delivered from sin in the sense that he was no longer dominated by it.<sup>91</sup> It could be said of him that he did not sin. This meant that he did not commit outward sins.<sup>92</sup> And he was not only delivered from the power of outward sin: the domination of inward sin was broken too.<sup>93</sup> Yet inward sin still remained. The root of sin was still present; the fleshly temper was not entirely uprooted. Thus sin was still inherent in his heart as well as in his words and actions. He was also chargeable with numberless sins of omission and inward defects.<sup>94</sup> The regenerate man was still to some extent carnal.<sup>95</sup> His life was still lived in

terms of two "contrary principles": nature and grace, the flesh and the Spirit.<sup>96</sup> In contradistinction to this state, entire sanctification is seen as full deliverance from sin. He who is full[y] sanctified is "freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers."<sup>97</sup> The perfect change implies "the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, all inward as well as outward pollution."<sup>98</sup> It involves the experience of "a total death to sin, and an entire renewal in the love and image of God."<sup>99</sup>

In Wesley's opinion the perfectly sanctified man was delivered not only from the power of sin -- this happened at new birth -- but also from the root of sin as the source of inward and outward sins. By this he meant that man was also delivered from original sin. He began to concern himself with this idea of deliverance from original sin immediately after the experience of 1738. In his first evangelical sermon of that year, *Salvation by Faith*, he says that the salvation which is bestowed on man through faith and which is a present salvation, involves salvation from all sins, from "original and actual, past and present sin, 'of the flesh and of the Spirit'."<sup>100</sup> *Hymns and Sacred Poems* also expresses a yearning for salvation from "actual and from inbred sin," from "deep original stain."<sup>101</sup> God is willing, he writes in 1757 in *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, to redeem man from "all sin, both original and actual."<sup>102</sup> This further liberation from original sin as well is attributed to entire sanctification. Of the latter, which signifies a second change after justification, he says: "Indeed this is so evident a truth, that wellnigh all the children of God, scattered abroad, however they differ in other points, yet generally agree in this: that although we may, 'by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body', resist and conquer both outward and inward sin: although we may *weaken* our enemies day by day; yet we cannot *drive them out*. By all the grace which is given at justification we cannot extirpate them. Though we watch and pray ever so much, we cannot wholly cleanse either our hearts or hands. Most sure we cannot, till it shall please our Lord to speak to our hearts again, to speak the second time, 'Be clean'; and then only the leprosy is cleansed. Then only, the evil root, the carnal mind, is destroyed; and inbred sin subsists no more."<sup>103</sup>

Yet the perfection he taught was attainable in this life was not absolute perfection. It was perfection subject to the limitations of human life. No one could be so perfect as to achieve deliverance from all defects. The defects inseparable from life on earth must remain. Thus no one could escape certain kinds of ignorance and the mistakes arising from it.<sup>104</sup> Infirmities too must remain, by which Wesley meant "not only those which are properly termed *bodily infirmities*, but all those inward or outward imperfections which are not of a moral nature." Here he is thinking of defects in man's intellectual equipment and their influence on his conversation and behaviour.<sup>105</sup> No deliverance from "actual mistakes" is to be expected "till this mortal puts on immortality." They are a natural outcome of the soul inhabiting the body: "For we cannot now think at all, but by the mediation of those bodily organs which have suffered equally with the rest of our frame. And hence we cannot avoid sometimes thinking wrong, till this corruptible shall have put on incorruption." Such mistakes "in judgement" or "in opinion" can also give rise to mistakes "in practice."<sup>106</sup> Thus even the most sanctified persons cannot avoid making such mistakes, and nor can they avoid "omissions," "shortcomings," and "defects of various kinds."<sup>107</sup> Such imperfection is seen as a result of Adam's fall. It was then that man's incorruptible body became corruptible, since when it has been "a clog to the soul," hindering its operations. So no man now can "apprehend clearly" or "judge truly," any more than he can "reason justly." Man must inevitably make mistakes. To do so is as natural as to breathe.<sup>108</sup> Thus even the most sanctified man lives in circumstances which necessarily limit his perfection. His knowledge is limited, his understanding dim, and it follows also that his "affections" are "disordered." And he acts accordingly. His life will therefore be stamped with ignorance and

error and a "thousand other infirmities." Errors of judgment will lead to "wrong words and actions" and in some cases to "wrong affections."<sup>109</sup>

The idea of perfection was thus adjusted to the present circumstances of man. The idea of the law was similarly adjusted. This adaptation of the idea of the law is one of the basic conditions for his doctrine of perfection. The law to which man is subject since the Fall is said to be unlike that which obtained before the Fall. The Adamic law, given to Adam in his innocence, was a law of works. It required of man an undivided obedience in every respect to the law of God, and particularly love to God and one's neighbor. He was to fulfil all righteousness, inward and outward, negative and positive. The law further required that this obedience should be perfect in degree. Every commandment was to be fulfilled with all strength, in the highest measure, and in the most perfect manner. Further, this obedience had to be entirely uninterrupted.<sup>110</sup>

These requirements were proportionate to the powers originally possessed by Adam. Since he was created free from all defect both in understanding and affections, and since his body did not prevent him from understanding clearly and judging truly, it was required of him that he should "always think, always speak, and always act precisely right, in every point whatever."<sup>111</sup> Clearly, no man is now in a position to fulfil this law, essentially the same as the angelic law.<sup>112</sup> But neither does God ask this. The law to which man is now subject is that of faith. Christ has abolished both the Adamic and the Mosaic law as a condition for either present or future salvation. Instead He has established "the law of faith." This means that it is only through faith that man can be sanctified and glorified as well as justified. As this law of faith is fulfilled through love Wesley can also call it the law of love. Faith is considered the foundation of "the Christian institution," love its end.<sup>113</sup>

Thus the perfection which is now attainable is neither angelic perfection nor the kind that Adam possessed before the Fall. It is instead a perfection achieved through faith, a perfection which means perfect love. Is it possible now to fulfil this law of love perfectly? Wesley believed that he who was fully sanctified fulfilled the law in so far as his whole disposition, his thoughts, words, and actions all have their source in love. To this extent he does not break the law. In this measure he is perfect. But in another sense he does not fulfil the law. For he is not infallible. Because of the inevitable defects which are part of him he must necessarily make many mistakes. These mistakes "will frequently occasion something wrong, both in our temper, and words, and actions."<sup>114</sup> The fully sanctified are more than ever conscious not only of "their own ignorance" but also of their "littleness of grace, coming short of the full mind that was in Christ, and walking less accurately than they might have done after their divine Pattern."<sup>115</sup> Yet in spite of these defects the perfected man can nevertheless be said to fulfil the law, for his breaches of it are due not to want of love but to want of knowledge.<sup>116</sup>

This accommodation to the present circumstances of man is also shown in the idea of sin. As we have seen the fully sanctified man can also be considered freed from all sin. It is clear that the concept of sin has also undergone adaptation. At the Bristol conference of 1758 a distinction was made between sin as a voluntary transgression of a known law and sin as an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown. The former was sin "properly so called," and the latter sin "improperly so called."<sup>117</sup> It is the former concept of sin that applies in the doctrine of perfection.<sup>118</sup> Only such transgression of the law as springs from man's own will and intention is considered sin. Here it is the individualistic line in Wesley's conception of sin that operates. Here he is clearly Arminian and not

Orthodox.<sup>119</sup> The definition of perfection as deliverance from sin is taken by Wesley to mean that the fully sanctified do not deliberately transgress the law of love. Perfection comes to mean perfect purity in intention and will, and in actions in so far as these are determined by the individual will.<sup>120</sup>

As we have seen, Wesley thinks the Christian is delivered through entire sanctification from original sin as well as from actual sin. The former is described as an evil root, an evil inclination. It is the source of all special sins, an evil corruption which finds expression in such sins as pride, self-will, covetousness, and anger, which are the antithesis of love to God and our neighbour.<sup>121</sup> The corruption of sin, that is, is manifest in the evil will of the individual.<sup>122</sup>

Accordingly, entire sanctification in Wesley comes to mean total resignation of the will of man to the will of God. The self-will which remained in the believer, although he was not governed by sin, is now utterly annihilated.

We have now examined the sense in which he attributes perfection to the fully sanctified. The concept of perfection, like those of law and sin, has been modified by adjustment to the potentialities of man since the Fall. He finds this idea of perfection to be in accordance with the Scriptures; we may not, he says, set perfection higher than Scripture itself does.<sup>123</sup>

We have also noticed, however, that from another point of view the fully sanctified are not considered perfect. Parallel with the conception of perfection adumbrated above, another also emerges. Here perfection takes on an absolute character in that it is not restricted to the present powers of man. This explains why Wesley on the one hand describes perfect sanctification as deliverance from all sin and on the other nevertheless declines to call it sinless.<sup>124</sup> This apparent contradiction is due to his use of two different concepts of perfection and a corresponding duality in the terms law and sin. He employs a concept of relative perfection and a concept of absolute perfection. The former is subjective and concerns the intention and will, the latter objective and independent of man's potentialities. This duality means that on the one hand he does not regard the defects of the fully sanctified as sins in the proper sense of the word. There can be no sin, he says, when love is the only principle of action.<sup>125</sup> On the other hand these mistakes and defects can also be regarded as sins in the sense that they constitute deviations from the perfect law.<sup>126</sup> Not even such defects as necessarily pertain to man during his life on earth can "bear the rigour of God's justice."<sup>127</sup>

This point of view is again seen when we turn to the relation between entire sanctification and atonement. In what sense do the fully sanctified need atonement? Surely the idea of forgiveness will be overshadowed by that of sanctification, which here in the conception of Christian perfection is present in its most pronounced form. This is certainly the case when Wesley is thinking in terms of his relative and subjective conception of sin. Then the fully sanctified cannot be said to be burdened with guilt and in need of forgiveness.<sup>128</sup> Nevertheless he insists that even these stand in need of the blood of atonement because of their transgressions. At this point the absolute and objective law and a corresponding conception of sin have again risen to the surface of his mind. In an absolute sense even the fully sanctified transgress the law because of their inescapable defects. "Therefore," he says of these defects, "(4.) Every such mistake, were it not for the blood of atonement, would expose to eternal damnation. (5.) It follows, that the most perfect have continual need of the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions, and may say for themselves, as well as for their

brethren, 'Forgive us our trespasses'." [129](#) Even the best of men "need Christ as their Priest, their Atonement, their Advocate with the Father; not only as the continuance of their every blessing depends on his death and intercession, but on account of their coming short of the law of love." [130](#) The entirely sanctified fulfil the law of love in so far as love is the sole motive for their actions, yet they transgress it because of the defects of understanding inseparable from life on earth. [131](#) This dual view of perfection is clearly seen in one of Wesley's letters. Here he maintains both the possibility of perfection on the one hand and on the other its relative character and the continuous need of forgiveness on the part of the fully sanctified. "The nicest point of all which relates to Christian perfection," he writes, "is that which you inquire of. Thus much is certain: they that love God with all their heart and all men as themselves are scripturally perfect. And surely such there are; otherwise the promise of God would be a mere mockery of human weakness. Hold fast this. But then remember, on the other hand, you have this treasure in an earthen vessel; you dwell in a poor, shattered house of clay, which presses down the immortal spirit. Hence all your thoughts, words, and actions are so imperfect, so far from coming up to the standard (that law of love which, but for the corruptible body, your soul would answer in all instances), that you may well say till you go to Him you love:

Every moment, Lord, I need  
The merit of Thy death." [132](#)

For Wesley, Christians, even the most sanctified, must live on the basis of forgiveness. That this is so in spite of everything is due to the fact that alongside a relative and subjective perfection -- the concept of perfection which makes possible his doctrine of perfection -- he retains the conception of an objective and absolute perfection and a corresponding idea of sin.

The connection between perfect sanctification and atonement, like the Christocentric alignment in general in his doctrine of sanctification, is given even heavier emphasis in another respect. The Christian life can persist only through unceasing contact with Christ. This applies to the fully sanctified too. These, he says, are particularly keenly aware of their total dependence on Christ, especially on his work of atonement. "None feel their need of Christ like these; none so entirely depend upon Him. For Christ does not give life to the soul separate from, but in and with, himself. Hence his words are equally true of all men, in whatsoever state of grace they are: 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. Without' (or separate from) 'me ye can do nothing'" "In every state," he continues, "we need Christ in the following respects: -- (1.) Whatever grace we receive, it is a free gift from him. (2.) We receive it as his purchase, merely in consideration of the price he paid. (3.) We have this grace, not only from Christ, but in him. For our perfection is not like that of a tree, which flourishes by the sap derived from its own root, but, as was said before, like that of a branch which, united to the vine, bears fruit; but severed from it, is dried up and withered. (4.) All our blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, depend on his intercession for us, which is one branch of his priestly office, whereof therefore we have always equal need." [133](#) This dependence on Christ is a dependence from moment to moment. [134](#) Man's holiness is due solely to the fact that through faith he is enabled to participate every moment in the power of Christ. Failing this, "notwithstanding all our present holiness, we should be devils the next moment." [135](#) The sanctity thus bestowed on man undoubtedly acquires the character of a quality in man, just as sanctifying grace is also conceived primarily as an indwelling power. But it does not become an independent quality of man's own as a result of this Christocentric

view. Never for a moment can it be separated from Christ and His work. And it is accorded to man solely because of Christ's merit and cannot therefore be considered a merit of man.

The main points in Wesley's view of perfection can now be presented in tabular form. Let us first distinguish between the two kinds of perfection we find in him: Adamic perfection, which applied to Adam before the Fall, and Christian perfection, which man can now attain.

<i>Adamic Perfection:</i>	<i>Christian Perfection:</i>
<p><i>Based on the covenant of works:</i></p> <p>man must fulfil the law of works.</p>	<p><i>Based on the covenant of grace:</i></p> <p>man must fulfil the law of faith.</p>
<p><i>Signifies</i> perfect obedience to every point in this law. This holiness must be perfect in degree and continue without intermission throughout the whole of life.</p>	<p><i>Signifies</i> perfect obedience in so far as this is attainable in the present circumstances of man. It means perfect love. This holiness is a perfection of motive, not of degree. It concerns man's will and intention.</p>

This is a perfect fulfilment of the law and perfect deliverance from sin in *the absolute and objective sense.*

This is a perfect fulfilment of the law and perfect deliverance from sin *in the relative and subjective sense.*

The relation between Christian perfection and atonement can be expressed as follows, varying in aspect according to the point of view from which perfection is regarded.

*From the absolute and objective standpoint:*

*From the relative and subjective standpoint:*

He who is fully sanctified is *imperfect.*

He who is fully sanctified is *perfect.*

This means that because of innumerable defects he must transgress the absolute law. In this sense he is *not free from sin.*

This means that he perfectly loves God and his neighbour and is *perfectly free from sin* properly so called.

For this  
reason he  
is *not free*  
*from guilt.*

For this  
reason he  
is also *free*  
*from guilt.*

Therefore  
in order  
that he  
may not  
suffer  
damnation  
for his sin  
and guilt,  
he is every  
moment  
dependent  
on the  
merit and  
intercession  
of Christ.

Yet in  
order to  
remain  
perfect he  
is every  
moment  
dependent  
on the  
merit and  
intercession  
of Christ.

### III

#### *Further Characteristics.*

Assurance is another characteristic feature of Christian perfection. Here, as has already been pointed out elsewhere<sup>136</sup>, the analogy between the stage of justification and that of perfect sanctification is again apparent. In both cases a direct and an indirect witness are present. As with assurance of justification, assurance of perfect sanctification derives both from the witness of the Spirit and from the fruit of the Spirit. "We know it," we are told, "by the witness and by the fruit of the Spirit. And, first, by the witness. As when we were justified, the Spirit bore witness with our spirit, that our sins were forgiven; so, when we were sanctified, he bore witness, that they were taken away. Indeed, the witness of sanctification is not always clear at first as neither is that of justification; neither is it afterwards always the same, but, like that of justification, sometimes stronger and sometimes fainter. Yea, and sometimes it is withdrawn. Yet, in general, the latter testimony of the Spirit is both as clear and as steady as the former."<sup>137</sup> The fully sanctified might also learn that this perfect sanctification had been accorded to them through the fruits of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, always abiding; by invariable long-suffering, patience, resignation; by gentleness, triumphing over all provocation; by goodness, mildness, sweetness, tenderness of spirit; by fidelity, simplicity, godly sincerity; by meekness, calmness, evenness of spirit; by temperance, not only in

food and sleep, but in all things natural and spiritual."<sup>138</sup> The change at justification was mixed with selfishness and love of the world, but the fully sanctified undergo a total change.<sup>139</sup> He who judges according to all the marks pertaining to perfect sanctification need not in Wesley's opinion run any risk of self-deception.<sup>140</sup>

It was also his opinion that as in sanctification otherwise, the change in Christian perfection must be outward and visible. The Christian cannot, he thought, remain ignorant of his good works, which are yet not his own but done by God through him.<sup>141</sup> From outward works, however, one cannot distinguish between the fully sanctified and those who are only regenerate. Outward works must be measured according to the grace accorded to man and from which they spring. Right judgement can only be passed if regard be had to the inward state of his heart: his perfect love to God and total resignation to His will.<sup>142</sup> It is true that certain circumstances make it probable that a man is fully sanctified. Yet this cannot be known with certainty, any more than we can know whether a particular individual is justified, "unless it should please God to endow us with the miraculous discernment of spirits."<sup>143</sup>

Wesley links up the idea of humility with his conception of perfection. Humility is given the primary significance of man's self-knowledge before God. The meaning of the term varies according to the particular stage in the order of salvation at which the individual finds himself. Before justification it means conviction of sin and guilt and complete helplessness.<sup>144</sup> Here it is identified with the repentance that precedes justifying faith. It is not until in justification man has been accorded the gift of atonement that his nature can be imbued with "true genuine Christian humility." This is achieved by a sense of the love of God, who is reconciled in Christ. It is seen in man's continual sense of total dependence on God and of his utter inability to do good without the ceaseless communication of God's grace. Such a man will detest "the praise of men, knowing that all praise is due unto God only." At the same time he will feel "a loving shame, a tender humiliation before God, even for the sins which we know He hath forgiven us, and for the sin which still remaineth in our hearts, although we know it is not imputed to our condemnation." The conviction of inbred sin will be intensified in proportion as man grows in grace and the knowledge of God and thus also becomes aware of his alienation from God and of his carnal mind.<sup>145</sup> Here, then, humility chiefly means the same thing as repentance after justification.

With perfect sanctification humility comes to an even greater degree than before to mean man's sense of total dependence on God. The fully sanctified are aware that their perfection is solely due to the unceasing operation in them, instant for instant, of God omnipotent.<sup>146</sup> Thus in Wesley humility does not conflict with perfection. On the contrary humility is regarded as a fruit of love.<sup>147</sup> Progress in sanctification, the essence of which to Wesley was love, must be accompanied by progress in humility. And so from this angle, too, we see the difference between perfect sanctification and the earlier stages of the Christian life. Whereas earlier humility was mixed with pride, the fully sanctified are also perfect in humility.<sup>148</sup>

As to the general characteristics of sanctification, Wesley defines holiness as both inward and outward righteousness. In this he shows an intention which is everywhere apparent in his thought. He is contending against religious formalism on the one hand and Antinomianism and Quietism on the other.<sup>149</sup> He is strongly opposed to the kind of religion which consists of nothing but outward forms and insists that it should be a matter of the heart. Here he is in agreement both with practical

mysticism and the Moravians. On the other hand he is just as opposed to Quietist mysticism<sup>150</sup> and the Antinomianism he detected among Zinzendorf and his followers<sup>151</sup>. He is opposed indeed to every kind of mysticism to which the inward temper was everything and which neglected the importance of its outward expression in works. Against such mysticism he also insisted on the importance of the means of grace.<sup>152</sup> He urges, that is, an inward against a purely outward religion, and an outward against such a purely inward type as Quietist mysticism.<sup>153</sup> It is in the combination of these that he sees sanctity.<sup>154</sup>

Entire sanctification becomes a perfecting of the personality. It is clear from what has been said that to Wesley perfection is not only perfection in actual acts; it embraces as well the whole disposition which lies behind them, the soul with all its tempers. He sees perfection as perfection in obedience too, but this is an expression of the inward perfection of the individual personality or character. The day of judgment, he says, will reveal "every inward working of every human soul; every appetite, passion, inclination, affection, with the various combinations of them, with every temper and disposition that constitute the whole complex character of each individual." Then it shall be "clearly and infallibly seen, who was righteous, and who unrighteous; and in what degree every action, or person, or character was either good or evil."<sup>155</sup> Entire sanctification, which is reflected even in the smallest things in life, is seen in the harmony of the soul.<sup>156</sup> He calls the fully sanctified "patterns of strict holiness."<sup>157</sup> The perfection which makes them like Christ and qualifies them for glorification, is an inherent holiness.<sup>158</sup>

Thus to Wesley perfection means the perfected and harmonious personality. It is presented as a perfection of character. This is clearly seen in the delineation of perfection which, following Clemens Alexandrinus<sup>159</sup>, he gives in *The Character of a Methodist*, or in his account of John Fletcher's character in his biography of him<sup>160</sup>. Christianity in general can be considered not only as "a principle in the soul" but also as "a scheme or system of doctrine, which describes the character."<sup>161</sup> In this he links up with those early Fathers who influenced him.<sup>162</sup> Here his view shows affinities with the ideal of perfection that has its root in Greek thought.<sup>163</sup> And here he is also continuing the line of the practical mystics, Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, and William Law, on whose ideal of *Imitatio Christi* he modelled so much of his thought.

---

## FOOTNOTES

1 Letter of 15 Sept. 1790, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 238.

2 Letters: 24 March 1757, *The Letters of John Wesley*, III, p. 212; 3 April 1772, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 315; 8 Oct. 1774, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VI, p. 116.

3 *The Repentance of Believers*, 1767, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 391; letter of 28 Dec. 1770, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 215.

4 *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 456; letters: 17 Nov. 1781, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VII, p. 90; 19 Jan. 1782, *ib.*, p. 102 (entire salvation); 3 Febr. 1786, p. 314 (full and present salvation); 4 March 1786, p. 322.

5 Minutes 1747, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 293 f.; *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 456 (full sanctification); letter 27 Nov. 1770, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 210 (full sanctification).

6 *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 294.

7 *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1763, in *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 420. Cf. letters: 19 August 1759, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 71; 15 Sept. 1762, *ib.*, p. 188; 31 May 1771, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 255; 1 July 1772, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 325.

8 Letters: 6 Sept. 1757, *The Letters of John Wesley*, III, p. 221; 5 April 1758, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 10; 22 August 1759, *ib.*, p. 71 f.

9 Letters: 2 Nov. 1762, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 192; 30 May 1769, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 138. Cf. *The Journal*, 29 Dec. 1766, *The Journal of John Wesley*, V, p. 194.

10 "The perfection I hold is so far from being contrary to the doctrine of our Church, that it is exactly the same which every Clergyman prays for every Sunday: 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name'." An Answer to Mr. Rowland Hill's Tract Entitled, 'Imposture Detected', 1777, *The Works of John Wesley*, X, p. 450. NUELSEN (*John Wesley und das deutsche Kirchenlied*, p. 55 ff.) points out the influence of the German hymnists: Terstegen and Paul Gerhardt.

11 In his abridgement of the Thirty-nine Articles Wesley omitted the second half of Art. XV (Of Christ alone without sin), which contains the words: "But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things, and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This did not tally with his intention in his doctrine of perfection. Cf. WHEELER, *History and Exposition of the Twenty-five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, p. 27 f.

12 Cf. PLATT, art. Perfection, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 9, p. 732 f.

13 This is maintained throughout in *A Plain Account*. See *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 444.

14 *Sermon on God's Vineyard*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 204, where Wesley also mentions the Spanish Benedictine monk Juan de Castaniza. On whom see *Grosses Universal Lexicon*, V, col. 1305.

15 LAW, *Perfection*, *The Works of William Law.*, III, pp. 5 ff., 10, 45. Cf. FLEW, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

16 Cf. LANG, *Puritanismus und Pietismus*, p. 294 f.

17 *ib.*, p. 279.

18 *ib.*, p. 279.9 Cf. FRANÇOIS DE SALES *Introduction à la vie dévote*, p. 14.

19 See further the following chapter.

20 See *The Circumcision of the Heart*, 1733, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 266; *A Plain*

Account, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 366 ff.; *Journal and letters of the pre-1738 period*. Cf. the letter to John Newton of 14 May 1765, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 298 f.

21 Cf. FLEW, *op. cit.*, p. 299; LANG, *op. cit.*, pp. 279, 290 ff.

22 Cf. JEREMY TAYLOR, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, p. 13 ff.; THOMAS à KEMPIS (*Of the Imitation of Christ*, pp. 50 f., 85) speaks of simplicity of intention.

23 Cf. THOMAS à KEMPIS, *op. cit.*; LAW, *op. cit.*, p. 215 ff. See FLEW, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

24 See next chapter.

25 *The Character of a Methodist*, 1742, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 344; *Sermon on the Mount: VI*, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 425 ff.; *Sermon on the Mount: VIII*, 1748, p. 473 ff.; *Sermon on The Imperfection of Human Knowledge*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 350.

26 *The Character of a Methodist*, 1742, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 344.

27 *Ib.*, P. 344.

28 *Ib.*, p. 345.

29 *Ib.*, p. 344.

30 *Ib.*, p. 346; Cf. *Christian Perfection*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 170 f. On the yearning for perfect imitation of God in Charles Wesley's hymns, see RATTENBURY, who also points out the difference between Charles and John Wesley's views of perfection. *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*, pp. 278 ff., 298 f.

31 *The Character of a Methodist*, 1742, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 341 ff.

32 *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739, *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, I, p. xx: *"They advise, 'To the desert, to the desert, and God will build you up'. Numberless are the commendations that occur in all their writings, not of retirement intermixed with conversation, but of an entire seclusion from men, (perhaps for months or years,) in order to purify the soul. Whereas, according to the judgment of our Lord, and the writings of His Apostles, it is only when we are knit together, that we have nourishment from Him, and increase with the increase of GOD."*

33 *Ib.*, P. xxii: *"The Gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness, but social holiness. Faith working by love is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection."*

34 *Ib.*, p. xxii.

35 *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1742, *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, II, p. 46 f.

36 *Christian Perfection*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 171.

37 *Ib.*, p. 169 ff.

38 Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1759, in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 394.

39 The Character of a Methodist, 1742, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 343: "The love of God has purified his heart from all revengeful passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind temper or malign affection. It hath cleansed him from pride and haughtiness of spirit, whereof alone cometh contention."

40 Minutes 1758, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 401; Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 418. Cf. letters 30 July, 15 Sept., and 2 Nov. 1762, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, pp. 186, 189, 192.

41 The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 444.

42 The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 413 ff.

43 LAW, op. cit., p. 7.

44 See ib., p. 41.

45 ib., p. 87.

46 ib., p. 70.

47 See ib., p. 86 f.

48 Letter, 28 Febr. 1730, The Letters of John Wesley, I, p. 48.

49 Sermon On the Holy Spirit, [1736], The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 514.

50 Sermon The Trouble and Rest of Good Men, 1735, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 366.

51 See letter of 5 April 1758, in which Wesley says this alteration took place in 1738. The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. II; Cf. letter 2 Nov. 1762, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 192.

52 The Character of a Methodist, 1742, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 341 ff.; The Scripture Way of Salvation, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, pp. 457 f., 460; Cf. letter 1 April 1766, The Letters of John Wesley, V, p. 7.

53 The Scripture Way of Salvation, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 452 f.; Cf. A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 382.

54 Minutes 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 285; Minutes 1747, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 294. Cf. letter (Sept. 1762): "As to the time, I believe this instant generally is the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body. But I believe it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before death. . . . I believe it is usually many years after justification, but that it *may be* within five years or five months after it. I know no conclusive argument to the contrary." The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 187.

55 Minutes, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 285.

56 The Scripture Way of Salvation, 1765, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 457 ff.: "But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified, -- saved from all sin, and perfected in love? It is a divine evidence and conviction, first, that God hath promised it in the holy Scripture. . . . It is a divine evidence and conviction, secondly, that what God hath promised He is able to perform. . . . It is, thirdly, a divine evidence and conviction that He is able and willing to do it now. And why not? Is not a moment to Him the same as a thousand years? He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is His will. And He cannot want or stay for any more *worthiness* or *fitness* in the persons He is pleased to honour. . . . To this confidence, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more, -- a divine evidence and conviction that He doeth it. . . . If you seek it by faith, you may expect it *as you are*; and if as you are, then expect it now. It is of importance to observe, that there is an inseparable connection between these three points, expect it *by faith*; expect it *as you are*; and expect it *now*. To deny one of them, is to deny them all; to allow one, is to allow them all." Cf. A Plain Account, p. 393, in which Wesley sums up his doctrine of perfection in three points: "(1.) That Christian perfection is that love of God and our neighbour, which implies deliverance from all sin. (2.) That this is received merely by faith. (3.) That it is given instantaneously, in one moment. (4.) That we are to expect it, not at death, but every moment; that now is the accepted time, now is the day of this salvation." See further letter [Sept. 1762], The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 187.

57 Minutes, 1758, in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 402 f.: "Q. How are we to wait for this change? A. Not in careless indifference, or indolent inactivity; but in vigorous, universal obedience, in a zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness, in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily; as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God. And if any man dream of attaining it any other way (yea, or of keeping it when it is attained, when he has received it even in the largest measure), he deceiveth his own soul. It is true, we receive it by simple faith; but God does not, will not, give that faith, unless we seek it with all diligence, in the way which he hath ordained."

58 Sermon On Perfection, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 414. Cf. above, p. 131.

59 Sermon on The Imperfection of Human Knowledge, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 349.

60 The Large Minutes, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 329: "If there be such a blessed change before death, should we not encourage all believers to expect it? and the rather, because constant experience shows, the more earnestly they expect this, the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their soul; the more watchful they are against all sin, the more careful to grow in grace, the more zealous of good works, and the more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God. Whereas, just the contrary effects are observed whenever this expectation ceases. They are 'saved by hope', by this hope of a total change, with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that salvation stands still, or, rather, decreases daily. Therefore whoever would advance the gradual change in believers should strongly insist on the instantaneous."

The chief reason why FLEISCH finds entire sanctification to be an inexplicable, magical intervention by God (Zur Geschichte der Heiligungsbewegung, I, p. 42 f.) is the inadequacy of the attention he pays to the connection between gradual and instantaneous sanctification, thus failing to arrive at the correct relation between faith and works in the doctrine of sanctification.

61 Christian Perfection, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 162 f.; Notes, 1755, John vii. 39. Cf. A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 408.

62 See Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, in *A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 426 f.; letter, 15 Sept. 1762, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 190.

It is strange that he always refers to the experience of others and never to his own. As far as we know, Wesley never expressly said that he had attained entire sanctification. O. A. Curtin, however, thinks he did say so, in the following passage from his *Journal*; "I saw every thought, as well as action or word, just as it was rising in my heart; and whether it was right before God, or tainted with pride or selfishness. I never knew before (I mean not as this time) what it was 'to be still before God' " (24 Dec. 1744). The next day he writes: "I walked, by the grace of God, in the same spirit; and about eight, being with two or three that believed in Jesus, I felt much awe and tender sense of the presence of God as greatly confirmed me therein: so that God was before me all the day long. I sought and found Him in every place; and could truly say, when I lay down at night, 'Now I have lived a day'" (*The Journal of John Wesley*, III, p. 157).

With MCCONNELL (*John Wesley*, p. 206) and FLEW (*Op. cit.*, p. 329 f.), however, I am not convinced by this passage. The experience described is not fully identical with Christian perfection as defined by Wesley. In the letter of 5 March 1767 to which KRISTOFFERSEN (*Metodismens vesen*, art. in *Metodismen*, p. 30 f.) refers, Wesley expressly denies having attained the perfection he described in his tract *The Character of a Methodist*. But, he says, he and the Methodists desired and laboured after it. *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 43 f. PLATT (art. *Perfection*, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 9, p. 731), SUGDEN (*The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 150) and BETT (*The Spirit of Methodism*, p. 161) also repudiate Curtin's contention. Bett, it is true, citing a different passage, believes that Wesley nevertheless experienced entire sanctification. Cf. RATTENBURY, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

He refers to the promises of salvation from all sin in Ps. cxxx. 8; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 29; Dent. xxx. 6; Eph. v. 25, 27; Rom. viii. 3 f.; I John iii. 8; further to the Lord's prayer (the last petition) and the prayers of entire sanctification in John xvii. 20 f., 23; Eph. iii. 14 ff.; I. Thess. v. 23; to the commands in Matth. v. 48, xxii. 37. To prove that it will take place before death he refers to: Titus ii. 11-14; Luke i. 69-75; 1 John iv. 17. See *Minutes 1747, The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 294 ff.; *A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 389 ff.

63 V. ENGESTRÖM, *Förlätelsetanken hos Luther och i nyare evangelisk teologi*, P. 131.

64 *Op. cit.*, P. 100 f.

65 ALTHAUS, *Paulus und Luther fiber den Menschen*, p. 70 f.

66 J. T. MÜLLER, *Die symb. Bücher der ev. Kirche*, p. 111. (*De Justificatione.*)

67 *Ib.*, p. 115 ff. (*Do Dilectione et Impletione Legis.*) Cf. LINDSTRÖM, *Skapelse och frälsning i Melanchthons teologi*, p. 322.

68 *Ib.*, p. 276. Cf. *Augsburg Confession, ib.*, p. 42 (*De Rebus Civilibus*), where evangelical perfection is seen in "timore Dei et fide."

69 v. ENGESTRÖM, *op. cit.*, p. 105 f.; LJUNGGREN, *Synd och skuld i Luthers toologi*, p. 341. ALTHAUS, *Op. cit.*, pp. 68, 70 f. JOSEFSON, *Ödmjukhet och tro*, pp. 158 f., 162 f. On the difference, however, between Lutheran and Calvinistic view on sanctification and perfection, see SCHNECKENBURGER, *Vergleichende Darstellung des lutherischen und reformierten Lehrbegriffs*, 1, p. 166 ff.

70 A Short View of the Difference between the Moravian Brethren ... and the Reverend Mr. John and Charles Wesley, sec. ed., 1748, p. 7 f. The whole conversation in the original Latin in *The Journal of John Wesley*, II, p. 488 ff., also published in *Bütdingische Sammlung*, III, p. 1026 ff. Cf. Spangenberg's view, *Journal*, 2 May 1741, *The Journal of John Wesley*, II, p. 451 f. Yet Wesley uses the Swedish Moravian Arvid Gradin's definition of the full assurance of faith as an expression of perfection. *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 369.

71 PLITT, *Zinzendorf's Theologie*, 1, p. 412. On Zinzendorf's view, see further op. cit., I, p. 406 ff.; II, p. 330 ff.; BECKER, *Zinzendorf in Verhältnis der Philosophie seiner Zeit*, p. 299 ff.

72 In the Latin and complete version of the above-mentioned conversation Wesley asked: "Nonne habet in corde suo amorem Dei et proximi, quin et totam imaginem Dei?" Zinzendorf answered: "Habet. Sed haec sunt sanctitas legalis, non Evangelica. Sanctitas Evangelica eat fides." *The Journal of John Wesley*, II, p. 489.

73 Wesley refers to I John iv. 18. *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 442.

74 *Minutes*, 1758, *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 401; *ib.*, p. 442, according to I. Thess. v. 16 ff. Cf. *The Character of a Methodist*, 1742, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 342 f.; *Satan's Devices*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 192.

75 *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, I, p. 200 f. Cf. *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 379 f.

76 *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 22.

77 *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 155.

78 See letter 24 March 1757, *The Letters of John Wesley*, III, p. 212 f.

79 *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1763, in *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 426; See also the short propositions of 1764 on Christian perfection in *A Plain Account*, *ib.*, p. 442; *Some Remarks on Mr Hill's "Farrago Double-distilled."* 1773, *AT.*, X, p. 426. Cf. letters: 26 Dec. 1761, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 167; 2 Nov. 1762 (to Thomas Maxfield): "But I dislike your supposing man may be as perfect as an angel; that he can be absolutely perfect; that he can be infallible, or above being tempted; or that the moment he is pure in heart he cannot fall from it." *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 192.

80 *Journal*, 16 Febr. 1760, *The Journal of John Wesley*, IV, p. 365 f.; *A Short History of the People Called Methodists*, written 1781, *The Works of John Wesley*, XIII, p. 349 f. Cf. TYREMAN, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley*, II, p. 417; LEZIUS, *Wesleys Perfectionismus und die Otley-Bewegung*, *Reinhold-Seeberg-Festschrift*, II, p. 227 ff.

81 See above p. 133. Cf. IMPETA (*De Leer der Heiliging en Volmaking bij Wesley en Fletcher*, p. 254 ff.) who thinks that in fact Wesley believed as early as 1740 that entire sanctification is attained instantaneously and through faith. He thus rejects, rightly, the view held by Whitehead and tentatively by TYERMAN (*Op. cit.*, II, pp. 417, 593 f.), that Wesley did not begin to preach this until 1760.

82 Cf. further *Notes*, 1755, I Cor. ii. 6; Eph. iv. 13; Col. iv. 12; I John ii. 12-14. In a letter to John Fletcher 22 March 1775 (*The Letters of John Wesley*, VI, p. 146) Wesley writes: "It is certain every babe in Christ has

received the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit witnesses with his spirit that he is a child of God. But he has not obtained Christian Perfection. Perhaps you have not considered St. John's threefold distinction of Christian believers: little children, young men, and fathers. All of these had received the Holy Ghost; but only the fathers were perfected in love."

83 Sermon On Patience, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 489.

84 Notes, 1755, Phil. iii. 15.

85 A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 369.

86 Christian Perfection, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 156: "There is no *perfection of degrees*, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase. So that how much soever any man has attained, or in how high a degree soever lie is perfect, he hath still need to 'grow in grace', and daily to advance in the knowledge and love of God his Saviour."

87 Sermon On Patience, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 488.

88 Minutes 1744, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 279; A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 393.

89 On Patience, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 489.

90 Minutes 1758 in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 402.

91 On Sin in Believers, dat. 1763, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, pp. 373, 375 f.

92 Christian Perfection, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 158. Cf. letter 12 March 1756, The Letters of John Wesley, III, p. 169: "I believe even babes in Christ (*while they keep themselves*) *do not commit sin*. By *sin* I mean outward sin; and the word 'commit' I take in its plain, literal meaning."

93 Cf. On Sin in Believers, 1763, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 376 f.

94 The Repentance of Believers, 1767, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 385 ff.

95 In his commentary to I John v. 18 Wesley writes: "*He that is born of God* -- That sees and loves God, *sinneeth not* -- So long as that loving Faith abides in him. He neither speaks nor does anything which God hath forbidden." But commenting I Cor. iii. 1 he says that "babes in Christ" are "still in great Measure *carnal*." Notes, 1755. Cf. On Sin in Believers, 1763, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 377: "In a degree, according to the measure of their faith, they are spiritual; yet in a degree they are carnal." See further especially The Repentance of Believers, dat. 1767, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 379 ff.

96 On Sin in Believers, 1763, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 367: "Indeed this grand point, that there are two contrary principles in believers -- nature and grace, the flesh and the Spirit -- runs through all the Epistles of St. Paul, yea, through all the holy Scriptures; almost all the directions and exhortations therein are founded on this supposition; pointing at wrong tempers or practices in those who are, notwithstanding, acknowledged by the inspired writers to be believers. And they are continually exhorted to fight with and conquer these by the power of the faith which was in them."

97 Christian Perfection, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 169.

98 A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 444.

99 Minutes 1758 in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 401.

100 The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 41 f.

101 See Charles Wesley's hymn in The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley, II, p. 321 (1742); the following lines express the idea:

From all remaining filth within  
Let me in Thee salvation have;  
From actual and from inbred sin  
My ransom'd soul persist to save.

Wash out my deep original stain --  
Tell me no more it cannot be,  
Demons or men! The Lamb was slain,  
His blood was all pour'd out for me.

Sprinkle it, Jesu, on my heart!  
One drop of Thine all-cleansing blood  
Shall make my sinfulness depart,  
And fill me with the life of God.

102 The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 312.

103 The Repentance of Believers, 1767, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 390 f. See also sermon What is man? 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 230. Cf. FLETCHER, A Vindication, p. 11.

104 Christian Perfection, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 153.

105 *Ib.*, P. 155: "Such are the weakness or slowness of understanding, dullness or confusedness of apprehension, incoherency of thought, irregular quickness or heaviness of imagination. Such (to mention no more of this kind) is the want of a ready or retentive memory. Such, in another kind, are those which are commonly, in some measure, consequent upon these; namely, slowness of speech, impropriety of language, ungracefulness of pronunciation; to which one might add a thousand nameless defects, either in conversation or behaviour. These are the infirmities which are found in the best of men, in a larger or smaller proportion. And from these none can hope to be perfectly freed, till the spirit returns to God that gave it."

106 Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1759, in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 394.

107 *Ib.*, p. 396.

108 Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 415.

109 See Sermon On Perfection, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 411 ff. Cf. sermon The End of Christ's Coming, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 276 f.

110 The Righteousness of Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 134 f.

111 Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 415 f.

112 *Ib.*, p. 414.

113 *Ib.*, p. 415 f.

114 *Ib.*, p. 417.

115 Letter 15 Sept. 1762, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 189.

116 Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 419. "Those who love God with all their heart and their neighbours as themselves are nevertheless burdened with defects because their souls 1. dwell in a shattered body, and are pressed down thereby, that they cannot always exert themselves as they would, by thinking, speaking, and acting precisely right. For want of better bodily organs, they must at times think, speak, or act wrong; not indeed through a defect of love, but through a defect of knowledge. And while this is the case, notwithstanding that defect, and its consequences, they fulfil the law of love."

117 A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 396.

118 Cf. FLEW, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

119 Cf. POPE (A Compendium of Christian Theology, III, p. 84) and PLATT (art. Arminianism, Perfection, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 1, p. 810 f.; 9, p. 732), who consider Wesley's doctrine of perfection Arminian in type, although it was further developed and clarified.

120 Cf. HAGEN, *Litt om Wesleys lære om kristelig fullkommenhet*, art. in *Metodismen*, p. 48.

121 The Repentance of Believers, 1767, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 381 ff.

122 Cf. *ib.*, p. 381, where Wesley writes of the sin that remains in the justified but not entirely sanctified man: "Nor is it long before he feels *self-will* in his heart; even a will contrary to the will of God. A will every man must inevitably have, as long as he has an understanding. This is an essential part of human nature, indeed of the nature of every intelligent being. Our blessed Lord Himself had a will as a man; otherwise He had not been a man. But His human will was invariably subject to the will of His Father. At all times, and on all occasions, even in the deepest affliction, He could say, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt'. But this is not the case at all times, even with a true believer in Christ. He frequently finds his will more or less exalting itself against the will of God." In Original Sin, 1760 (The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 218 f.) the natural man is described thus: "Satan has stamped his own image on our heart in self-will also. 'I will', said he, before he was cast out of heaven, 'I will sit upon the sides of the north': I will do my own will and pleasure, independently on that of my Creator. The same does every man born into the world say, and that in a thousand instances; nay, and avow it too, without ever blushing upon the account, without either fear or shame. Ask the man, 'Why did you do this?' He answers, 'Because I had a mind to it'. What is this but, 'Because

it was my will'; that is, in effect, because the devil and I are agreed, because Satan and I govern our actions by one and the same principle. The will of God, meantime, is not in his thoughts, is not considered in the least degree; although it be the supreme rule of every intelligent creature, whether in heaven or earth, resulting from the essential, unalterable relation which all creatures bear to their Creator."

123 Minutes 1758, A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 397: "Q. How shall we avoid setting perfection too high or too low? A. By keeping to the Bible, and setting it just as high as the Scripture does. It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this, -- the pure love of God and man; the loving God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves. It is love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers, words, and actions."; letter 15 Sept. 1762, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 190.

124 Minutes, 1758, A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 396. Cf. A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 442; letter [Sept. 1762], The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 187.

125 Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1759, A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 394 ff.

126 Minutes, 1758, A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 396. Cf. The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757, The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 338.

127 Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1759, p. 395.

128 Cf. The Repentance of Believers, 1767, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 393: "Continue to believe in Him that loved thee, and gave Himself for thee; that bore all thy sins in His own body on the tree; and He saveth thee from all condemnation, by His blood continually applied. Thus it is that we continue in a justified state. And when we go on 'from faith to faith', when we have faith to be cleansed from indwelling sin, to be saved from all our uncleannesses, we are likewise saved from all that guilt, that *desert* of punishment, which we felt before. So that then we may say, not only,

Every moment, Lord, I want  
The merit of Thy death;

but, likewise, in the full assurance of faith,

Every moment, Lord, I have  
The merit of Thy death!

For, by that faith in His life, death, and intercession for us, renewed from moment to moment, we are every whit clean, and there is not only now no condemnation for us, but no such desert of punishment as was before, the Lord cleansing both our hearts and lives."

129 Minutes, 1758, A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 395.

130 Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 417. Cf. letters 30 July, and 15 Sept. 1762, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, pp. 186, 189.

131 Ib., P. 417: "Q. 8. But do we not 'in many things offend all', yea the best of us, even against this law? A. In one sense we do not, while all our tempers, and thoughts, and words, and works, spring from love. But in another we do, and shall do, more or less, as long as we remain in the body. For neither love nor the 'unction

of the Holy One' makes us infallible: Therefore, through unavoidable defect of understanding, we cannot but mistake in many things. And these mistakes will frequently occasion something wrong, both in our temper, and words, and actions. From mistaking his character, we may love a person less than he really deserves. And by the same mistake we are unavoidably led to speak or act, with regard to that person, in such a manner as is contrary to this law, in some or other of the preceding instances."

132 Letter 7 April 1763, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 208.

133 Minutes, 1758, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 395 f.

134 A Plain Account, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 443; *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, *ib.*, p. 417: "The holiest of men still need Christ as their Prophet, as 'the light of the world'. For he does not give them light, but from moment to moment: The instant he withdraws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their King; for God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain. They still need Christ as their Priest, to make atonement for their holy things. Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ."

135 *The Repentance of Believers*, 1767, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 393.

136 See above p. 118.

137 *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1763. *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 420.

138 *ib.*, p. 422.

139 *ib.*, p. 422 f.

140 Minutes 1758, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 402: "Q. But whence is it that some imagine they are thus sanctified, when in reality they are not? A. It is hence: They do not Judge by all the preceding marks, but either by part of them, or by others that are ambiguous. But I know no instance of a person attending to them all, and yet deceived in this matter. I believe there can be none in the world. If a man be deeply and fully convinced, after justification, of inbred sin; if he then experience a gradual mortification of sin, and afterwards an entire renewal in the image of God; if to this change, immensely greater than that wrought when he was justified, be added a clear, direct witness of the renewal; I judge it as impossible this man should be deceived herein, as that God should lie. And if one whom I know to be a man of veracity testify these things to me, I ought not, without some sufficient reason, to reject his testimony."

141 Matthew xxv. 37 he expounds thus: "But in what sense are we to understand the words that follow? 'Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and gave thee meat or thirsty, and gave thee drink?' They cannot be literal understood; they cannot answer in these very words; because it is not possible they should be ignorant that God had really wrought by them. Is it not then manifest, that these words are to be taken in a figurative sense? And can they imply any more, than that all which they have done will appear as nothing to them; will, as it were, vanish away, in view of what God their Saviour had done and suffered for them?" *Sermon on The Reward of the Righteous*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 129. Cf. Notes, 1755.

142 Minutes, 1758, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 399.

143 "But," Wesley continues, "we apprehend those would be sufficient proofs to any reasonable man, and such as would leave little room to doubt either the truth or depth of the work: (1.) If we had clear evidence

of his exemplary behaviour for some time before this supposed change. This would give us reason to believe, he would not 'lie for God', but speak neither more nor less than he felt; (2.) If he gave a distinct account of the time and manner wherein the change was wrought, with sound speech which could not be reproved; and, (3.) If it appeared that all his subsequent words and actions were holy and unblamable." *Ib.*, p. 398.

144 Sermon on the Mount: 1, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 323

145 *Ib.*, p. 328 f.

146 Cf. above, p. 152 f. See also sermon *Of the Church*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 398: "Yea, suppose God has now thoroughly cleansed our heart, and scattered the last remains of sin; yet how can we be sensible enough of our own helplessness, our utter inability to all good, unless we are every hour, yea, every moment, endued with power from on high? Who is able to think one good thought, or to form one good desire, unless by that almighty power which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure? We have need, even in this state of grace, to be thoroughly and continually penetrated with a sense of this. Otherwise we shall be in perpetual danger of robbing God of his honour, by glorying in something we have received, as though we had not received it."

147 Sermon *On Charity*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 48: "Nothing humbles the soul so deeply as love: It casts out all 'high conceits, engendering pride'; all arrogance and overweening; makes us little, and poor, and base, and vile in our own eyes. It abases us both before God and man; makes us willing to be the least of all, and the servants of all, and teaches us to say, 'A mote in the sun-beam is little, but I am infinitely less in the presence of God'." Cf. Sermon *On Zeal*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 59.

148 Sermon *On Patience*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 489.

149 In the Preface to *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley* Wesley declares that it is especially his desire "first, to guard those who are just setting their faces toward heaven (and who, having little acquaintance with the things of God, are the more liable to be turned out of the way), from formality, from mere outside religion, which has almost driven heart-religion out of the world; and, secondly, to warn those who know the religion of the heart, the faith which worketh by love, lest at any time they make void the law through faith, and so fall back into the snare of the devil." *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 32 f.

150 *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739. *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, I, p. xxii.

151 Journal 31 Dec. 1739, *The Journal of John Wesley*, II, p. 329 ff.; letter to the Church at Herrnhut, 8 August 1740, *The Letters of John Wesley*, I, p. 345 ff.

152 Cf, letter of 23 Nov. 1736, *The Letters of John Wesley*, I, p. 207: "I think the rock on which I had the nearest made shipwreck of the faith was the writings of the Mystics; under which term I comprehend all, and only those, who slight any of the means of grace." See *The Means of Grace*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 239 ff.

153 Cf. his criticism of Madame Guyon in letter, 19 Sept. 1773, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VI, p. 44.

154 In the Sermon *God's Vineyard*, 1788 (*The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 205) he says that he is "as tenacious of inward holiness as any Mystic, and of outward, as any Pharisee."

155 *The Great Assize*, dated 1758, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 408 f.

156 Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 424 ff. See further below, p. 182 f.

157 *Ib.*, p. 427.

158 Sermon The Wedding Garment, dat. 1790, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 314 ff.

159 Earlier he had expressed his keen appreciation of Clemens' description of the Christian, but under Reformed influence he criticizes it. Here he feels the account should be more biblical. Journal, 5 March 1767, The Journal of John Wesley, V, p. 197. He disapproves in particular of Stoic apathy: "Many years ago I might have said, but I do not now,

Give me a woman made of stone,  
A widow of Pygmalion.

And just such a Christian one of the Fathers, Clemens Alexandrinus, describes; but I do not admire that description now as I did formerly. I now see a Stoic and a Christian are different characters." Letter to Miss March 30 Nov. 1774, The Letters of John Wesley, VI, p. 129. Though he thus departs from Clemens, affinity remains in his way of describing the perfect character, the perfect Christian human type.

160 A Short Account of the Life and Death of the Rev. John Fletcher, 1786, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 340 ff.

161 Letter to the Rev. Dr. Middleton, 1749, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 72.

162 Cf. FLEW, *op. cit.*, p. 314 f.

163 Cf. FRIDRICHSEN, FullkomEghetskravet i Jesu förkunnelse, Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift v. 1933, p. 125 ff.

# Wesley and Sanctification

by

**Harald Lindström**

---

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CHRISTIAN LOVE

#### I

#### *The Idea of Love in William Law.*

Christian love is a factor both in the objective events of atonement and justification and in the subjective transformation of new birth and subsequent sanctification. In the former we see God's love to man in the latter man's love to God and his neighbour. In this chapter the latter kind of love must be considered. God's love, we have seen, is poured into the heart of man on new birth. One result is that man begins to love God and his neighbour; and as the Christian life develops this love increases. In Christian perfection, we have found, it becomes a perfect or pure love.

In order to fill in our survey of Wesley's doctrine of sanctification we must examine the composition of the love in which the true essence of sanctification is manifested.<sup>1</sup> Our aim, however, is also to determine his whole conception of religion from the standpoint of the idea of love. First, let us run over some of the outstanding characteristics of William Law's attitude to Christian love. Law's influence, we know, was decisive in Wesley's earliest period, before 1738. Indeed, as we saw in the previous chapter, there is even some affinity between Wesley's later outlook and that of Law in his earlier phase.

In Law attention is concentrated more on man's love to God and his neighbour than on God's love to man. This is a natural consequence of Law's general standpoint in religion. Everything is directed towards personal holiness as the preparation for entrance into eternal life. "If thou rememberest," he says, "that the whole Race of Mankind are a Race of fallen Spirits, that pass through this World as an Arrow passes through the Air, thou wilt soon perceive, that all Things here are equally great and equally little, and that there is no Wisdom or Happiness, but in getting away to the best Advantage."<sup>2</sup> Our life on earth is a mere journey to eternity. Man is sent into the world to "prepare himself to live with God in everlasting Happiness."<sup>3</sup> Law sees everything in terms of the goal of eternal life. The sole end of Christianity is to deliver us from our present misery and disorder and raise us to the blissful enjoyment of the divine nature.<sup>4</sup> Religion is the means necessary to the attainment of this end. For Law, Christianity is "a Course of holy Discipline, solely fitted to the Cure and Recovery of fallen Spirits, and intends such a Change in our Nature, as may raise us to a nearer Union with God, and qualify us for such high Degrees of Happiness."<sup>5</sup> Human nature must be transformed, the injury done to it cured. A pious and devoted life is the means by which man may

recover spiritual health and achieve a state of perfection and happiness in God.<sup>6</sup>

Law defines the ultimate goal of religion as participation in the happiness of Christ in Heaven. But if this is to be enjoyed we must in this life model ourselves upon Christ. Such imitation does not require outward resemblance, to the "*particular Actions*" of Christ, but it does require inward resemblance in "*Spirit and Temper.*" It means that we must act in accordance with the same rule as He and with eyes focussed on the same goal. It is the whole temper of Christ that must be imitated, not the trait of forgiveness alone but also His "Meakness, Humility, Devotion, and Renunciation of the World."<sup>7</sup> Man must purify and perfect his soul to the utmost of his power. Only if he does everything he possibly can for his own salvation, can he expect to be accepted by God. We can have no "Security of our Salvation, but by doing our utmost to deserve it."<sup>8</sup>

Human nature, however, cannot be changed without God's grace. His Spirit regenerates man's heart. This birth in the Spirit must of necessity be accompanied by complete self-denial, for the spirit of the world and man's corrupted heart are opposed to the Spirit of God.<sup>9</sup> For Law progress in sanctification towards perfection is a result of co-operation between divine grace and human obedience and effort. Through self-denial and mortification and through the imitation of Christ man becomes ready and worthy to receive grace; by these means he can promote the operation of grace within him. Accordingly we must give up all such "Tempers and Ways of Life" as make God "*withhold* his Grace from us; and likewise all those Enjoyments and Indulgences, which make us *less able* and *less disposed* to improve and co-operate with those Degrees of Divine Grace, that are communicated to us."<sup>10</sup> We must "*prepare* ourselves" for the presence in us of the Divine Spirit by loving Christ and keeping His commandments. Man must fulfil his obligations, for instance that of humility, not merely because it is a "reasonable Duty" and "proper to our State" but because it also "*qualifies and prepares* us for larger Degrees of Divine Grace, such as may Purify and Perfect our Souls in all Manner of Holiness."<sup>11</sup> Human conduct must conform to the requirements of a life guided by the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup> Through any "*wrong Turn of Mind,*" any "false Satisfaction," as well as through open vices, the soul can be thrown into a state contrary to religion and man become "unfit to receive its Doctrines." This is why religion "calls us to a State of *Self-denial, Humility, and Mortification,* because it is a State that awakens the Soul into right Apprehensions of Things, and qualifies us to see, and hear, and understand the Doctrines of eternal Truth."<sup>13</sup>

A marked teleological tendency is, we see, a feature of Law's Christianity. And this is determined by an eschatological motive: eternal life in Heaven. Everything is directed to the sanctification of man through an inherent ethical transformation as the condition of his justification at the last judgement. In this life man must be trained to qualify for "an eternal happiness in Heaven hereafter."<sup>14</sup> He must be fitted "to be glorious in the enjoyment of God to all eternity."<sup>15</sup> This is the end to which all else is but the means.

For Law, the practical mystic, salvation is primarily imitation of Christ. Christ came "to make us like Himself."<sup>16</sup> The objective aspect of atonement is always minimized. Instead, emphasis is laid on the necessity for man to live the life of the Cross, to imitate Christ.<sup>17</sup> Thus humility, mortification, and love to God and our neighbour become the chief characteristics of the Christian way of life and the essentials of Christianity.

This general alignment is naturally reflected in Law's attitude to love, the stress falling on man's love

to God and his neighbour. Like the transformation as a whole, love is seen as a means by which man is elevated to God's sphere. Man must become more and more like God, must become more and more perfect to attain final union with Him. Love, that is, is seen as an expression of progress upwards, the ascent from man to God.<sup>18</sup>

We see here how the idea of likeness to God and Christ dominates his conception of neighbourly love. "The newness of this precept," he writes of the text on love in St. John xiii. 34 f., "did not consist in this, that men were commanded to love one another; for this was an old precept, both of the law of Moses, and of nature. But it was new in this respect, that it was to imitate a new, and till then unheard-of example of love; it was to love one another, as Christ had loved us."<sup>19</sup> The highest view of man is one that regards him as a creature as like God as possible, when the concept of God employed is also the highest possible: that of a being of immeasurable love and goodness, who puts forth "an infinite wisdom and power, for the common good and happiness of all His creatures." In the same way man should also put forth "all his infinite faculties, whether of wisdom, power, or prayers, for the common good of all his fellow-creatures; heartily desiring they may have all the happiness they are capable of, and as many benefits, and assistances from him, as his state and condition in the world will permit him to give them."<sup>20</sup> Such universal love of our neighbours makes us like God, and thus no "principle of the heart" is more acceptable to Him.<sup>21</sup> In the character of Miranda in his *Serious Call* Law makes her compassion to sinners an example of likeness to God.<sup>22</sup> Miranda's behaviour is modelled on that of God, Christ, and the Apostles. Imitation of God is the motive of her love to her neighbour and of the practical application of that love.<sup>23</sup> Love, then, can make us one with God only if it is so pure and universal "as to imitate that love which God beareth to all His creatures."<sup>24</sup>

Man in his love of his neighbour is to imitate God in His love. Further, man is to love his neighbour like himself. These two principles emerge most clearly in Law's definition of the scope and nature of neighbourly love. Like God's love to us, man's love of his neighbour must be pure and universal. Like God Himself we must unselfishly wish all beings happiness.<sup>25</sup> Just as all created beings are the objects of God's eternal love, so our love of our neighbour must be universal.<sup>26</sup> The importance of this universality is particularly stressed.<sup>27</sup> It is only when extended to all that love becomes Christian love.<sup>28</sup> Otherwise it is without righteousness and piety and not superior to love on the natural plane.<sup>29</sup> The necessity of such universality is motivated firstly by reference to the Creation<sup>30</sup>, secondly by the idea of Christ's love of the sinner<sup>31</sup>, or by the idea of God's love to us "not because we are wise, and good, and holy, but in pity to us, because we want this happiness: He loves us, in order to make us good<sup>32</sup>." Thus man's love of his neighbour does not arise from the merits or qualities of the object.<sup>33</sup> It must include love of one's enemy too.<sup>34</sup>

Neighbourly love is "a love of benevolence."<sup>35</sup> It means feeling "all those sentiments" towards our neighbour that we feel towards ourselves. It means wishing him "everything that we may lawfully wish to ourselves; to be glad of every good, and sorry for every evil, that happens to him; and to be ready to do him all such acts of kindness, as we are always ready to do to ourselves." It "requires nothing of us but such good wishes, tender affections, and such acts of kindness, as we show to ourselves."<sup>36</sup> Neighbourly love is seen as a universal benevolence. This "love of benevolence" is not the same thing as the "esteem or veneration" that a human being should feel towards good men. The latter is appreciation of and respect for virtue. Thus it applies only to good and pious people and their actions. The former, on the other hand, embraces all men without exception, all, in equal

degree and without regard to merit. Man should love himself with this "love of benevolence," but on the other hand he ought not to have "a high esteem or honour" for his own "accomplishments, or behaviour."<sup>37</sup> A man may detest many of his own actions without ceasing to cherish "tender sentiments" towards himself, sentiments in which this benevolence is expressed, and it is possible to learn to love others in the same way: "We may have the highest good wishes towards them, desiring for them every good that we desire for ourselves, and yet, at the same time, dislike their way of life."<sup>38</sup>

We are beginning to see that Law regards even self-love as a legitimate form of Christian love. Neighbourly love means that we feel the same benevolence towards all others as we do towards ourselves. Proper self-love, that is, is the standard of neighbourly love. No opposition need arise between them; proper self-love can be fully reconciled with neighbourly love and indeed with every other form of Christian love. It is a conclusion that results from the incorporation of Christian love into a system of legality and rationality. In basing self-love and neighbourly love on the word and will of God, Law also makes them agree with an objective moral order. God's will itself harmonizes with this order too; the former is an expression of the latter. It is an order, which, since it expresses the divine law, is also regarded as an expression of reason and justice. Thus we are told that self-love is "just and reasonable."<sup>39</sup> In strict justice man should love all other men with the same love with which he justly loves himself. Neighbourly love becomes a duty based on the laws of God and of our nature.<sup>40</sup>

The rational and legal form given to the concept of love is an outcome of Law's basic theological position. Religion is associated with reason, despite his maintenance of a supernatural point of view against the rationalism of the Enlightenment.<sup>41</sup> The part played by reason in his theology is conspicuous in his early works, where the relation between religion and reason is expressly treated<sup>42</sup>, but the same fundamental view<sup>42</sup> is also apparent in the exposition of sanctification in *A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection* (1726) and in his *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1728). For Law the holy life was the reasonable life, in harmony with an objective rational order manifested in the laws of God and nature. It was man's duty to live in accordance with his reason.<sup>43</sup> Failure to do so was an offence against the law of his nature and rebellion against God, who had endowed man with this nature.<sup>44</sup> The sin lay in the fact that man abused his nature, refusing to adapt his behaviour to the end for which God had created him.<sup>45</sup> The duty or virtue of the Christian was based on the very nature and reason of things.<sup>46</sup> This necessarily implied acting according to God's will, for God was the highest reason.<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, the universality of neighbourly love is also based on a reasonable objective order, on grounds independent of any mutable subjective qualifications in the human beings to be loved. Thus we must love good and bad people equally.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, as we have seen, neighbourly love becomes a matter of strict justice.

Law puts heavy emphasis on neighbourly love but his guiding principle is nevertheless love to God. The former is regarded only as an offshoot of the latter.<sup>49</sup> Love to God is the most proper form of man's love. True, this is not often stated explicitly; but it is implicit in the general structure of neighbourly love and in Law's basic theology. Neighbourly love cannot have the same independent character as love to God since its necessity is urged by the need to imitate God and since it is seen as a means to union with God.<sup>50</sup> True, neighbourly love is also based on the divine word.<sup>51</sup> God's will is the chief motive behind all actions. But God's aim is the sanctification of man and the happiness that comes with it. Religion thus becomes identical in essence with sanctification. It is seen as the

means to the end of man's glorification and reunion with God. It follows that the imitation of God by which the end is attained must be put first and become the decisive factor in religion. Man's love, which constitutes the essence of sanctification, acquires the form of a life force flowing towards God. All love comes from God, Law says, and love alone can lead us back to Him.<sup>52</sup> In the mystical way, love to God becomes the most proper form of love in man. The way of life typical of mysticism is thus apparent.<sup>53</sup>

To recapitulate, then, we can say that the outstanding characteristics of Law's outlook are as follows: the teleological alignment, the emphasis given to the idea of imitation in his attitude to love, and the union of love with legality and rationality. Further, we have seen that love to God is the truest form of love in man. The stress is laid on the realization of fellowship with God on the basis not of sin but of holiness.

## II

### *The Idea of Love in Wesley: General Characteristics.*

Wesley shares the teleological leaning of Law and the mystics. It is the dominant principle in his approach to sanctification and religion generally both before and after 1738. We find it expressed in the idea of man as a spirit coming from God and whose object and task it is to return to Him. Like the mystics Wesley employs the metaphor of rivers returning to their source. In his university sermon, *The Circumcision of the Heart*, delivered at Oxford in 1733, he says: "Let the Spirit return to God that gave it, with the whole train of its affections. 'Unto the place from whence all the rivers came', thither let them flow again."<sup>54</sup> After 1738 we find the same idea in the preface (written in 1746) to his *Standard Sermons*. Here the return of the human spirit to God is illustrated by the simile of the flying arrow, an image he has obviously taken directly from Law. "To candid, reasonable men," he writes, "I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God: Just hovering over the great gulf; till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, -- the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way: For this very end he came from heaven."<sup>55</sup> This, as we have already seen in another connection, is the attitude that ultimately determines his theology, as it did that of the mystics. Everything is directed toward the perfecting of man as the condition of his glorification. In his life on earth man must be so transformed that he is fitted for eternal life.<sup>56</sup> A natural consequence, we have noted, is that salvation becomes a process of sanctification by which man is increasingly purified and perfected to attain his final goal. And since love was for Wesley the very essence of sanctification, it too must be teleologically determined in the same way: love must be accommodated to this progress towards the goal of salvation. It is also the highest value in the scale. Church, ordinances, outward acts, and inward tempers, all else acquires value only in so far as it leads to love, the highest goal of human zeal.<sup>57</sup>

The teleological structure of his theology is thus clearly seen in the way everything is directed to the final end and all else regarded as means to this end. The same alignment in the conception of love is again seen in the relation between atonement and sanctification, even after this had been deeply modified on Reformed lines. Sanctification is regarded as the object of atonement and justification.

God's love in atonement and justification aims at the establishment of the law of love in the human heart.<sup>58</sup> The main interest is thus directed towards the realisation of that aim. The stress falls on inherent ethical transformation in man, by which he becomes the subject of love. Thus when the relation between faith and love is under consideration the main stress will fall on the latter. This is the inevitable consequence of the teleological and subjective character of his idea of salvation. The object of salvation is the restoration in man of the love of God. This is effected by faith. But faith is only the means, the end is love.<sup>59</sup> The former, that is to say, is subordinated to the latter. Love is described as having eternal duration, whereas faith is transitory, something that applies only to man's life on earth. In the original state, we are told, love had no rival in the heart of man. Thus love existed before faith. Faith did not come until love had been lost through sin, and the intention is that it shall not survive the attainment of its purpose: the restoration of man to the love from which he has fallen.<sup>60</sup> It follows that man's fellowship with God in sanctification is seen primarily as a fellowship not of faith but of love. Under earthly conditions it must also be simultaneously fellowship in faith, but in proportion as the purpose of salvation has already been realized it will become increasingly a fellowship of love. And in the eternal life the perfect fellowship with God will be one of love alone.

Nevertheless, Wesley's conception of love, in spite of the influence on it of his fundamental teleology, could not be identical with that of Law and practical mysticism. Here too, and inevitably, the Reformed outlook, particularly as expressed in the conceptions of sin, man, atonement, and justification, makes itself felt. The Reformed influence -- like the directly Biblical one earlier -- made him give a new kind of prominence to atonement.<sup>61</sup> One result is that his way of basing the idea of love on that of atonement is not Law's way. Side by side with the teleological leaning a causal view can also be seen in Wesley and is much more stressed than it was by Law. The teleological approach is one of ends and means, in which ends are emphasized; the causal approach one of causes and effects, in which causes are emphasized. The former, as we have seen, stresses the subjective aspect (man's love), the latter the objective (God's love).

In Wesley, then, a causal view impinges upon the teleological. The former is again seen in the relation between faith and love: faith is the source of love. The derivation of this love from faith implies that the natural man is entirely without Christian love. He is, as we saw in chapter one, totally corrupt. In spite of his supernatural leanings Law allowed a certain continuity between natural man and the Divine and could regard religion as the purification and refinement of man's resources<sup>62</sup>, but Wesley's attitude to the Fall gave his view of man a deeper and Reformed purport. Natural man cannot love God and his neighbour. He cannot love God because he has no knowledge of him.<sup>63</sup> Love, therefore, must come from above. Man's love must be born of God's love. The latter must always precede the former.

This love is linked chiefly to faith in atonement and forgiveness. After 1738 faith is anchored in the atonement of Christ, and it is from this faith that Christian love derives.<sup>64</sup> Just as sanctification is now regarded as a consequence of saving faith in atonement<sup>65</sup>, so love to God and our neighbour, which is the essence of sanctification, is linked up with faith in atonement and assurance of forgiveness<sup>66</sup>. Love is seen as the direct fruit of justifying faith.<sup>67</sup> Love to God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Through this Spirit man looks up to God as his forgiving and loving father.<sup>68</sup> Thus God's love to man, manifested chiefly in the Atonement, precedes man's love, the former being regarded as the cause of the latter.

The conviction of God's forgiving love is the immediate cause of man's love to God. This is an idea to which he frequently returns; for instance, in *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1743): "How came you then to love him at first? Was it not because you knew that he loved you? Did you, could you, love God at all, till you tasted and saw that he was gracious; that he was merciful to you a sinner? What awaits then controversy, or strife of words? Out of thy own mouth! You own you had no love to God till you was sensible of his love to you. And whatever expressions any sinner who loves God uses, to denote God's love to him, you will always upon examination find, that they directly or indirectly imply forgiveness. Pardoning love is still at the root of all. He who was offended is now reconciled."<sup>69</sup> Thus not merely God's love to man but also the Spirit's direct testimony to it precede man's love. This witness, conveying to man the certainty of forgiveness and acceptance by God, is regarded as the chief cause of love to God and of all other fruits of the Spirit.<sup>70</sup> Thus faith in God and the conviction of His love are prerequisites of man's love to Him. It is only through this faith that the heart of man is imbued with the love of God and that man is led to love other men. Wesley develops this idea in his sermon *On Charity* (1788), maintaining that in I Cor. xiii the apostle means love of our neighbour: "I believe whoever carefully weighs the whole tenor of his discourse will be fully convinced of this. But it must be allowed to be such a love of our neighbour, as can only spring from the love of God. And whence does this love of God flow? Only from that faith which is of the operation of God; which whoever has, has a direct evidence that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.'" When this faith becomes a personal faith in the heart of man, "then, and not till then, 'the love of God is shed abroad in his heart'." It is a love that "sweetly constrains" him to love "every child of men."<sup>71</sup>

A causal approach is seen in the way the emphasis is laid on God's love to man as the source of man's love. God's love is the cause, man's love to God and his neighbour the natural consequence.<sup>72</sup> God's love in Christ is the source of man's love to God and his neighbour. Wesley finds the best expression of this in the words of St. John: "We love Him, because He first loved us."<sup>73</sup> The attention is first directed to God as the subject of love. It comes from above; its direction is from God to man. Accordingly, he draws attention to the necessity for man to receive the Holy Spirit if he will love, for love is a fruit of the Spirit.<sup>74</sup> Love to God is shed abroad in man's heart by the Holy Ghost that has been given to him.<sup>75</sup> It is seen as a fire descending on his heart, a divine fire of love, coming to man from above.<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, a causal approach is seen when we turn to the perfect love bestowed on man in entire sanctification. In both cases love is regarded as a gift conveyed to man by grace, by a direct and instantaneous act of God. We saw, however, that in Wesley new birth and entire sanctification must be regarded as stages in the process of salvation and not as isolated phenomena, and in the same way his idea of love cannot be disassociated from the idea of the order of salvation. Salvation is seen as a process composed of momentary and gradual steps. In the former case a causal approach is evident in justification (including the New Birth) and entire sanctification, whereas in the latter a more teleological attitude is seen in sanctification otherwise. Thus, as love is the essence of the Christian life, the causal approach is combined with a teleological one in the idea of love. But as love is seen within the framework of an order of salvation, the causal view will always be subordinate ultimately to the teleological. In the idea of salvation as a process a teleological standpoint must come first. In the last resort everything is directed towards its object: final justification and glorification. Love, then, will be seen both as the *point de départ* of the Christian life in new birth and as the object and final goal of this life in the ethical perfection on earth which

constitutes the condition for glorification. Since the main emphasis in the order of grace falls on sanctification the idea of love in this connection must carry a primarily teleological import. The idea of a love instilled on new birth will thus be determined by its object: that the work begun shall continue -- that thus love shall grow and be developed and perfected to the attainment of the final goal of salvation.

Further, the idea of Christian love is closely bound up with the idea of law. Love to God and our neighbour is also regarded as fulfilment of the law, the law of love.<sup>77</sup> Wesley's insistence on the law here is a result of his view of atonement, of the way in which he sees sanctification as the object of atonement. Thus the righteousness of Christ is considered imputed to man, but only in order that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in him.<sup>78</sup> And so fulfilment of the law is still a Christian duty, although now it derives from faith instead of being brought about by man's own works. The Christian is immune "from the curse of the moral law" but not released "from observing it." He is exempt from the "condemning power" of the law if he truly believes in Christ but not independent of its "directing power."<sup>79</sup> It is called the great and unchangeable law of love of God and our neighbour.<sup>80</sup> It is also binding for the believer.<sup>81</sup> Christ has not repealed it.<sup>82</sup> Love is the fulfilment of the law, not by delivering us from it but by compelling us to observe it. It does not render good works superfluous.<sup>83</sup> It is seen as an instrument of the grace of God.<sup>84</sup> It drives man to Christ, and to it man is driven by Christ.<sup>85</sup> It leads him steadfastly to the blood of atonement until its righteousness is fulfilled in him.<sup>86</sup> And thus it is again established through faith.<sup>87</sup>

The Christian, then, is bound by obedience to the moral law. But it is now written in his heart.<sup>88</sup> He obeys not in fear but in love.<sup>89</sup> Yet this evangelical principle behind obedience and works should be no less active than the previous legalistic one.<sup>90</sup> Grateful love to God because of his work in Christ compels man to love his neighbour. It is a love that does not rest content with refraining from the infliction of injury upon our neighbour, but one that continuously prompts us to do good. And thus the positive as well as the negative law of God is fulfilled.<sup>91</sup> In this way obedience to God, inward and outward, of the heart and in life, comes to be regarded as a fruit of the Spirit or of love to God and our neighbour.<sup>92</sup> He who verily loves God will try his best to do His will on earth as it is done in Heaven.<sup>93</sup> To the Christian it is happiness to do the will of God.<sup>94</sup> Such conformity to the commandments of God, by which man shows his love of Christ, is regarded as a work of Christ in him.<sup>95</sup>

But Wesley can reconcile with even greater clarity the idea of the law with an evangelical approach. He holds that the law and the gospel are simply two different points of view. If, for instance, the commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves is regarded as an order, it falls under the law, but if seen as a promise it becomes an integral part of the gospel. For the gospel is nothing but the law presented as a promise. In the light of the gospel the injunctions of the moral law are only a like number of glorious promises. The close connection between the law and the gospel is also seen in the way the law directs man to the gospel, and the gospel shows him how to fulfil the law with greater exactitude. The moral law commands man to do what he cannot possibly achieve by himself, but he trusts in God's promise to give him what the law prescribes. Thus every commandment in the Scriptures is a veiled promise. In undertaking to write His law in the heart of man God has engaged Himself to give whatever he commands.<sup>96</sup> Wesley can see love and obedience now as a gift, now as a law, and the consequence is that the idea of love never overthrows the idea of law. The moral law remains a law, to be fulfilled by the Christian, although fulfilment occurs through faith and can

therefore also be regarded as a work of God. Accordingly religion is sometimes defined in terms of love, sometimes in terms of the law.<sup>97</sup> The two are not at all incompatible. The close association of love with the law emerges again in his definition of Christian freedom. In a negative sense it means deliverance from the guilt and the power of sin; in a positive, it involves love to God and our neighbour and fulfilment of the law.<sup>98</sup> It comes to mean above all deliverance from the power of sin and ethical change. The concept is almost identical with that of sanctification.<sup>99</sup>

Wesley, like Law, can also give the idea of the law an appearance of rationality. This is not as marked in Wesley as in Law, but the resemblance is nevertheless striking. Wesley too can look at the law, an expression of God's will, as an eternal, reasonable scheme of things, and at religion as founded on, and fully in harmony with, eternal reason. "Why," he says, "this is the very religion we preach; a religion evidently founded on, and every way agreeable to, eternal reason, to the essential nature of things. Its foundation stands on the nature of God and the nature of man, together with their mutual relations."<sup>100</sup> Christianity is not "contradictory to right reason," and of the Christian we are told that, "so far as he departs from true, genuine reason, so far he departs from Christianity." His frame of mind, words, and actions must harmonize with "right reason."<sup>101</sup> The moral law, regarded as the imperishable image of God, can also be identified with supreme unchangeable reason, unalterable rectitude, and the everlasting fitness of all things.<sup>102</sup> Or it is defined as the immutable rule of right and wrong, resting on the nature and fitnesses of things and on their fundamental relations to one another. Since all these things and all the relations between them are the works of God, the law is seen as depending on God or His will.<sup>103</sup> It is a law that prescribes exactly what man ought to think, say, and do, with regard to the Creator, himself and all created beings, and in all respects it is adapted to the nature of things and to their mutual relations. Of the justice of the law we read: "It renders to all their due. It prescribes exactly what is right, precisely what ought to be done, said or thought, both with regard to the Author of our being, with regard to ourselves, and with regard to every creature which he has made. It is adapted, in all respects, to the nature of things, of the whole universe, and every individual. It is suited to all the circumstances of each, and to all their mutual relations, whether such as have existed from the beginning, or such as commenced in any following period. It is exactly agreeable to the fitnesses of things, whether essential or accidental. It clashes with none of these in any degree; nor is ever unconnected with them. If the word be taken in that sense, there is nothing arbitrary in the law of God. Although still the whole and every part thereof is totally dependent upon His will; so that, 'Thy will be done', is the supreme, universal law both in earth and heaven."<sup>104</sup> The idea of God's will as the supreme rule of every intelligent creature follows from his view of the creation. He says it rests on the essential unalterable relation in which the creatures stand to the Creator.<sup>105</sup> It is the natural, inevitable result of the relation between all creatures and their Creator.<sup>106</sup>

In this way Wesley reconciles religion with law and reason. The idea of order and harmony which is a typical feature of his theology fits in here.<sup>107</sup> In its practical formulation religion becomes a uniform, universal obedience, in which everything, great and small, has its proper place in the whole.<sup>108</sup>

It follows that even the idea of love must be adjusted to legality and rationality. Love becomes ordered love. It can be measured in size and degree and be marked by reason or merge with it. In *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1743) he asks: "And can there be a more equitable rule than this: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?' You will plead for the reasonableness of this, as also for that golden rule, (the only adequate measure of brotherly love, in all our words and

actions,) "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them?"<sup>109</sup> Love is seen as regulated. After saying that the Christian loves all men, Wesley, in *An Letter to the Rev. Dr. Middleton (1749)* continues: "And yet this universal benevolence does in nowise interfere with a peculiar regard for his relations, friends, and benefactors; a fervent love for his country; and the most endeared affection to all men of integrity, of clear and generous virtue."<sup>110</sup> The regulated nature of this love is also seen in the relation between neighbourly love and self-love.<sup>111</sup> Thus this train of thought, which Wesley shares with Law, finds expression even in the first post-1738 period. He employs it even when in other respects his new evangelical awareness is paramount and forces him to oppose Law. It is an attitude that persists, a typical element in his idea of love. He resorts to it again in speaking of the sharp antagonism between holiness and love and "all vile and inordinate affections."<sup>112</sup>

Yet this regulation of love and its alliance with law and reason does not lead Wesley to modify his supernaturalism.<sup>113</sup> This is even truer of Wesley than of Law. The former, as we have seen, based his view of love primarily on faith in atonement. Indeed his whole theological outlook is at variance with contemporary rationalism.

Love, however, is accommodated to a framework of rationality and legality. The Reformed outlook is merged with one that follows the directive of William Law. Nor did the Enlightenment, we see in this alloying of the idea of love, leave Wesley entirely uninfluenced in spite of his reaction against it.<sup>114</sup>

### III

#### *Love in Relation to its Objects.*

So far we have been discussing his idea of love in general terms. We must now examine love in relation to its objects. The law prescribes man's relations to God, his neighbour, and himself, and Wesley adopts the same pattern in speaking of love. He is not concerned only with love to God and one's neighbour; self-love also has a place.

In our general analysis of love in Wesley, attention was paid to his view of love to God. We saw that God's love to man precedes man's love to God. We have seen how this love has its source in God's love, particularly as revealed in the act of atonement. But it can also refer to God as Creator and be seen as gratitude to Him.<sup>115</sup> The condition for it is knowledge of God, and this is supernatural knowledge. It is accorded to man by a Divine act of self-revelation. When determined in this way by its Divine origin it is clear that love acquires a causal character. Man loves God because God has loved him. His love is a natural result of God's. It is a reciprocated love, the immediate outcome of God's love. We have also seen that this Reformed, causal train of thought is linked up with a fundamental teleology in the idea of love.

An examination of love in its relation to its divine object will make it clear that into the Reformed outlook is woven another derived from mysticism and in line with Augustine's conception of love. Love to God has a parallel in love to the world. Love of the created competes with love of the Creator. The former is a kind of "affection," which, if directed to created things, is misdirected: it should be turned towards God. Man may desire other things only in so far as such desire is subordinated to love of God. Already in a letter of 1731 Wesley dwells on the opposition between

*frui* and *uti*. Love to God is seen in the fact that man enjoys God, whereas he only uses the world.<sup>116</sup> Two years later, in a university sermon, *The Circumcision of the Heart*, love to God is defined entirely on the same lines. God is the only perfect good and as such He should be the sole ultimate goal of man. Man may enjoy created things but only in so far as this enjoyment is subordinated to love of God and promotes it. "The one perfect Good," he says, "shall be your one ultimate end. One thing shall ye desire for its own sake, -- the fruition of Him that is all in all ... One design you are to pursue to the end of time, -- the enjoyment of God in time and in eternity. Desire other things, so far as they tend to this. Love the creature as it leads to the Creator. But in every step you take, be this the glorious point that terminates your view. Let every affection, and thought, and word, and work, be subordinate to this. Whatever ye desire or fear, whatever ye seek or shun, whatever ye think, speak, or do, be it in order to your happiness in God, the sole End, as well as Source, of your being."<sup>117</sup>

Such desire and yearning after God can be said to give love an egocentric stamp. But note that it is given a theocentric quality at the same time. Man's highest wish must be to do honour to God and suffer his life to be completely determined by God's will.<sup>118</sup> It is not only because God is the *summum bonum* that man shall exclusively concentrate his love on Him -- and love his neighbour merely because such love is implied in his love to God<sup>119</sup> or duly subordinated to it -- but also because it is God's desire to rule without a rival<sup>120</sup>. The two ideas are interwoven. Both, however, can be fitted into the framework of a view which lies behind and gives final unity to the total concept of love. We have already seen that man is considered as a spirit deriving from God whose goal and task on earth is to return to his origin.<sup>121</sup> Love to God is accommodated to this teleological context. It is the way back to God. It is both a desire to enjoy perfect fellowship with God and a means of attaining that end. Accordingly Wesley sees perfection in terms of the mystics' idea of purity in intention and affection. Love is a wholehearted attitude to God, a means to attain the end of perfect and final union with Him.<sup>122</sup>

The causal view dates, as we have seen, from 1738. The earlier teleological outlook persists but is modified in that the idea of love is given a new point of departure. However, love to the Creator and to the creature can still be compared. Natural man desires and finds his pleasure in the creation, the Christian finds his pleasure in God. This view of God as the highest good of man is expressed in 1742 in *The Character of a Methodist*. Here the Christian is described in ideal and perfect conditions: "God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul; which is constantly crying out, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! My God and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!'"<sup>123</sup> He has "the loving eye of his mind still fixed" upon God<sup>124</sup>; on the other hand he is dead to the world for "all his desire is unto God, and to the remembrance of his name"<sup>125</sup>. And he who loves God is also "happy in God."<sup>126</sup> A similar train of thought is found later, for instance in the sermon on Original Sin (1760) when the state of natural man is described. The natural man seeks happiness and satisfaction in the creation instead of the Creator: "What is more natural to us than to seek happiness in the creature, instead of the Creator? -- to seek that satisfaction in the works of his hands, which can be found in God only?"<sup>127</sup> Because we delight in what we love we cannot in our natural state find delight in God: "What we love we delight in: But no man has naturally any delight in God. In our natural state we cannot conceive how any one should delight in him. We take no pleasure in him at all; he is utterly tasteless to us."<sup>128</sup>

Yet the love, directed exclusively to God, which grows out of man's desire for Him, is quite different

in kind from love to the world and the creature, although both types seem to be synonymous with desire for their respective objects. The second type is regarded as an expression of man's corruption. It reveals the self-will of the natural man. He wants to exert his will and ignore his Creator's.<sup>129</sup> His love of the world comes out in "'the desire of the flesh' . . . 'the desire of the eye' . . . 'the pride of life' . . . the desire of praise, of the honour that cometh of men."<sup>130</sup> On the other hand love to God denotes an attitude to life determined by the will of God. Man's desire for God alone is identified with his longing to do His will alone. "Agreeable to this his one desire," we read, "is the one design of his life, namely, 'not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him'. His one intention at all times and in all things is, not to please himself, but Him whom his soul loveth."<sup>131</sup>

In love to God, then, the idea of man's desire for God is merged with that of surrender to Him and His will. Instead of loving the world and what is of it man must be crucified for it. He must deny himself and do, not his own will, but God's. This attitude to life links up with the idea that man should only use the world but enjoy God and seek all his happiness in Him. Fellowship with God, that is, is a happiness and joy to man precisely because his attitude to life is dictated by God's will, so that he has no higher wish than that His will shall be done.<sup>132</sup>

Later we again find the ideas of *uti* and *frui*.<sup>133</sup> We also find that of purity of intention as an expression of man's proper attitude to God. Purity of intention, which Wesley calls "the single eye,"<sup>134</sup> means a wholehearted attitude to God unsullied by any kind of ulterior motive. It is having "one design and one desire."<sup>135</sup> The one design is to learn to know God and Christ, to love God and in all respects to live to please Him<sup>136</sup> with singleness of heart<sup>137</sup>. At the same time it embraces enjoying "God in all, and above all things, in time and in eternity."<sup>138</sup> Such an attitude to God brings "Wisdom, Holiness, and Happiness."<sup>139</sup> The result is that knowledge and love flow into man's soul. If the eye of faith is steadily fixed on God's love in Christ man is filled with ever greater love to God and man.<sup>140</sup> Love to God can also be regarded as a direct result of the contemplation of God.<sup>141</sup>

In this formulation of the idea of love, love to God is seen in a will determined by God, but a teleological thread bearing on the present and then final happiness of man is also apparent. This train of thought is accommodated to a dominating and fundamental view of human life: in this world the soul must be changed and qualified for entry into life everlasting. By loving God only man qualifies for the state in which, his soul freed from his body, he can enter the immaterial world of immortality.<sup>142</sup> This concentration on God and eternity is sometimes expressed as a yearning for, and obtaining of, happiness.<sup>143</sup> Nothing in this world can satisfy the immortal soul of man. It was created by God to enjoy fellowship in Him. It is only in God that man can find peace, satisfaction, and happiness.<sup>144</sup>

In regarding love to God in this aspect of man's reunion with Him, Wesley has logically to make Him ultimately the sole object of human love. All else becomes a means to this end. Further, as love is considered a gradual growth, it follows that love to God as well as already involving fellowship with Him must also be seen as a progress towards an ever more perfect fellowship with Him.

The new starting point for love in 1738 also affects love to our neighbour. Its status in relation to love to God becomes rather more independent and as a result it is given greater emphasis.<sup>145</sup> Love to God, however, is still the main principle, although the two are welded indissolubly together. Love

to God is accompanied by neighbourly love.<sup>146</sup> Both have their common source in God's love to man. Occasionally neighbourly love and love to God are seen as deriving directly from God's love, particularly as manifested in the Atonement.<sup>147</sup> But this is not usually the case. Normally man's love to God is inserted as an intermediate link, neighbourly love being derived from it.<sup>148</sup> The order is thus: God's love to man -- man's love to God -- neighbourly love.

God's love to man, then, is the first but indirect cause of man's love to his neighbour. Man loves God because He loves him; further, because he loves God he loves his neighbour. Neighbourly love is regarded as a necessary fruit of love to God.

God is again the primary object of love when imitation of the behaviour of God and Christ is advanced as a reason why man should love his neighbour.<sup>149</sup> Because God loves all men, man must also do so.<sup>150</sup> The same attitude is seen when, in treating works, Wesley stresses the importance of purity of intention. Both in "works of piety," which show love to God, and in "works of charity or mercy," which show neighbourly love, man's sole intention must be to add to the honour of God and increase the happiness of man for God's sake.<sup>151</sup>

Neighbourly love can also be motivated from the idea of the creation. Here, too, the relation between man and his neighbour is of secondary importance in comparison with that between man and God. Because all men are brothers, children of the same father, they should love one another.<sup>152</sup> This love of our neighbour must issue from "a grateful, filial love to the common Father of all; to God, considered not only as his Father, but as 'the Father of the spirits of all flesh'; yea, as the general Parent and Friend of all the families both of heaven and earth."<sup>153</sup>

As to nature and scope, neighbourly love is described as a goodwill which man extends to everyone including his enemies. It means that he should "embrace his neighbour with the most tender goodwill, the most earnest and cordial affection, the most inflamed desires of preventing or removing all evil, and of procuring for him every possible good." Loving his neighbour like himself means loving "with the same invariable thirst after his happiness in every kind; the same unwearied care to screen him from whatever might grieve or hurt either his soul or body."<sup>154</sup> Wesley's definitions of neighbourly love become with time increasingly like what Law calls universal benevolence. It is a "universal, disinterested love<sup>155</sup>, "a sincere, tender, disinterested love for all mankind<sup>156</sup>, "universal benevolence; tender good-will to all men<sup>157</sup>." It is described as a "tender good-will to all the souls that God has made"<sup>158</sup> or as "benevolence to our fellow-creatures<sup>159</sup>." It is also defined in the words of St. Paul in I Cor. xiii.<sup>160</sup> Like Law Wesley too distinguishes between this "love of benevolence," which also includes love of God's enemies, and "a love of esteem or of complacence."<sup>161</sup>

The graduation and regulation of love which was mentioned above can now be specially applied to neighbourly love. The fields within which it operates can be represented as three concentric circles, the object of love covering a greater or smaller area. Later in life Wesley tends to speak increasingly of a type of brotherly love different from the all-embracing kind treated above. The latter applies to all men, the former to the Christian brotherhood only. Here there is an outer and an inner circle. The former embraces all mankind, the enemies of man and the enemies of God, and the stranger of whom we know neither good nor evil. The latter is restricted to friends, brothers in Christ, citizens

of the New Jerusalem, comrades in the same war and under the same leader.<sup>162</sup> Especial love is due to these latter, who love God.<sup>163</sup>

In both cases the kind of love is the same. We have already seen that the love of the outer circle could be described in the words of I Cor. xiii. It is "in itself generous and disinterested; springing from no view of advantage to himself, from no regard to profit or praise; no, nor even the pleasure of loving. This is the daughter, not the parent, of his affection."<sup>164</sup> The second kind of love can also be defined in the words of I Cor. xiii. "Love," we read, "me (but in a higher degree than thou dost the bulk of mankind) with the love that is *longsuffering and kind ... that envieth not ... that is not provoked ... Love me so as to think no evil of me ... Love me with the love that covereth all things ... that believeth all things ... that hopeth all things.*"<sup>165</sup> Thus the love is the same in kind; the difference is one of degree.

There is also a third area of love, an inner circle within that of Christian brotherly love. This comprises those to whom the Christian is joined not only in the Spirit but also by all the outward bonds of Christian fellowship; those who belong to the same congregation and in whose company he receives the means of grace. These are his nearest, his dearest brothers. These he regards as his own family.<sup>166</sup> As was the case between the love of the two other circles, there is again no distinction in kind. The difference is in degree. Thus love increases in degree from circle to circle in proportion as the area of the object of love shrinks.

The experience of God's love to man, resulting in sanctification, becomes the foundation of the unity of Christians. The fellowship of all Christians is based on love as the fruit of faith. This ecumenical feature is clearly discernible soon after 1738. In *The Character of a Methodist* (1742), he writes: "By these marks, by these fruits of a living faith, do we labour to distinguish ourselves from the unbelieving world, from all those whose minds or lives are not according to the Gospel of Christ. But from real Christians, of whatsoever denomination they be, we earnestly desire not to be distinguished at all, not from any who sincerely follow after what they know they have not attained. No: 'Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' And I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that we be in no wise divided among ourselves. Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? I ask no farther question. If it be, give me thy hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not destroy the work of God. Dost thou love and serve God? It is enough. I give thee the right hand of fellowship."<sup>167</sup> He expresses himself similarly in *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1745): "I will not quarrel with you about any opinion. Only see that your heart be right toward God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ; that you love your neighbour, and walk as your Master walked; and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions: I am weary to hear them. My soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion; give me an humble, gentle lover of God and man; a man full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my soul be with these Christians, wheresoever they are, and whatsoever opinion they are of. 'Whosoever' thus 'doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother'."<sup>168</sup> In 1750, in a sermon entitled *Catholic Spirit*, the ecumenical idea is presented in amplified form: although love is again graduated and divided between the three circles, great emphasis is given to the catholicity of the love represented by the first two categories. It is in the exposition of the second of these that Wesley defines his ecumenical outlook. The Christian fellowship is based on brotherly love between all Christians, a love that overrides

distinctions of doctrine, ritual, or ecclesiastical organization. It excludes all sectarianism and partisanship. Yet it need not involve indifference in these respects. It does not mean latitudinarianism, he says, whether speculative or practical. The man who is actuated by this Catholic spirit is steadfast in his judgement concerning the main points of Christian doctrine. His religious views are clear and definite although he is always ready to hear and ponder anything that can be said against them. He is not indifferent to the manner of worshipping God. He is "fixed in his congregation as well as his principles." Yet although the closest ties bind him to a particular congregation, he embraces all men with "strong and cordial affection<sup>169</sup>," and feels unceasing solicitude for those who believe in Christ, an "unspeakable tenderness," whatever their particular opinion, form of worship, or congregation, may be<sup>170</sup>. Thus the ecumenical attitude in Wesley follows the line later called "Life and Work" as distinguished from "Faith and Order." The unity refers to the heart, not opinions. All Christians, Wesley maintains, may be one in faith and experience, although differing in opinion and expression.<sup>171</sup>

When Wesley speaks of neighbourly love he sometimes touches on self-love as well. Yet in expounding the commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself in St. Matthew xxii. 39 all the emphasis is laid on neighbourly love. Self-love does not emerge as a delimitation of the former. Instead it is employed to underline the importance of brotherly love by comparison. This is done particularly when love of our neighbour is identified with the mind of Christ. Every Christian, we are told, loves his neighbour like himself, exactly, indeed, as Christ loved him.<sup>172</sup> In early Christian times neighbourly love was a love of all men, the evil and ungrateful included, and not least one's enemies. The latter "had a peculiar place, both in his heart and in his prayers." The Christian "loved them 'even as Christ loved us'."<sup>173</sup> Neighbourly love, we are told in the description of the marks of regeneration, includes love of our enemies. It is a love "whereby we love every man as ourselves; as we love our own souls. Nay, our Lord has expressed it still more strongly, teaching us to 'love one another, even as He hath loved us'."<sup>174</sup> Man must love his neighbours, each one of them, with such love that he is willing to lay down his life for any of them.<sup>175</sup> Love of one's enemy is particularly stressed.<sup>176</sup> Perfect love means that man feels and thinks as Christ did, that "we shall love every man so as to be ready to lay down our life for his sake; so as, by this love, to be free from anger, and pride, and from every unkind affection."<sup>177</sup>

This view is merged with another in which self-love expresses the idea of an ordered and regulated love and is a legitimate form of love. In the exposition of the commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself, self-love is regarded as an obvious pre-requisite. The commandment is understood to mean that equilibrium should be achieved between them. But this self-love must be of such a kind as to harmonize with love to God and our neighbour. The same idea emerges clearly when Wesley describes the commandment as a particularly just rule, and the golden rule "the only adequate measure of brotherly love."<sup>178</sup> The harmony in love achieved by this regulation means that there can be no opposition between true self-love and love to our neighbour. "By experience," we are told, "he knows that social love, if it mean the love of our neighbour, is absolutely different from self-love, even of the most allowable kind; just as different as the objects at which they point. And yet it is sure, that, if they are under due regulations, each will give additional force to the other, till they mix together never to be divided."<sup>179</sup> Proper self-love is not "a Sin" but "an indisputable Duty."<sup>180</sup> Man has obligations to himself just as he has to God and his neighbour.<sup>181</sup> Unregulated self-love is an expression of Sin<sup>182</sup> and thus proper self-love acquires the character of regulated love. The relation between neighbourly love and self-love should be a regulated one, a conclusion reflected in the

directions for practical behaviour. "Again: we would that all man should love and esteem us, and behave towards us according to justice, mercy, and truth. And we may reasonably desire, that they should do us all the good they can do, without injuring themselves; yea, that in outward things (according to the known rule), their superfluities should give way to our conveniences; their conveniences, to our necessities; and their necessities, to our extremities. Now, then, let us walk by the same rule: let us do unto all as we would they should do to us. Let us love and honour all men. Let justice, mercy, and truth govern all our minds and actions. Let our superfluities give way to our neighbour's conveniences (and who then will have any superfluities left?); our conveniences, to our neighbour's necessities; our necessities, to his extremities."<sup>183</sup> In the treatment of Christian stewardship in his sermon *The Use of Money* (1760) self-love and neighbourly love appear as forms of an ordered love grounded on love to God. "The directions which God has given us, touching the use of our wordly substance, may be comprised in the following particulars. If you desire to be a faithful and a wise steward, out of that portion of your Lord's goods which He has for the present lodged in your hands, but with the right of resuming whenever it pleases Him, first, provide things needful for yourself; food to eat, raiment to put on, whatever nature moderately requires for preserving the body in health and strength. Secondly, provide these for your wife, your children, your servants, or any others who pertain to your household. If, when this is done, there be an overplus left, then 'do good to them that are of the household of faith'. If there be an overplus still, 'as you have opportunity, do good unto all men'. In so doing, you give all you can; nay, in a sound sense, all you have: for all that is laid out in this manner is really given to God. You 'render unto God the things that are God's', not only by what you give to the poor, but also by that which you expend in providing things needful for yourself and your household."<sup>184</sup>

Self-love, then, must not be regarded as a rival to the love of God. The latter renders the former legitimate. Like neighbourly love, self-love operates within the framework of love to God. Thus it is this love that constitutes the quintessence of sanctification.

---

## FOOTNOTES

1 Letter of 15 Sept. 1790, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 238.

2 Letters: 24 March 1757, *The Letters of John Wesley*, III, p. 212; 3 April 1772, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 315; 8 Oct. 1774, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VI, p. 116.

3 *The Repentance of Believers*, 1767, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 391; letter of 28 Dec. 1770, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 215.

4 *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 456; letters: 17 Nov. 1781, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VII, p. 90; 19 Jan. 1782, *ib.*, p. 102 (entire salvation); 3 Febr. 1786, p. 314 (full and present salvation); 4 March 1786, p. 322.

5 *Minutes* 1747, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 293 f.; *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 456 (full sanctification); letter 27 Nov. 1770, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 210 (full sanctification).

6 The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 294.

7 Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 420. Cf. letters: 19 August 1759, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 71; 15 Sept. 1762, *ib.*, p. 188; 31 May 1771, The Letters of John Wesley, V, p. 255; 1 July 1772, The Letters of John Wesley, V, p. 325.

8 Letters: 6 Sept. 1757, The Letters of John Wesley, III, p. 221; 5 April 1758, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 10; 22 August 1759, *ib.*, p. 71 f.

9 Letters: 2 Nov. 1762, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 192; 30 May 1769, The Letters of John Wesley, V, p. 138. Cf. The Journal, 29 Dec. 1766, The Journal of John Wesley, V, p. 194.

10 "The perfection I hold is so far from being contrary to the doctrine of our Church, that it is exactly the same which every Clergyman prays for every Sunday: 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name'." An Answer to Mr. Rowland Hill's Tract Entitled, 'Imposture Detected', 1777, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 450. NUELSEN (John Wesley und das deutsche Kirchenlied, p. 55 ff.) points out the influence of the German hymnists: Terstegen and Paul Gerhardt.

11 In his abridgement of the Thirty-nine Articles Wesley omitted the second half of Art. XV (Of Christ alone without sin), which contains the words: "But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things, and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This did not tally with his intention in his doctrine of perfection. Cf. WHEELER, History and Exposition of the Twenty-five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, p. 27 f.

12 Cf. PLATT, art. Perfection, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 9, p. 732 f.

13 This is maintained throughout in A Plain Account. See The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 444.

14 Sermon on God's Vineyard, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 204, where Wesley also mentions the Spanish Benedictine monk Juan de Castaniza. On whom see Grosses Universal Lexicon, V, col. 1305.

15 LAW, Perfection, The Works of William Law., III, pp. 5 ff., 10, 45. Cf. FLEW, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

16 Cf. LANG, Puritanismus und Pietismus, p. 294 f.

17 *ib.*, p. 279.

18 *ib.*, p. 279.9 Cf. FRANÇOIS DE SALES Introduction à la vie dévote, p. 14.

19 See further the following chapter.

20 See The Circumcision of the Heart, 1733, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 266; A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 366 ff.; Journal and letters of the pre-1738 period. Cf. the letter to John Newton of 14 May 1765, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 298 f.

21 Cf. FLEW, *op. cit.*, p. 299; LANG, *op. cit.*, pp. 279, 290 ff.

22 Cf. JEREMY TAYLOR, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, p. 13 ff.; THOMAS à KEMPIS (*Of the Imitation of Christ*, pp. 50 f., 85) speaks of simplicity of intention.

23 Cf. THOMAS à KEMPIS, *op. cit.*; LAW, *op. cit.*, p. 215 ff. See FLEW, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

24 See next chapter.

25 *The Character of a Methodist*, 1742, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 344; *Sermon on the Mount: VI*, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 425 ff.; *Sermon on the Mount: VIII*, 1748, p. 473 ff.; *Sermon on The Imperfection of Human Knowledge*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 350.

26 *The Character of a Methodist*, 1742, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 344.

27 *Ib.*, P. 344.

28 *Ib.*, p. 345.

29 *Ib.*, p. 344.

30 *Ib.*, p. 346; Cf. *Christian Perfection*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 170 f. On the yearning for perfect imitation of God in Charles Wesley's hymns, see RATTENBURY, who also points out the difference between Charles and John Wesley's views of perfection. *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*, pp. 278 ff., 298 f.

31 *The Character of a Methodist*, 1742, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 341 ff.

32 *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739, *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, I, p. xx: "*They advise, 'To the desert, to the desert, and God will build you up'. Numberless are the commendations that occur in all their writings, not of retirement intermixed with conversation, but of an entire seclusion from men, (perhaps for months or years,) in order to purify the soul. Whereas, according to the judgment of our Lord, and the writings of His Apostles, it is only when we are knit together, that we have nourishment from Him, and increase with the increase of GOD.*"

33 *Ib.*, P. xxii: "*The Gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness, but social holiness. Faith working by love is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.*"

34 *Ib.*, p. xxii.

35 *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1742, *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, II, p. 46 f.

36 *Christian Perfection*, 1750, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 171.

37 *Ib.*, p. 169 ff.

38 *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1759, in *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 394.

39 *The Character of a Methodist*, 1742, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 343: "The love of God has purified his heart from all revengeful passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind temper or malign

affection. It hath cleansed him from pride and haughtiness of spirit, whereof alone cometh contention."

40 Minutes 1758, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 401; *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1763, in *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 418. Cf. letters 30 July, 15 Sept., and 2 Nov. 1762, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, pp. 186, 189, 192.

41 *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 444.

42 *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 413 ff.

43 LAW, op. cit., p. 7.

44 See *ib.*, p. 41.

45 *ib.*, p. 87.

46 *ib.*, p. 70.

47 See *ib.*, p. 86 f.

48 Letter, 28 Febr. 1730, *The Letters of John Wesley*, I, p. 48.

49 Sermon On the Holy Spirit, [1736], *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 514.

50 Sermon The Trouble and Rest of Good Men, 1735, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 366.

51 See letter of 5 April 1758, in which Wesley says this alteration took place in 1738. *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. II; Cf. letter 2 Nov. 1762, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 192.

52 *The Character of a Methodist*, 1742, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 341 ff.; *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, pp. 457 f., 460; Cf. letter 1 April 1766, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 7.

53 *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 452 f.; Cf. *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 382.

54 Minutes 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 285; Minutes 1747, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 294. Cf. letter (Sept. 1762): "As to the time, I believe this instant generally is the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body. But I believe it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before death. . . . I believe it is usually many years after justification, but that it *may be* within five years or five months after it. I know no conclusive argument to the contrary." *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 187.

55 Minutes, 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 285.

56 *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 457 ff.: "'But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified, -- saved from all sin, and perfected in love?' It is a divine evidence and conviction, first, that God hath promised it in the holy Scripture. . . . It is a divine evidence and conviction,

secondly, that what God hath promised He is able to perform. . . . It is, thirdly, a divine evidence and conviction that He is able and willing to do it now. And why not? Is not a moment to Him the same as a thousand years? He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is His will. And He cannot want or stay for any more *worthiness* or *fitness* in the persons He is pleased to honour. . . . To this confidence, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more, -- a divine evidence and conviction that He doeth it. . . . If you seek it by faith, you may expect it *as you are*; and if as you are, then expect it now. It is of importance to observe, that there is an inseparable connection between these three points, expect it *by faith*; expect it *as you are*; and expect it *now*. To deny one of them, is to deny them all; to allow one, is to allow them all." Cf. A Plain Account, p. 393, in which Wesley sums up his doctrine of perfection in three points: "(1.) That Christian perfection is that love of God and our neighbour, which implies deliverance from all sin. (2.) That this is received merely by faith. (3.) That it is given instantaneously, in one moment. (4.) That we are to expect it, not at death, but every moment; that now is the accepted time, now is the day of this salvation." See further letter [Sept. 1762], The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 187.

57 Minutes, 1758, in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 402 f.: "Q. How are we to wait for this change? A. Not in careless indifference, or indolent inactivity; but in vigorous, universal obedience, in a zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness, in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily; as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God. And if any man dream of attaining it any other way (yea, or of keeping it when it is attained, when he has received it even in the largest measure), he deceiveth his own soul. It is true, we receive it by simple faith; but God does not, will not, give that faith, unless we seek it with all diligence, in the way which he hath ordained."

58 Sermon On Perfection, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 414. Cf. above, p. 131.

59 Sermon on The Imperfection of Human Knowledge, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 349.

60 The Large Minutes, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 329: "If there be such a blessed change before death, should we not encourage all believers to expect it? and the rather, because constant experience shows, the more earnestly they expect this, the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their soul; the more watchful they are against all sin, the more careful to grow in grace, the more zealous of good works, and the more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God. Whereas, just the contrary effects are observed whenever this expectation ceases. They are 'saved by hope', by this hope of a total change, with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that salvation stands still, or, rather, decreases daily. Therefore whoever would advance the gradual change in believers should strongly insist on the instantaneous."

The chief reason why FLEISCH finds entire sanctification to be an inexplicable, magical intervention by God (Zur Geschichte der Heiligungsbewegung, I, p. 42 f.) is the inadequacy of the attention he pays to the connection between gradual and instantaneous sanctification, thus failing to arrive at the correct relation between faith and works in the doctrine of sanctification.

61 Christian Perfection, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 162 f.; Notes, 1755, John vii. 39. Cf. A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 408.

62 See Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 426 f.; letter, 15 Sept. 1762, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 190.

It is strange that he always refers to the experience of others and never to his own. As far as we know,

Wesley never expressly said that he had attained entire sanctification. O. A. Curtin, however, thinks he did say so, in the following passage from his Journal; "I saw every thought, as well as action or word, just as it was rising in my heart; and whether it was right before God, or tainted with pride or selfishness. I never knew before (I mean not as this time) what it was 'to be still before God' " (24 Dec. 1744). The next day he writes: "I walked, by the grace of God, in the same spirit; and about eight, being with two or three that believed in Jesus, I felt much awe and tender sense of the presence of God as greatly confirmed me therein: so that God was before me all the day long. I sought and found Him in every place; and could truly say, when I lay down at night, 'Now I have lived a day'" (The Journal of John Wesley, III, p. 157).

With MCCONNELL (John Wesley, p. 206) and FLEW (Op. cit., p. 329 f.), however, I am not convinced by this passage. The experience described is not fully identical with Christian perfection as defined by Wesley. In the letter of 5 March 1767 to which KRISTOFFERSEN (Metodismens vesen, art. in Metodismen, p. 30 f.) refers, Wesley expressly denies having attained the perfection he described in his tract The Character of a Methodist. But, he says, he and the Methodists desired and laboured after it. The Letters of John Wesley, V, p. 43 f. PLATT (art. Perfection, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 9, p. 731), SUGDEN (The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 150) and BETT (The Spirit of Methodism, p. 161) also repudiate Curtin's contention. Bett, it is true, citing a different passage, believes that Wesley nevertheless experienced entire sanctification. Cf. RATTENBURY, op. cit., p. 304.

He refers to the promises of salvation from all sin in Ps. cxxx. 8; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 29; Dent. xxx. 6; Eph. v. 25, 27; Rom. viii. 3 f.; I John iii. 8; further to the Lord's prayer (the last petition) and the prayers of entire sanctification in John xvii. 20 f., 23; Eph. iii. 14 ff.; I. Thess. v. 23; to the commands in Matth. v. 48, xxii. 37. To prove that it will take place before death he refers to: Titus ii. 11-14; Luke i. 69-75; 1 John iv. 17. See Minutes 1747, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 294 ff.; A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 389 ff.

63 V. ENGSTRÖM, Förlätelsetanken hos Luther och i nyare evangelisk teologi, P. 131.

64 Op. cit., P. 100 f.

65 ALTHAUS, Paulus und Luther fiber den Menschen, p. 70 f.

66 J. T. MÜLLER, Die symb. Bücher der ev. Kirche, p. 111. (De Justificatione.)

67 Ib., p. 115 ff. (Do Dilectione et Impletione Legis.) Cf. LINDSTRÖM, Skapelse och frälsning i Melanchthons teologi, p. 322.

68 Ib., p. 276. Cf. Augsburg Confession, ib., p. 42 (De Rebus Civilibus), where evangelical perfection is seen in "timore Dei et fide."

69 v. ENGSTRÖM, op. cit., p. 105 f.; LJUNGGREN, Synd och skuld i Luthers toologi, p. 341. ALTHAUS, Op. cit., pp. 68, 70 f. JOSEFSON, Ödmjukhet och tro, pp. 158 f., 162 f. On the difference, however, between Lutheran and Calvinistic view on sanctification and perfection, see SCHNECKENBURGER, Vergleichende Darstellung des lutherischen und reformierten Lehrbegriffs, 1, p. 166 ff.

70 A Short View of the Difference between the Moravian Brethren ... and the Reverend Mr. John and Charles Wesley, sec. ed., 1748, p. 7 f. The whole conversation in the original Latin in The Journal of John Wesley, II, p. 488 ff., also published in Büttingische Sammlung, III, p. 1026 ff. Cf. Spangenberg's view, Journal, 2 May 1741, The Journal of John Wesley, II, p. 451 f. Yet Wesley uses the Swedish Moravian Arvid Gradin's definition

of the full assurance of faith as an expression of perfection. A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 369.

71 PLITT, Zinzendorf's Theologie, 1, p. 412. On Zinzendorf's view, see further op. cit., I, p. 406 ff.; II, p. 330 ff.; BECKER, Zinzendorf in Verhältnis der Philosophie seiner Zeit, p. 299 ff.

72 In the Latin and complete version of the above-mentioned conversation Wesley asked: "Nonne habet in corde suo amorem Dei et proximi, quin et totam imaginem Dei?" Zinzendorf answered: "Habet. Sed haec sunt sanctitas legalis, non Evangelica. Sanctitas Evangelica eat fides." The Journal of John Wesley, II, p. 489.

73 Wesley refers to I John iv. 18. A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 442.

74 Minutes, 1758, A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 401; ib., p. 442, according to I. Thess. v. 16 ff. Cf. The Character of a Methodist, 1742, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 342 f.; Satan's Devices, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 192.

75 The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley, I, p. 200 f. Cf. A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 379 f.

76 The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 22.

77 The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 155.

78 See letter 24 March 1757, The Letters of John Wesley, III, p. 212 f.

79 Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 426; See also the short propositions of 1764 on Christian perfection in A Plain Account, ib., p. 442; Some Remarks on Mr Hill's "Farrago Double-distilled." 1773, AT., X, p. 426. Cf. letters: 26 Dec. 1761, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 167; 2 Nov. 1762 (to Thomas Maxfield): "But I dislike your supposing man may be as perfect as an angel; that he can be absolutely perfect; that he can be infallible, or above being tempted; or that the moment he is pure in heart he cannot fall from it." The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 192.

80 Journal, 16 Febr. 1760, The Journal of John Wesley, IV, p. 365 f.; A Short History of the People Called Methodists, written 1781, The Works of John Wesley, XIII, p. 349 f. Cf. TYREMAN, The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, II, p. 417; LEZIUS, Wesleys Perfectionismus und die Otley-Bewegung, Reinhold-Seeberg-Festschrift, II, p. 227 ff.

81 See above p. 133. Cf. IMPETA (De Leer der Heiliging en Volmaking bij Wesley en Fletcher, p. 254 ff.) who thinks that in fact Wesley believed as early as 1740 that entire sanctification is attained instantaneously and through faith. He thus rejects, rightly, the view held by Whitehead and tentatively by TYERMAN (Op. cit., II, pp. 417, 593 f.), that Wesley did not begin to preach this until 1760.

82 Cf. further Notes, 1755, I Cor. ii. 6; Eph. iv. 13; Col. iv. 12; I John ii. 12-14. In a letter to John Fletcher 22 March 1775 (The Letters of John Wesley, VI, p. 146) Wesley writes: "It is certain every babe in Christ has received the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit witnesses with his spirit that he is a child of God. But he has not obtained Christian Perfection. Perhaps you have not considered St. John's threefold distinction of Christian believers: little children, young men, and fathers. All of these had received the Holy Ghost; but only the fathers were perfected in love."

83 Sermon On Patience, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 489.

84 Notes, 1755, Phil. iii. 15.

85 A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 369.

86 Christian Perfection, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 156: "There is no *perfection of degrees*, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase. So that how much soever any man has attained, or in how high a degree soever lie is perfect, he hath still need to 'grow in grace', and daily to advance in the knowledge and love of God his Saviour."

87 Sermon On Patience, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 488.

88 Minutes 1744, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 279; A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 393.

89 On Patience, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 489.

90 Minutes 1758 in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 402.

91 On Sin in Believers, dat. 1763, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, pp. 373, 375 f.

92 Christian Perfection, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 158. Cf. letter 12 March 1756, The Letters of John Wesley, III, p. 169: "I believe even babes in Christ (*while they keep themselves*) *do not commit sin*. By *sin* I mean outward sin; and the word 'commit' I take in its plain, literal meaning."

93 Cf. On Sin in Believers, 1763, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 376 f.

94 The Repentance of Believers, 1767, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 385 ff.

95 In his commentary to I John v. 18 Wesley writes: "*He that is born of God* -- That sees and loves God, *sinneth not* -- So long as that loving Faith abides in him. He neither speaks nor does anything which God hath forbidden." But commenting I Cor. iii. 1 he says that "babes in Christ" are "still in great Measure *carnal*." Notes, 1755. Cf. On Sin in Believers, 1763, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 377: "In a degree, according to the measure of their faith, they are spiritual; yet in a degree they are carnal." See further especially The Repentance of Believers, dat. 1767, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 379 ff.

96 On Sin in Believers, 1763, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 367: "Indeed this grand point, that there are two contrary principles in believers -- nature and grace, the flesh and the Spirit -- runs through all the Epistles of St. Paul, yea, through all the holy Scriptures; almost all the directions and exhortations therein are founded on this supposition; pointing at wrong tempers or practices in those who are, notwithstanding, acknowledged by the inspired writers to be believers. And they are continually exhorted to fight with and conquer these by the power of the faith which was in them."

97 Christian Perfection, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 169.

98 A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 444.

99 Minutes 1758 in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 401.

100 The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, I, p. 41 f.

101 See Charles Wesley's hymn in The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley, II, p. 321 (1742); the following lines express the idea:

From all remaining filth within  
Let me in Thee salvation have;  
From actual and from inbred sin  
My ransom'd soul persist to save.

Wash out my deep original stain --  
Tell me no more it cannot be,  
Demons or men! The Lamb was slain,  
His blood was all pour'd out for me.

Sprinkle it, Jesu, on my heart!  
One drop of Thine all-cleansing blood  
Shall make my sinfulness depart,  
And fill me with the life of God.

102 The Works of John Wesley, IX, p. 312.

103 The Repentance of Believers, 1767, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 390 f. See also sermon What is man? 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 230. Cf. FLETCHER, A Vindication, p. 11.

104 Christian Perfection, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 153.

105 *Ib.*, P. 155: "Such are the weakness or slowness of understanding, dullness or confusedness of apprehension, incoherency of thought, irregular quickness or heaviness of imagination. Such (to mention no more of this kind) is the want of a ready or retentive memory. Such, in another kind, are those which are commonly, in some measure, consequent upon these; namely, slowness of speech, impropriety of language, ungracefulness of pronunciation; to which one might add a thousand nameless defects, either in conversation or behaviour. These are the infirmities which are found in the best of men, in a larger or smaller proportion. And from these none can hope to be perfectly freed, till the spirit returns to God that gave it."

106 Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1759, in A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 394.

107 *Ib.*, p. 396.

108 Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 415.

109 See Sermon On Perfection, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 411 ff. Cf. sermon The End of Christ's Coming, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 276 f.

110 The Righteousness of Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 134 f.

111 Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 415 f.

112 *Ib.*, p. 414.

113 *Ib.*, p. 415 f.

114 *Ib.*, p. 417.

115 Letter 15 Sept. 1762, The Letters of John Wesley, IV, p. 189.

116 Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection, 1763, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 419. "Those who love God with all their heart and their neighbours as themselves are nevertheless burdened with defects because their souls 1. dwell in a shattered body, and are pressed down thereby, that they cannot always exert themselves as they would, by thinking, speaking, and acting precisely right. For want of better bodily organs, they must at times think, speak, or act wrong; not indeed through a defect of love, but through a defect of knowledge. And while this is the case, notwithstanding that defect, and its consequences, they fulfil the law of love."

117 A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 396.

118 Cf. FLEW, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

119 Cf. POPE (A Compendium of Christian Theology, III, p. 84) and PLATT (art. Arminianism, Perfection, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 1, p. 810 f.; 9, p. 732), who consider Wesley's doctrine of perfection Arminian in type, although it was further developed and clarified.

120 Cf. HAGEN, Litt om Wesleys lære om kristelig fullkommenhet, art. in Metodismen, p. 48.

121 The Repentance of Believers, 1767, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 381 ff.

122 Cf. *ib.*, p. 381, where Wesley writes of the sin that remains in the justified but not entirely sanctified man: "Nor is it long before he feels *self-will* in his heart; even a will contrary to the will of God. A will every man must inevitably have, as long as he has an understanding. This is an essential part of human nature, indeed of the nature of every intelligent being. Our blessed Lord Himself had a will as a man; otherwise He had not been a man. But His human will was invariably subject to the will of His Father. At all times, and on all occasions, even in the deepest affliction, He could say, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt'. But this is not the case at all times, even with a true believer in Christ. He frequently finds his will more or less exalting itself against the will of God." In Original Sin, 1760 (The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 218 f.) the natural man is described thus: "Satan has stamped his own image on our heart in self-will also. 'I will', said he, before he was cast out of heaven, 'I will sit upon the sides of the north': I will do my own will and pleasure, independently on that of my Creator. The same does every man born into the world say, and that in a thousand instances; nay, and avow it too, without ever blushing upon the account, without either fear or shame. Ask the man, 'Why did you do this?' He answers, 'Because I had a mind to it'. What is this but, 'Because it was my will'; that is, in effect, because the devil and I are agreed, because Satan and I govern our actions by one and the same principle. The will of God, meantime, is not in his thoughts, is not considered in the least degree; although it be the supreme rule of every intelligent creature, whether in heaven or earth, resulting from the essential, unalterable relation which all creatures bear to their Creator."

123 Minutes 1758, A Plain Account, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 397: "Q. How shall we avoid setting

perfection too high or too low? A. By keeping to the Bible, and setting it just as high as the Scripture does. It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this, -- the pure love of God and man; the loving God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves. It is love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers, words, and actions."; letter 15 Sept. 1762, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 190.

124 Minutes, 1758, *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 396. Cf. *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 442; letter [Sept. 1762], *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 187.

125 *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1759, *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 394 ff.

126 Minutes, 1758, *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 396. Cf. *The Doctrine of Original Sin*, 1757, *The Works of John Wesley*, IX, p. 338.

127 *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1759, p. 395.

128 Cf. *The Repentance of Believers*, 1767, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 393: "Continue to believe in Him that loved thee, and gave Himself for thee; that bore all thy sins in His own body on the tree; and He saveth thee from all condemnation, by His blood continually applied. Thus it is that we continue in a justified state. And when we go on 'from faith to faith', when we have faith to be cleansed from indwelling sin, to be saved from all our uncleannesses, we are likewise saved from all that guilt, that *desert* of punishment, which we felt before. So that then we may say, not only,

Every moment, Lord, I want  
The merit of Thy death;

but, likewise, in the full assurance of faith,

Every moment, Lord, I have  
The merit of Thy death!

For, by that faith in His life, death, and intercession for us, renewed from moment to moment, we are every whit clean, and there is not only now no condemnation for us, but no such desert of punishment as was before, the Lord cleansing both our hearts and lives."

129 Minutes, 1758, *A Plain Account*, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 395.

130 *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1763, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 417. Cf. letters 30 July, and 15 Sept. 1762, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, pp. 186, 189.

131 *Ib.*, P. 417: "Q. 8. But do we not 'in many things offend all', yea the best of us, even against this law? A. In one sense we do not, while all our tempers, and thoughts, and words, and works, spring from love. But in another we do, and shall do, more or less, as long as we remain in the body. For neither love nor the 'unction of the Holy One' makes us infallible: Therefore, through unavoidable defect of understanding, we cannot but mistake in many things. And these mistakes will frequently occasion something wrong, both in our temper, and words, and actions. From mistaking his character, we may love a person less than he really deserves. And by the same mistake we are unavoidably led to speak or act, with regard to that person, in such a manner as is contrary to this law, in some or other of the preceding instances."

132 Letter 7 April 1763, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 208.

133 Minutes, 1758, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 395 f.

134 A Plain Account, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 443; *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, *ib.*, p. 417: "The holiest of men still need Christ as their Prophet, as 'the light of the world'. For he does not give them light, but from moment to moment: The instant he withdraws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their King; for God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain. They still need Christ as their Priest, to make atonement for their holy things. Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ."

135 *The Repentance of Believers*, 1767, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 393.

136 See above p. 118.

137 *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1763. *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 420.

138 *ib.*, p. 422.

139 *ib.*, p. 422 f.

140 Minutes 1758, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 402: "Q. But whence is it that some imagine they are thus sanctified, when in reality they are not? A. It is hence: They do not Judge by all the preceding marks, but either by part of them, or by others that are ambiguous. But I know no instance of a person attending to them all, and yet deceived in this matter. I believe there can be none in the world. If a man be deeply and fully convinced, after justification, of inbred sin; if he then experience a gradual mortification of sin, and afterwards an entire renewal in the image of God; if to this change, immensely greater than that wrought when he was justified, be added a clear, direct witness of the renewal; I judge it as impossible this man should be deceived herein, as that God should lie. And if one whom I know to be a man of veracity testify these things to me, I ought not, without some sufficient reason, to reject his testimony."

141 Matthew xxv. 37 he expounds thus: "But in what sense are we to understand the words that follow? 'Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and gave thee meat or thirsty, and gave thee drink?' They cannot be literal understood; they cannot answer in these very words; because it is not possible they should be ignorant that God had really wrought by them. Is it not then manifest, that these words are to be taken in a figurative sense? And can they imply any more, than that all which they have done will appear as nothing to them; will, as it were, vanish away, in view of what God their Saviour had done and suffered for them?" *Sermon on The Reward of the Righteous*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 129. Cf. Notes, 1755.

142 Minutes, 1758, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 399.

143 "But," Wesley continues, "we apprehend those would be sufficient proofs to any reasonable man, and such as would leave little room to doubt either the truth or depth of the work: (1.) If we had clear evidence of his exemplary behaviour for some time before this supposed change. This would give us reason to believe, he would not 'lie for God', but speak neither more nor less than he felt; (2.) If he gave a distinct account of the time and manner wherein the change was wrought, with sound speech which could not be reproved; and, (3.) If it appeared that all his subsequent words and actions were holy and unblamable." *ib.*, p. 398.

144 *Sermon on the Mount*: 1, 1748, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 323

145 lb., p. 328 f.

146 Cf. above, p. 152 f. See also sermon *Of the Church*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 398: "Yea, suppose God has now thoroughly cleansed our heart, and scattered the last remains of sin; yet how can we be sensible enough of our own helplessness, our utter inability to all good, unless we are every hour, yea, every moment, endued with power from on high? Who is able to think one good thought, or to form one good desire, unless by that almighty power which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure? We have need, even in this state of grace, to be thoroughly and continually penetrated with a sense of this. Otherwise we shall be in perpetual danger of robbing God of his honour, by glorying in something we have received, as though we had not received it."

147 *Sermon On Charity*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 48: "Nothing humbles the soul so deeply as love: It casts out all 'high conceits, engendering pride'; all arrogance and overweening; makes us little, and poor, and base, and vile in our own eyes. It abases us both before God and man; makes us willing to be the least of all, and the servants of all, and teaches us to say, 'A mote in the sun-beam is little, but I am infinitely less in the presence of God'." Cf. *Sermon On Zeal*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VII, p. 59.

148 *Sermon On Patience*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 489.

149 In the Preface to *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley* Wesley declares that it is especially his desire "first, to guard those who are just setting their faces toward heaven (and who, having little acquaintance with the things of God, are the more liable to be turned out of the way), from formality, from mere outside religion, which has almost driven heart-religion out of the world; and, secondly, to warn those who know the religion of the heart, the faith which worketh by love, lest at any time they make void the law through faith, and so fall back into the snare of the devil." *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 32 f.

150 *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739. *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, I, p. xxii.

151 *Journal* 31 Dec. 1739, *The Journal of John Wesley*, II, p. 329 ff.; letter to the Church at Herrnhut, 8 August 1740, *The Letters of John Wesley*, I, p. 345 ff.

152 Cf. letter of 23 Nov. 1736, *The Letters of John Wesley*, I, p. 207: "I think the rock on which I had the nearest made shipwreck of the faith was the writings of the Mystics; under which term I comprehend all, and only those, who slight any of the means of grace." See *The Means of Grace*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 239 ff.

153 Cf. his criticism of Madame Guyon in letter, 19 Sept. 1773, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VI, p. 44.

154 In the *Sermon God's Vineyard*, 1788 (*The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 205) he says that he is "as tenacious of inward holiness as any Mystic, and of outward, as any Pharisee."

155 *The Great Assize*, dated 1758, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 408 f.

156 *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, 1763, *The Works of John Wesley*, XI, p. 424 ff. See further below, p. 182 f.

157 lb., p. 427.

158 Sermon The Wedding Garment, dat. 1790, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 314 ff.

159 Earlier he had expressed his keen appreciation of Clemens' description of the Christian, but under Reformed influence he criticizes it. Here he feels the account should be more biblical. Journal, 5 March 1767, The Journal of John Wesley, V, p. 197. He disapproves in particular of Stoic apathy: "Many years ago I might have said, but I do not now,

Give me a woman made of stone,  
A widow of Pygmalion.

And just such a Christian one of the Fathers, Clemens Alexandrinus, describes; but I do not admire that description now as I did formerly. I now see a Stoic and a Christian are different characters." Letter to Miss March 30 Nov. 1774, The Letters of John Wesley, VI, p. 129. Though he thus departs from Clemens, affinity remains in his way of describing the perfect character, the perfect Christian human type.

160 A Short Account of the Life and Death of the Rev. John Fletcher, 1786, The Works of John Wesley, XI, p. 340 ff.

161 Letter to the Rev. Dr. Middleton, 1749, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 72.

162 Cf. FLEW, *op. cit.*, p. 314 f.

163 Cf. FRIDRICHSEN, FullkomEghetskravet i Jesu förkunnelse, Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift v. 1933, p. 125 ff.

# Wesley and Sanctification

by

Harald Lindström

---

## CHAPTER SIX

### SANCTIFICATION AND FINAL SALVATION

#### I

#### *Final Salvation as a Work of God.*

We have seen that in Wesley sanctification is not a necessary condition for present justification or present salvation. "Justification (or salvation) by faith alone" is a major theme in his teaching. This Reformed doctrine is nevertheless based on an Arminian view of election, with the inevitable consequences. After justification the Christian will grow in sanctification and seek perfection. During his life on earth he is to be made worthy of eternal life. Sanctification constitutes the prerequisite for final justification at the last judgment and for final salvation. Thus another major theme constantly recurs in Wesley: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." We must now examine this condition of final salvation more closely, and try to see how it affects the relation between present and final salvation.

We shall find that the ideas of present and final salvation converge in that of saving faith. In this both present and final salvation have their source. The man who through faith is justified and receives present salvation, achieves final salvation through continuing in faith. It follows that Wesley can call this continuance in faith the condition of final salvation. It means abiding in faith to the very end. "By 'the righteousness which is of faith' is meant, that condition of justification (and, in consequence, of present and final salvation, if we endure therein unto the end) which was given by God to *fallen man*, through the merits and mediation of His only-begotten Son."<sup>1</sup> We are also told, when the effect of justifying faith is under consideration: "And if thou endure to the end, believing in Jesus, thou shalt never taste the second death; but, having suffered with thy Lord, shalt also live and reign with Him for ever and ever."<sup>2</sup> Because of the atonement of Christ, all that now truly believe in Him are saved from their sins, and "if they endure to the end, shall be saved everlastingly."<sup>3</sup> Through the merits of Christ, all those who to the very end remain in the faith that is active in love, will be saved.<sup>4</sup> "He that through the power of faith," Wesley maintains with special emphasis on the faith active in love, "endureth to the end in humble, gentle, patient love; he, and he alone, shall, through the merits of Christ, 'inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world'."<sup>5</sup>

The faith that constitutes the condition for forgiveness and new birth is not as such, *in loco justificationis*, associated with love, but the faith which must be retained to preserve the Christian

life and to attain final salvation, is so associated. Opposed as always to outward, formalistic religion, Wesley insists that this faith must be accompanied by love. He describes it as a living, saving principle.<sup>6</sup> True faith must be accompanied by love to God and all men.<sup>7</sup> Faith is only possible so long as man loves God.<sup>8</sup>

Thus the condition necessary to final salvation coincides fairly closely with that necessary to the maintenance of the Christian life in general. In both cases it is a matter of the faith active in love. This is because Wesley regards the Christian life as a process of salvation leading to perfection. If the Christian continues in faith he will also develop in faith. So the Christian life is seen as a ripening process and by passing through it man is qualified for glorification and final salvation. A gradual development begins after new birth. "From that time (unless he make shipwreck of the faith) salvation gradually increases in his soul. For 'so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and it springeth up, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear'."<sup>9</sup> When man begins to believe, sanctification begins too. "And as faith increases, holiness increases, till we are created anew."<sup>10</sup>

In Wesley's opinion, then, the Christian need feel no anxiety over his final salvation, if he remains in faith. At the same time, however, the Christian life is directed towards perfection in a way typical of Wesley's teleological outlook. The Christian must leave the first milestones of his path well behind him and seek perfect sanctification.<sup>11</sup> This is essential if we are to "see the Lord" in glory, but "none who seeks it sincerely shall or can die without it; though possibly he may not attain it, till the very article of death."<sup>12</sup>

The concentration on final sanctification should not lead to forgetfulness of the magnificent gift already possessed in justification. The justified are already the children of God, no longer in a state of condemnation.<sup>13</sup> Perfect sanctification should be regarded as a promise to be fulfilled by God in his own good time. In sermons, therefore, it must be referred to "always by way of promise; always drawing, rather than driving."<sup>14</sup> To prevent this doctrine from reducing believers to a condition of slavish fear "we should always place it in the most amiable light, so that it may excite only hope, joy, and desire."<sup>15</sup> Nor should their Christian joyfulness be damped by it.<sup>16</sup> They must not be troubled by the fear of dying before they have been fully sanctified.<sup>17</sup> Nor must they allow themselves to be depressed by their awareness of the sin which is still in them. On the contrary, the deep consciousness of their sinful nature should only induce them to turn the more eagerly to Christ and with his help to continue on the path of sanctification and victory. The knowledge of his love should always grow still greater when the sense of sin is more profound. Our joy in God grows with our love to Him. The believer must not dwell so much on innate, inherent sin that he forgets or depreciates the change already bestowed on him.<sup>18</sup>

This problem, of such great importance in the Christian life, is most fully treated in a sermon published in 1750 and entitled *Satan's Devices*.<sup>19</sup> Here Wesley begins by describing the situation in which the Christian finds himself when he is already justified but looking ahead to full sanctification as a goal not yet reached. Already as a "babe in Christ" he has been granted forgiveness and the first fruits of God's spirit, but the harvest is not yet ripe. Although what he already possesses is of immense value, "yet we trust to see greater than these." The Christian, that is, also expects to be accorded perfect love in his heart. Here Wesley emphasizes the danger of allowing this expectation of a greater work of God to destroy or stunt the growth of His first work. Our joy in God can be

weakened if we are too preoccupied with our worthlessness and sinfulness and think too much of the greater change which must take place before we can see God in glory. Our peace is disturbed by the consciousness of our distance from the final goal. Confronted by God's holiness and our own sinfulness we begin to doubt our fellowship with God. We may even begin to doubt the reality of our acceptance and the basic truth on which we build our Christian life. And thus we may find ourselves back again at the point where we started and seek justification by works or through our own merits. Such thoughts as these, however, must be regarded as the devices of the devil, who tries to exploit the necessity of perfect sanctification in order to disturb the peace and happiness of the Christian. The devil also does his best to destroy the sanctity already acquired by the Christian. Happiness and peace contribute essentially to its furtherance. In so far as doubt and fear take their place, growth in sanctification is impeded. But this growth is most easily and effectively arrested when the devil attacks the Christian's faith, his belief in a loving and forgiving God. For this faith is the foundation of Christian life and the root of all holiness. The Christian will long earnestly for the perfection which even in this life will be bestowed upon him, but in doing so his attention must not be distracted from the imperishable inheritance of eternal life. Uninterrupted concentration on this eternal goal is a source of strength on which we must necessarily draw if we are to complete the course prescribed for us here on earth. By keeping our attention fixed on the joy in store for us above we are able to endure all the trials which God in his wisdom inflicts upon us, and so through holiness arrive at glory.

The Christian, Wesley continues, must not be depressed by these temptations. He must not let his happiness be undermined when he considers his situation. The deeper his awareness, by God's grace, of his own vileness, the greater should be his happiness in the confident hope that it will all be lifted from him. The more violently his peace of mind is upset by the thought that his righteousness is but imagined, the more earnestly must he cling to the true knowledge that he has been justified through faith in Christ and not because of his own merits. Nor must he succumb to the temptation to abandon his shield, his confidence in God's love; instead he must hold more firmly to what has already been given to him. He must never forget that he has an advocate in the Father and that he now lives in the faith of His love. In the peace and joy of faith the Christian must strive on towards the perfection necessary for final salvation. He must regard this sanctification, however, not as something which must be realized if he is not to go to Hell, but as something which will take him to Heaven. He must regard it as the most desirable gift that God can bestow, and if he looks at it in this light he will hunger and thirst all the more intensely for conformity with the image of God.

Wesley tries in this way to bind the idea of present to that of final salvation. The latter he regards as a promise that God when He thinks fit will implement for those who have continued in faith. The spiritual life, which through faith is bestowed on every Christian, is itself an earnest of eternal life.<sup>20</sup> What God has already done for him is a pledge of what he will do later through perfect sanctification.<sup>21</sup> He who has justified the Christian and begun his sanctification will carry on this work "till it issue in Glory."<sup>22</sup> The Christian who lives in faith can look forward in confidence to the glory which will be revealed.<sup>23</sup> Wesley, we see, is careful to present evangelically, and not with oppressive legalism, the perfection which is a necessary condition for entry into eternal life. At the same time, as we have seen, he contends that he who is not yet fully sanctified nevertheless enjoys the divine favour as a child of God. "By 'perfection,'" we are told in a most illuminating passage, "I mean 'perfect love', or the loving God with all our heart, so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. I am convinced every believer may attain this; yet I do not say he is in a state of damnation or under the curse of God till he does attain. No, he is in a state of

grace and in favour with God as long as he believes. Neither would I say, 'If you die without it, you will perish'; but rather, Till you are saved from unholy tempers, you are not ripe for glory. There will, therefore, more promises be fulfilled in your soul before God takes you to Himself."<sup>24</sup>

In Wesley, then, continuing in faith stands out as the fundamental and ultimate condition of final salvation. It results sooner or later in perfect sanctification, the immediate requirement. Further, we have seen how both the development of the Christian life on earth and its sequel in glorification are regarded in evangelical perspective; the whole can be seen as a work of God and as a promise that God will keep.

## II

### *Final Salvation and the Works of Man.*

Continuance in faith, however, is not regarded only as a work of God. It is at the same time dependent on the Christian himself. It is true that for a time immediately after 1738 this latter consideration is hardly discernible; it was swept aside by the new and overwhelming conviction of salvation by faith alone.<sup>25</sup> But it is not long before the idea of the importance of works in the preservation and development of the Christian life is explicitly expressed. As early as the conference of 1744, for instance, it is put thus: "Q. 11. Are works necessary to the continuance of faith? A. Without doubt; for a man may forfeit the free gift of God, either by sins of omission or commission."<sup>26</sup> The importance attributed to obedience is also seen in the view that faith is only lost through some form of disobedience on the part of man. The question "Can faith be lost but for want of works?" is answered: "It cannot but through disobedience."<sup>27</sup> The latter begins in an inward disobedience.<sup>28</sup> Wesley sees it as the beginning of a process of degeneration ending in total loss of faith and love.<sup>29</sup> Thus obedience is also necessary to the fulfilment of God's promise of entire sanctification. In obedience to His commandments and employment of the means of grace, the Christian must await this full change. "How should we wait for the fulfilling of this promise?" was one of the questions at the doctrinal conference of 1745. The answer ran: "In universal obedience; in keeping all the commandments; in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily. These are the general means which God hath ordained for our receiving his sanctifying grace. The particular are, -- prayer, searching the Scripture, communicating, and fasting."<sup>30</sup> Accordingly the Christian life will be marked by human activity. If it is to be upheld and developed, God's faithful care for those he has called must be accompanied by their obedience. The faith active in love and obedience is taken to be a condition for God's fulfilment of His promise. This line of thought is found as an expression of Wesley's Arminian view of election in *Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints*, published in 1751: "But how then is God faithful? I answer, In fulfilling, every promise which he hath made, to all to whom it is made, all who fulfil the condition of that promise. More particularly, (1.) 'God is faithful' in that 'he will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear'. (1 Cor. x. 13.) (2.) 'The Lord is faithful, to establish and keep you from evil'; (if you put your trust in him;) from all the evil which you might otherwise suffer, through 'unreasonable and wicked men'. (2 Thess. iii, 2, 3.) (3.) 'Quench not the Spirit; hold fast that which is good; abstain from all appearance of evil; and your whole spirit, soul, and body shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.' (1 Thess. v. 19, &c.) (4.) Be not

disobedient unto the heavenly calling; and 'God is faithful, by whom ye were called, to confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ'. (1 Cor. i. 8, 9.) Yet, notwithstanding all this, unless you fulfil the condition, you cannot attain the promise." "Nay, but are not 'all the promises, yea and amen'?" Wesley asks further, and replies: "They are firm as the pillars of heaven. Perform the condition, and the promise is sure. Believe, and thou shalt be saved."<sup>31</sup> The main point is that man should make use of the grace given to him, while awaiting the consummation of God's promises.<sup>32</sup> Grace accrues to man more and more abundantly, and faith grows in proportion as man makes use of the grace and faith allotted to him. Love and obedience may be explicitly called a pre-requisite for man's abiding in God's favour. In a statement made at the London conference in 1770, in which otherwise works are most strongly emphasized, we read as follows: " (1.) Who of us is now accepted of God? He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart."<sup>33</sup>

The importance of works is still more clearly shown when they are explicitly called a condition for final justification or when perfect sanctification is regarded as necessary to final salvation. In 1738, however, the idea of final salvation is pushed into the background. Instead, present salvation now becomes the object of his central, if not exclusive, interest. In principle the idea of such two-fold justification and salvation is present immediately after 1738<sup>34</sup>, but his view of salvation is dominated, particularly at first, wholly by present justification and present salvation<sup>35</sup>. This is a result of the supremacy now attained by the Reformed doctrine of justification through faith alone. As in the Article on justification in the Thirty-nine Articles<sup>36</sup>, and as in the Homily of Salvation<sup>37</sup>, in Wesley 'justification' in this connection means only present justification. The word is also virtually confined to this sense in his abridgement of the Thirty-nine Articles<sup>38</sup>, although the idea of the last judgement is also present<sup>39</sup>, just as there is a preoccupation with final salvation, seen as a result of predestination, in the original Articles<sup>40</sup>. This does not mean that the ethical consequences of salvation are now overlooked; on the contrary, they are strongly emphasized. But in this sense the works issuing from faith are not regarded as pre-requisites of a second and final salvation; they are only the necessary fruits of true faith. Thus a purely causal attitude is operative here. But when the idea of final salvation looms larger, works, i. e. works deriving from faith -- while at the same time being seen increasingly from the point of view of the law<sup>41</sup> --, take on further significance. Final justification is considered dependent upon them. This is already evident in the *Minutes* of 1744<sup>42</sup> and in *A Farther Appeal*, published the following year. In speaking of final salvation in the latter work Wesley calls "holiness or universal obedience" the "ordinary condition." For present salvation faith is the only condition, but for final salvation works are also necessary.<sup>43</sup> St. Paul's statement that faith made perfect by love, or Jacob's [James] that faith made perfect by works, constitutes the condition of salvation, refer, in Wesley's view, to "final salvation."<sup>44</sup>

Thus man's relation to God is seen by Wesley in terms of works as well as grace. Works, particularly in their bearing on the last judgement, are treated as a definite pre-requisite of final justification. "Q. 24. But do you consider, that we are under the covenant of grace, and that the covenant of works is now abolished? A. All mankind were under the covenant of grace, from the very hour that the original promise was made. If by the covenant of works you mean, that of unsinning obedience made with Adam before the fall, no man but Adam was ever under that covenant; for it was abolished before Cain was born. Yet it is not so abolished, but that it will stand, in a measure, even to the end of the world; that is, if we 'do this', we shall live; if not, we shall die eternally: If we do well, we shall live with God in glory; if evil, we shall die the second death. For every man shall be

judged in that day, and rewarded 'according to his works'.<sup>45</sup> At the last judgement the good steward will be rewarded according to his works.<sup>46</sup>

In the *Minutes* for 1770, in which the arguments against Antinomianism are particularly stressed, works are said to constitute a necessary condition for final salvation as well as an important factor in maintaining the Christian life. "We said in 1744," Wesley writes, "'We have leaned too much toward Calvinism'. Wherein? A. (1.) With regard to man's faithfulness. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression: Therefore we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert upon his authority, that if a man is not 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches'. (2.) With regard to 'working for life', which our Lord expressly commands us to do. 'Labour', ἐργάζεσθε, literally, 'work, for the meat that endureth to everlasting life'. And in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well as *from* life."<sup>47</sup> Final salvation presupposes "works as a condition."<sup>48</sup> "And who can deny," Wesley writes of this salvation in a letter explaining the tenets of the same London conference, "that both inward good works (loving God and our neighbour) and outward good works (keeping His commandments) are a condition of this? What is this more or less than '*Without holiness no man shall see the Lord*'?"<sup>49</sup>

We have seen, then, that the obedience and works issuing from faith can be directly or indirectly called necessary conditions of final justification. Earlier we saw how final salvation was dependent upon perfect sanctity. A closer examination of this dependence will now show that Wesley makes a distinction between 'condition' and 'merit'. Here sanctity is regarded as a condition of final salvation, but not as a merit on the strength of which final salvation or justification is accorded to man. This idea of merit is totally rejected with regard to present justification, nor is it allowed to obtrude upon the conception of final justification. In the latter as in the former case, Christ is declared the only meritorious cause of human salvation. A Christocentric view of salvation corresponds here to a Reformed view of man. Thus any notion of merit in man is repudiated. This applies even to the works done by the Christian through the grace of God.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, any notion of works of supererogation is ruled out. Man can never do more than his duty. All he has he has received from God, and thus everything is owed to Him.<sup>51</sup>

Wesley never wavered in his support of this Evangelical tenet. It is true that later on some of his statements in the Antinomian controversy might suggest that he did.<sup>52</sup> But when he pauses to amplify and explain, this Reformed line is always clearly reaffirmed. In his 1771 declaration on the controversy over the rulings of the conference of the year before, for instance, we find him writing: "Whereas the Doctrinal points in the Minutes of a Conference, held in London, August the 7th 1770, have been understood to favour Justification by Works: Now the Revd John Wesley & others assembled in Conference, do declare, That we had no such meaning; & that we abhor the Doctrine of Justification by Works, as a most perilous & abominable Doctrine. And as the said Minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare, in the sight of God, that we have no trust or Confidence but in the alone Merits of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ, for Justification or Salvation, either in Life, Death or the day of Judgement. And though no one is a real Christian Believer (and consequently cannot be saved) who doth not good works, where there is time & opportunity, yet our Works have no part in meriting or purchasing our Justification from first to last, either in whole or in part."<sup>53</sup> In a letter of the same year to his friend and collaborator, Fletcher, Wesley again insists that salvation is a work of God and that the works of Christ are its only meritorious cause. He contends here that on this point his views have not changed. "I always did (for

between these thirty and forty years)," he writes, "clearly assert the total fall of man, and his utter inability to do any good of himself: the absolute necessity of the grace and Spirit of God to raise even a good thought or desire in our hearts: the Lord's rewarding no work, and accepting of none, but so far as they proceed from his preventing, convincing and converting grace thro' the Beloved. The blood and righteousness of Christ being the sole meritorious cause of our salvation. And who is there in England that has asserted these things more strongly and steadily than I have done?"<sup>54</sup>

We find this repudiation of the idea of merit in Fletcher's interpretation of Wesley's attitude. Wesley's general distinction between "condition" and "merit" is made more precise by Fletcher, who distinguishes between "evidence of works" and "merit of works." When we are told that at the last judgement man will be justified because of his works, no merit is involved in the concept of 'works'. Justification is exclusively occasioned by the merits of the life and death of Christ, but "thy justification which is purchased by my alone merits, will entirely turn upon the *evidence* of thy works, according to the time and opportunity thou hast to do them'."<sup>55</sup> Wesley is extremely careful, Fletcher says, to defend himself against any idea of merit in man. It is the witness, not the merit, of works that Wesley has in mind when he makes final justification dependent upon them. It is a question of "justification by the evidence of works."<sup>56</sup>

Obedience and holiness are considered necessary to final salvation, but they have no meritorious significance. In final as in present salvation everything is dependent upon Christ's work of atonement. The idea of grace is also seen in the fact that the works necessary to final salvation are regarded as having been made possible by God. The grace of salvation is in Wesley the common foundation of all the phases in the process of salvation. Of everything that man undertakes on the path of salvation it is true to say that without God he can do nothing.

The relation between present and final justification can also be determined in another way, which brings out the organic connection between them. The former relates to faith, the latter to the fruits of faith. Accordingly, Fletcher defines the difference between first and second justification as follows: "My dear child, would I say, though hitherto this tree has produced nothing but crabs, yet by the skill of the gardener, who has just fixed in it that good little branch, it is now made an *apple-tree*, I *justify* and warrant it such. (Here is an emblem of our *first* justification by *faith!*) In three or four years, if we live, we will come again and see it: *If it thrives and bears fruit*, well; we shall then by that mark justify it a second time, we shall declare that it is a *good* apple-tree indeed, and fit to be transplanted from this wild nursery into a delightful orchard. But if we find that the old crabstock, instead of nourishing the graft, spends all its sap in producing wild shoots and sour crabs; or if it is a *tree whose fruit withereth without fruit, twice dead* (dead in the graft and in the stock) *plucked up by the root*, or quite cankered, far from declaring *it a good tree*, we shall pass sentence of condemnation upon it, and say, *Cut it down: Why cumbereth it the ground? For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.*' Here is an emblem of our *second* justification *by works*, or of the condemnation that will infallibly overtake those Laodicean professors and wretched apostates, whose faith is not shewn by works, where there is time and opportunity."<sup>57</sup> Special emphasis is laid on the fruits of the Christian life, since they are of such fundamental importance for final justification.

Wesley's simultaneous insistence on final salvation as a work of God and on works as the prerequisite of final justification, must be understood in the light of his formulation of the issue; here it

is not primarily a question of whether final salvation is attained through grace or through human merits. These alternatives are only dealt with when he is on the defensive. When this happens he repudiates the idea of human merit and defends the argument of grace. The real issue, however, is different, and in it his attitude to salvation is determined by his rejection of Antinomianism, the emphasis being laid on works and the law man must fulfil. His opposition to Antinomianism is motivated by the view of atonement according to which the work of Christ does not exempt us from the necessity of fulfilling the moral law. On the contrary the Christian is still under an obligation to fulfil this law; indeed, as we have already seen, the aim of atonement can be said to be man's real change and his fulfilment of the law.

The importance Wesley attributes to works is chiefly grounded on his objection to the Calvinist doctrine of election. Thus his opposition to Antinomianism is a necessary outcome of his Arminian outlook and the doctrine of prevenient grace, the latter a consequence of the former. Accordingly God's will to salvation is declared universal. No one can be utterly lost except as a result of his own actions. Faith is the condition of salvation just as absence of faith is the condition of damnation. Thus faith is a personal act on the part of man and of independent importance for salvation. This view of salvation as something also dependent on human decisions is emphasized by the idea of repentance before faith as a condition of justification and repentance after faith as a condition of perfect sanctification. In accordance with his Arminian view of election Wesley thus rejects the idea of a *gratia irresistibilis*.<sup>58</sup> Grace, that is, does not operate irresistibly; its effectiveness is dependent on human cooperation. In consonance with this basic idea he dismissed the doctrine of an unconditional perseverance. Thus those who believe in Christ are not regarded as incapable of apostasy.<sup>59</sup> A believer whose faith is wrecked, is *ipso facto* no longer a child of God. He is now in danger of Hell and will go there if he continues without faith.<sup>60</sup> Wesley thus rejects the idea of a state of grace from which apostasy is impossible; instead he accentuates the necessity of man's own contribution to salvation.<sup>61</sup> So the Christian life is seen in imperative as well as indicative terms: the Christian is already saved in faith but at the same time he is ceaselessly exhorted to continue in faith by means of obedience and to seek the sanctity which constitutes the pre-requisite of final salvation.

Although works are thus strongly emphasized, man's contribution is not assessed as highly as grace in the attainment of salvation. The former is always subordinate to the latter. The initiative always rests with God; and this is not all, for at every stage of the order of salvation the effective cause is always God's grace. On the other hand faith and the works issuing from it are means necessary to the realization of the divine redemptional intention. The efficacy of grace is therefore dependent upon them as means. In this sense man is an independent agent, although grace is the ground. He must make good use of the grace accorded to him. If he does, he can cooperate with grace. Here a certain synergism is inevitable, the result of Wesley's attempt to fuse two trains of thought: on the one hand the doctrine of original sin, in the light of which salvation must be entirely a work of God, and on the other, the Arminian view of election and the doctrine of prevenient grace, according to which man himself contributes to the attainment of salvation.<sup>62</sup>

### III

#### *Sanctification and Twofold Salvation.*

The causal and teleological trains of thought in Wesley's theology are also manifested in his twofold

view of salvation. The idea of present salvation can be said to correspond to the former. This is seen when the stress is laid on the state of grace already reached by the Christian and which will lead to final salvation if he remains in faith. But when final salvation is seen as the goal and sanctification as the means of attaining it, the teleological view emerges, and the Christian life becomes a striving towards its own consummation. Desire and effort are now focussed on final salvation and glorification. In the former case it is faith that comes to the fore, in the latter, the works issuing from it. In the former case the stress is on the work of God, in the latter, on the works of man.

The idea of a twofold justification involves a distinct tension in the Christian life: the tension between the experienced judgement of grace and the coming judgement of works. The Christian who has already been saved through faith, still awaits the final salvation for which the maturing power of sanctification will qualify him. The tension between present and final salvation can also be related to another tension contained in the idea of present salvation: the tension between the ideas of forgiveness and sanctification. According to the approach employed fellowship with God may be total or only partial. It is total from the angle of forgiveness: every believer, that is, is totally free from guilt. He is in a state of grace, no longer in a state of condemnation. He is accepted by God as one of His children. From the point of view of sanctification, however, salvation is divided up into the successive stages of a process. New birth involves only partial fellowship with God, a fellowship developing towards perfect sanctification. The latter is certainly perfect, but only by earthly standards. It is relative, not absolute. Wesley envisages a continued development in sanctification after the entire change in perfection. Therefore salvation from the point of view of real change is not considered fully consummated, not total. Whereas in the former case we have an objective event altering the relation between God and man, in the latter we have a subjective, empirical process. In the former case salvation is described as an instantaneous work, in the latter, partly as instantaneous -- with regard to new birth, which takes place simultaneously with forgiveness, and perfect sanctification -- and partly as gradual. Seen as a whole, then, salvation takes the form of a gradual process incorporating instantaneous events.

Wesley clearly took great pains to unify the diverse factors in salvation. Forgiveness and new birth are obviously very closely related: the one cannot occur without the other. After new birth sanctification develops towards the perfect real change that constitutes the pre-requisite of final salvation and glorification. There is thus a certain organic inter-relationship between the separate phases of the process of salvation. Present and final salvation are also connected. Each factor is treated as a link in the same chain<sup>63</sup> or as integral parts, each with its proper function, of a whole<sup>64</sup>. Yet this idea of an organic unity does not prevent him from regarding forgiveness and new birth, or present and final salvation, as separate and distinct one from the other. He distinguishes between new birth and forgiveness in a logical, though not in a temporal, sense. The difference between forgiveness and sanctification increases in so far as subsequent sanctification is regarded as an empirical process. As this process precedes final salvation, present and final salvation must denote events distinct in time and accorded to man under different circumstances.

Forgiveness and sanctification are the two cardinal factors in the idea of salvation, with the main stress on sanctification. Forgiveness, based on atonement, is the ground of the Christian life and in principle is never overstepped, yet nevertheless it is the idea of sanctification that dominates his whole theology. The conception of salvation is determined by the idea of sanctification, because salvation is seen as a process directed to the perfect, real change of the individual. And this process is the necessary condition for final salvation, which is the ultimate goal of the Christian life. The

emphasis is then laid on sanctification: the Christian must prepare himself for the last judgement and for entry into Heaven. The Christian, as in William Law and the mystics, is above all a pilgrim, his life on earth a journey, the destination Heaven. And the path he must travel to reach his goal is the path of sanctification, of real, empirical change in man.

---

## FOOTNOTES

1 The Righteousness of Faith, 1746, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 1, p. 136.

2 *Ib.*, p. 137 f.

3 A Dialogue Between an Antinomian and his Friend, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 267.

4 "Christ has not done all which was necessary for the absolute salvation of all mankind. For notwithstanding all that Christ has done, he that believeth not shall be damned. But he has done all which was necessary for the conditional salvation of all mankind; that is, if they believe; for through his merits all that believe to the end, with the faith that worketh by love, shall be saved." An Extract from 'A Short View of the Difference Between the Moravian Brethren (so called,) and the Rev. Mr. John and Charles Wesley'. The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 202. Cf. letter, 27 Nov. 1750, The Letters of John Wesley, III, p. 53.

5 Sermon On Charity, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 57.

6 An Earnest Appeal, 1743, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 19.

7 True faith cannot exist for one moment "without 'certain inherent qualities and dispositions', (viz., the love of God and of all mankind) 'which makes us meet for the kingdom of heaven'." A Dialogue, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 273 f.

8 Man believes no longer than he loves God, for "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails, without faith working by love." Minutes 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 282.

9 A Farther Appeal, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 48.

10 Minutes 1744, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 279.

11 See Minutes 1747, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 283 f.

12 Minutes 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 285.

13 On forgiveness the believer is "received into God's favour; into such a state, that, if we continue therein, we shall be finally saved." Minutes 1744, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 275.

14 Minutes 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 286: "Q. 8. In what manner should we preach entire sanctification? A. Scarce at all to those who axe not pressing forward. To those who are, always by way of promise; always drawing, rather than driving."

15 Minutes 1747, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 297: "Q. 16. Does not the harshly preaching perfection tend to bring believers into a kind of bondage, or slavish fear? A. It does: Therefore we should always place it in the most amiable light, so that it may excite only hope, joy, and desire."

16 *Ib.*, p. 297 f.: "Q. 17. Why may we not continue in the joy of faith even till we are made perfect? A. Why indeed! since holy grief does not quench this joy; since, even while we are under the cross, while we deeply partake of the sufferings of Christ, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable. Q. 18. Do we not discourage believers from rejoicing evermore? A. We ought not so to do. Let them all their life long rejoice unto God, so it be with reverence. And even if lightness or pride should mix with their joy, let us not strike at the joy itself, (this is the gift of God,) but at that lightness or pride, that the evil may cease and the good remain."

17 *Ib.*, p. 298: "Q. 19. Ought we to be anxiously careful about perfection, lest we should die before we have attained? A. In nowise. We ought to be thus careful for nothing, neither spiritual nor temporal."

18 Minutes 1747, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 298: "Q. 20. But ought we not to be troubled on account of the sinful nature which still remain in us? A. It is good for us to have a deep sense of this, and to be much ashamed before the Lord: But this should only incite us the more earnestly to turn unto Christ every moment, and to draw light, and life, and strenght from him, that we may go on conquering and to conquer. And, therefore, when the sense of our sin most abounds, the sense of his love should much more abound. Q. 21. Will our joy or our trouble increase as we grow in grace? A. Perhaps both. But without doubt our joy in the Lord will increase as our love increases. Q. 22. Is not the teaching believers to be continually poring upon their inbred sin, the ready way to make them forget that they were purged from their former sins? A. We find by experience it is; or to make them undervalue and account it a little thing: whereas, indeed, (though there are still greater gifts behind,) this is inexpressibly great and glorious."

19 *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 192 ff.

20 *Justification by Faith*, 1746, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 118.

21 *Satan's Devices*, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 203: "And if you thus 'taste of the good word, and of the powers of the world to come', you will not murmur against God, because you are not yet 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light'. Instead of repining at your not being wholly delivered, you will praise God for thus far delivering you. You will magnify God for what He hath done, and take it as an earnest of what He will do. You will not fret against Him, because you are not yet renewed, but bless Him because you shall be; and because 'now is your salvation' from all sin nearer than when you 'first' believed'. Instead of uselessly tormenting yourself because the time is not fully come, you will calmly and quietly wait for it, that it 'will come, and will not tarry'. You may therefore the more cheerfully endure, as yet, the burden of sin that still remains in you, because it will not always remain. Yet a little while, and it shall be clean gone. Only 'tarry. thou the Lord's leisure': be strong, and 'He shall comfort thy heart'; and put thou thy trust in the Lord!" Cf. *Heaviness through Manifold Temptations*, 1760, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 276.

22 *Notes*, 1755, *Phil. i. 6*.

23 *Heaviness through Manifold Temptations*, 1760, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 11, p. 275 f. "Indeed our hope cannot but increase in the same proportion with our faith. On this foundation it stands: believing in His name, living by faith in the Son of God, we hope for, we have a confident expectation of, the glory which shall be revealed; and, consequently, whatever strenghtens our faith, increases our hope also. At the same time it increases our joy in the Lord, which cannot but attend an hope full of immortality. In this view the Apostle exhorts believers in the other chapter 'Rejoice that ye are partakers of the sufferings of

Christ.' On this very account, 'happy are you; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you': and hereby ye are enabled, even in the midst of sufferings, to 'rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory'."

24 Letter to Elizabeth Hardy, 5 April 1758, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 10.

25 See *Salvation by Faith*, 1738, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, 1, p. 37 ff.

26 Minutes, 1744, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 277.

27 *Ib.*, p. 277.

28 Minutes, 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 283: "Q. 12. Can faith be lost, but through disobedience? A. It cannot. A believer first inwardly disobeys, inclines to sin with his heart: Then his intercourse with God is cut off; that is, his faith is lost: And after this, he may fall into outward sin, being now weak and like another man."

29 See above, p. 39.

30 Minutes, 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 286.

31 *The Works of John Wesley*, X, p. 290.

32 He writes of entire sanctification: "To use the grace we have, and now to expect all we want, is the grand secret." Letter to Miss March, 13 Oct. 1765, *The Letters of John Wesley*, IV, p. 313. Cf. letter of 29 June 1767, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 54.

33 Minutes, 1770, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 337. See above, p. 97 f.

34 See *Salvation by Faith*, 1738, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 41.

35 See *ib.*, p. 41 ff.; *An Earnest Appeal*, 1743, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 3 ff., in which the question of final salvation does not arise; *Journal for 1739, 1741, and 1742*, *The Journal of John Wesley*, II, pp. 275; 326; *The Journal of John Wesley*, III, p. 28.

36 On the nature of justification he writes in *A Farther Appeal*, 1745, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 46 f.: "It sometimes means our acquittal at the last day. (Matt. xii. 37.) But this is altogether out of the present question; that justification whereof our Articles and Homilies speak, meaning present forgiveness, pardon of sins, and, consequently, acceptance with God; who therein 'declares his righteousness' (or mercy, by or) 'for the remission of the sins that are past'; saying, 'I will be merciful to thy unrighteousness, and thine iniquities I will remember no more'. (Rom. iii. 25; Heb. viii. 12.)" See Articles XI, XII, and XIII in the Thirty-nine Articles, *Corp. Conf., Die Kirche von England*, p. 383 f.

37 *Corp. Conf., Die Kirche von England*, p. 449 ff. Here present salvation is meant. In the background, however, there is also the idea of a final judgement according to works performed through faith. See *ib.*, p. 463 f.

38 See the Articles IX, X, and XII. *Corp. Conf., Die bischöfliche Methodistenkirche*, p. 12 f.

39 Article III.

40 Article XVII; but this is omitted in Wesley's abridgement.

41 Minutes, 1744, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 278.

42 *Ib.*, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 277: "Q. 14. St. Paul says, Abraham was not justified by works; St. James, he was justified by works. Do they not contradict each other? A. No: (1.) Because they do not speak of the same justification. St. Paul speaks of that justification which was when Abraham was seventyfive years old, above twenty years before Isaac was born; St. James, of that justification which was when he offered up Isaac on the altar. (2.) Because they do not speak of the same works; St. Paul speaking of works that precede faith; St. James, of works that spring from it."

43 A Farther Appeal, 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 68 f.: "With regard to the *condition* of salvation, it may be remembered that I allow, not only faith, but likewise holiness or universal obedience, to be the ordinary condition of final salvation; and that when I say, Faith alone is the condition of present salvation, what I would assert is this: (1.) That without faith no man can be saved from his sins; can be either inwardly or outwardly holy. And, (2.) That at what time soever faith is given, holiness commences in the soul. For that instant 'the love of God' (which is the source of holiness) 'is shed abroad in the heart'."

44 *Ib.*, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 69.

45 Minutes 1746, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 289.

46 The Good Steward, written 1768, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, 11, p. 478.

47 The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 337.

48 *Ib.*, p. 337.

49 Letter to Several Preachers and Friends, 10 July 1771, The Letters of John Wesley, V, p. 264. See as well the postscript to the statement on works as a condition in Point 5 in Minutes 1770. Wesley fears that for the last thirty years they have merely been arguing about "words." "That is," he adds here, "so far as we have been disputing (as I did with Dr. Church) whether works be a *condition* of salvation -- yea, or of justification, suppose you take that term as our Lord does (Matt. xii. 37), where (speaking of the Last Day) He says, '*By thy words thou shalt be justified*'. With justification as it means our first acceptance with God this proposition has nothing to do." The following passage shows that for some little time after 1738 he could not give such emphasis to the importance of works for final salvation: "'Tis true thirty years ago I was very angry with Bishop Bull, that great light of the Christian Church, because in his *Harmonica Apostolica* he distinguishes our first from our final justification, and affirms both inward and outward good works to be the condition of the latter, though not the former." *Ib.*, p. 264.

For explanation of the statements in Minutes 1770, see FLETCHER, A Vindication, 1771. In five letters to Shirley, Fletcher defends Wesley against his critics. Wesley, who read the manuscript copy and gave it to the printer (see FLETCHER, A Second Check to Antinomianism, p. viii; TYERMAN, The Life and Times of John Wesley, III, p. 100 f.) finds these letters consonant with Scripture. See Letter to The Countess of Huntingdon, 14 Aug. 1771, The Letters of John Wesley, V, p. 274 f.

50 Minutes 1745, The Works of John Wesley, VIII, p. 285: "Q. 23. Wherein may we come to the very edge of

Calvinism? A. (1.) In ascribing all good to the free grace of God. (2.) In denying all natural free-will, and all power antecedent to grace. And, (3.) In excluding all merit from man; even for what he has or does by the grace of God. Q. 24. Wherein may we come to the edge of Antinomianism? A. (1.) In exalting the merits and love of Christ. (2.) In rejoicing evermore."

51 *The Good Steward*, 1768, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, s. 479: "We learn from hence, thirdly, that there are no works of supererogation; that we can never do more than our duty, seeing all we have is not our own, but God's; all we can do is due to Him. We have not received this or that, or many things only, but everything from Him therefore, everything is His due. He that gives us all, must needs have a right to all: so that if we pay Him anything less than all, we cannot be faithful stewards." Cf. *The Lord our Righteousness*, 1765, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, II, p. 439.

52 See *Minutes 1770*, *The Works of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 337 f.; *Letter to Several Preachers and Friends*, 10 Juli 1771, *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, p. 264 f. The idea that we are "rewarded *according to our works*," or "*because of our works*" at the Last Day is not distinguished here from '*secundum merita operum*.'"

In a letter to his brother Charles, 3 Aug. 1771, Wesley does however make a certain distinction between "meritorious" and "rewardable ... .. I neither plead for merit nor against it. I have nothing to do with it. I have declared a thousand times there is no goodness in man till he is justified; no merit either before or after: that is, taking the word in its proper sense; for in a loose sense *meritorious* means no more than *rewardable*." *The Letters of John Wesley*, V, s. 270. See also *Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's "Review of all the Doctrines Taught by Mr. John Wesley," 1772*, *The Works of John Wesley*, X, p. 392 f., in which Wesley utterly repudiates the idea of merit "in a strict sense" but does not condemn it "in a looser sense," although he says he never uses it.

53 This statement in facsimile: *The Journal of John Wesley*, V, p. 427. Cf. TYFRMAN, *Op. Cit.*, III, P. 100.

54 Printed in FLETCHER, *A Vindication*, 1771, p. 21.

55 FLETCHER, *A Second Check to Antinomianism*, 1771, p. 27. Here Fletcher defends the three points of the 1771 declaration: "*We have no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of Christ for justification in the day of judgement. -- Works have no part in meriting or purchasing our justification from first to last, either in whole or in part. -- He is not a real Christian Believer (and consequently cannot be saved) who does not good works where there is time and opportunity.*"

56 *ib.*, p. 28.

57 *ib.*, p. 30 f.

58 *Predestination Calmly Considered*, 1752, *The Works of John Wesley*, X, p. 254 f.; *Notes*, 1755, Rom viii. 30; sermon *The General Spread of the Gospel*, 1788, *The Works of John Wesley*, VI, p. 280 f.

59 *Salvation by Faith*, 1738, *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, I, p. 43.

60 *Serious Thoughts upon The Perseverance of the Saints*, 1751, *The Works of John Wesley*, X, p. 297.

61 *Letter 3 Aug. 1789*, *The Letters of John Wesley*, VIII, p. 159 f.

62 Of course, as the cause of sanctification, divine grace is strongly emphasized. The appeal to man to show his love and devotion to Christ actively can therefore simultaneously be an appeal to allow Christ, who has done everything for him, to do everything in him as well. "Suffer me to warn you of another silly, unmeaning word: Do not say, 'I can do nothing'. If so, then you know nothing of Christ; then you have no faith: For if you have, if you believe, then you 'can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth you'. You can love him and keep his commandments, and to you his 'commandments are not grievous'. Grievous to them that believe! Far from it. They are the joy of your heart. Show then your love to Christ by keeping his commandments, by walking in all his ordinances blameless. Honour Christ by obeying him with all your might, by serving him with all your strength. Glorify Christ by imitating Christ in all things, by walking as he walked. Keep to Christ by keeping in all his ways. Trust in Christ, to live and reign in your heart. Have *confidence in* Christ that he will fulfil in you all his great and precious promises, that he will work *in you* all the good pleasure of his goodness, and all the work of faith with power. Cleave to Christ, till his blood have cleansed you from all pride, all anger, all evil desire. Let Christ do all. Let him that has done all for you, do all in you." A Blow at the Root, 1762, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 369.

It follows, as we have seen, that works acquire the character of an active expectation of the fulfilment of God's promise. A synergistic element is none the less present in the process of salvation; it emerges more clearly in later years. In his sermon Working Out Our Own Salvation, 1788, we find Wesley maintaining: 1. God works in us -- therefore man *can* work. Prevenient grace is accorded to all. (The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 511 ff.) 2. God works in you -- therefore you *must* work. You must work together with Him, or He will cease working. The general rule is this: to him who has more shall be given; from him who does not improve the grace already given shall be taken what he has. Wesley also cites a statement of St. Augustine: "Even St. Augustine, who is generally supposed to favour the contrary doctrine, makes that just remark, *Qui fecit nos sine nobis, non salvabit nos sine nobis*: 'He that made us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves.' He will not save us unless we 'save ourselves from this untoward generation'; unless we ourselves 'fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life'; unless we 'agonize to enter in at the strait gate', 'deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily', and labour by every possible means to 'make our own calling and election sure'." (Ib., p. 513.) Cf. sermon The General Spread of the Gospel, 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VI, p. 281, in which this statement of St. Augustine is again quoted.

63 Cf. Satan's Devices, 1750, The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, II, p. 202; the sermon On God's Vineyard. 1788, The Works of John Wesley, VII, p. 204 f. and the undated Thoughts Concerning Gospel Ministers, The Works of John Wesley, X, p. 456.

64 Cf. FLETCHER Second Check to Antinomianism, 1771, p. 26 f.

# Wesley and Sanctification

by

**Harald Lindström**

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### *Wesley's Works.*

**Wesley, J.**, The Works. With the last corrections of the author. Preface to the Third Edition 1831 by Thomas Jackson. Several Editions. I--XIV. London.

-----, Standard Sermons. Edited and Annotated by Edward H. Sugden. I. The Second Edition. London 1935. II. London 1921.

-----, The Journal. Edited by Nehemiah Curnock. Standard Edition. I-VIII. London 1909-1916.

-----, The Letters. Edited by John Telford. Standard Edition. I-VIII. London 1931.

-----, Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament. The Second Edition. London 1757.

Not included in the editions cited above:

[-----], A Short View of the Difference Between the Moravian Brethren ... and the Reverend Mr John and Charles Wesley. Extracted chiefly from a late Journal. The Second Edition. Bristol 1748.

[-----], Queries Humbly Proposed to the Right Reverend and Right Honourable Count Zinzendorf. London 1755.

**Wesley, J. and Ch.**, The Poetical Works. Collected and Arranged by G. Osborn. I-XIII. London 1868-1872.

### *Other Sources.*

**Bengel, J. A.**, Gnomon Novi Testamenti ... Editio secunda. I-II. Tübingen 1759.

The Book of Common Prayer. London 1851.

Büdingische Sammlung. Einiger in die Kirchen-Historie einschlagender sonderlich neuerer Schriften. I-II. Leipzig 1742. III. Leipzig 1744.

Corpus Confessionum. Die bischöfliche Methodistenkirche. Ihre Kirchenordnung und ihre Katechismen. Bearbeitet von D. Cajus Fabricius. Berlin und Leipzig 1931.

Corpus Confessionum. Die Brüdergemeinde. Kirchenordnungen, Lieder, Liturgien und Lehrschriften der Herrnhuter. Bearbeitet von D. Cajus Fabricius. Berlin und Leipzig 1936.

-----, Die Kirche von England. Ihr Gebetbuch, Bekenntnis und kanonisches Recht. Bearbeitet von D. Cajus Fabricius. Berlin und Leipzig 1937.

[Fletcher, J. W.], A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Last Minutes. Bristol 1771.

-----, A Second Check to Antinomianism. London 1771.

François de Sales, Introduction à la vie dévote. Texte intégral, publié d'après l'édition de 1619 ... 2<sup>e</sup>, édition. Paris 1923.

Law, William, A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection. London 1726. (The Works of the Rev. William Law. Vol. III. London 1726. Privately Reprinted 1893.)

-----, A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life. London 1906.

-----, Remarks upon a Book Entitled The Fable of the Bees . . . London 1723. (The Works of the Rev. William Law. Vol. II. London 1762. Privately Reprinted 1892.)

-----, The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, Fairly and Fully Stated. London 1731. (The Works of the Rev. William Law.. Vol. II. London 1762. Privately Reprinted 1892.)

MacDonald, J. A., Wesley's Revision of the Shorter Catechism with Notes ... Edinburgh 1906.

Müller, J. T., Die symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen. Kirche, deutsch und lateinisch. Mit einer neuen historischen Einleitung von Th. Kolde. Elfte Auflage. Giitersloh 1912.

Müller, K., Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformierten Kirche. In authentischen Texten mit geschichtlicher Einleitung und Register herausgegeben. Leipzig 1903.

Pearson, J., An Exposition of the Creed. The Sixth Edition. London 1692.

Spangenberg, A. G., Idea fidei fratrum. oder kurzer Begriff der Christlichen Lehre in den evangelischen Briidergemeinen. Barby 1779.

Taylor, J., The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living and of Holy Dying. A New Edition. Oxford and London 1866. The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living. A New Edition. Oxford 1863.. The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying. A New Edition. Oxford 1863.

Thomas à Kempis, Of the Imitation of Christ. New Edition. London 1885.

Tillotson, J., The Works ... Containing Fifty Four Sermons and Discourses, On Several Occasions. Together with the Rule of Faith. The Fourth Edition. London 1704.

v. Zinzendorf, L., Sendschreiben an Ihre Königl. Maj. von Schweden, von Grafen und Herrn Ludewig von Zinzendorff, betreffende sein und seiner Gemeinde Glauben und Bekännniss, 1735. (Corpus Confessionum. Die Brüdergemeinde.)

*Other Works Quoted.*

Althaus, P., Paulus und Luther über den Menschen. Gütersloh 1938.

Aulén, G., Christus Victor. An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement. London 1931.

Becker, B., Zinzendorf im Verhältnis zu Philosophie und Kirchentum seiner Zeit. Leipzig 1886.

Bett, H., The Spirit of Methodism. London 1937.

Bicknell, E. J., A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. London 1919.

Bready, J. W., England: Before and after Wesley. The Evangelical Revival and Social Reform. London 1938.

Brilioth, Y., The Anglican Revival. Studies in the Oxford Movement. London 1925.

Bring, R., Dualismen hos Luther. Lund 1929.

-----, Förhillandet mellan tro och gärningar inom luthersk teologi. Åbo 1933.

Böhmer P., Pietismus und Methodismus. Eine kirchengeschichtliche Studie zum Vergleich beider Richtungen in der Gegenwart. (Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift 1895.)

Cell, G. C., The Rediscovery of John Wesley. New York 1935.

Cooke, R. J., History of the Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church. With a Commentary on Its Offices. Third Edition. Cincinnati 1900.

Dimond, S. G., The Psychology of the Methodist Revival. Oxford 1926.

Eayrs, G., John Wesley. Christian Philosopher and Church Founder. London 1926.

-----, See: A New History of Methodism.

Edwards, M., Methodism and England. A Study of Methodism in its Social and Political Aspects during the Period 1850-1932. London 1943.

v. Eicken E., Rechtfertigung und Heiligung bei Wesley, dargestellt unter Vergleichung mit den

Anschauungen Luthers und des Luthertums. [Heidelberg] 1934.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica. Eleventh Edition. Vol. I ff. Cambridge 1910 ff.

Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Ed. by James Hastings. Vol. I ff. Edinburgh 1908 ff.

v. Engeström, S., Förlätelsetanken hos Luther och i nyare evangelisk teologi. Stockholm 1938.

-----, Luthers trosbegrepp med särskild hänsyn till försanthållandets betydelse. Uppsala 1933.

The English Church from the Accession of George I. to the End of the Eighteenth Century (1714-1800). By J. H. Overton and F. Relton. London 1906. (A History of the English Church. Edited by the Rev. W. R. W. Stephens, and the Rev. William Hunt. VII.)

Findlay, G. G., Methodism. Art. in Encyclopedea of Religion and Ethics.

Fleisch, P., Methodisten. Art. in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart.

-----, Heiligungsbewegung. Art. in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart.

-----, Zur Geschichte der Heiligungsbewegung. Erstes Heft: Die Heiligungsbewegung von Wesley bis Boardman. Leipzig 1910.

Flew, R. N., The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology. An Historical Study of the Christian Ideal for the Present Life. Oxford 1934.

Fridrichsen, A., Fullkomlighetskravet i Jesu förkunnelse. (Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift 1933.)

Frost, S. B., Die Autoritätslehre in den Werken John Wesleys. München 1938.

Gennrich, P., Die Lehre von der Wiedergeburt, die christliche Zentrallehre in dogmengeschichtlicher und religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung. Leipzig 1907.

Green, R., The Works of John and Charles Wesley. A Bibliography. London 1896.

Grosses Universal Lexicon aller Wiessenschaften und Kiinste ... I ff. Halle und Leipzig 1732 ff.

Hagen, O., Litt om Wesleys lære om kristelig fullkommenhet. (Metodismen. Oslo 1938.)

Hardwick, Ch., A History of the Articles of Religion: to which is Added a Series of Documents, from A. D. 1536 to A. D. 1615; Together with Illustrations from Contemporary Sources. Philadelphia 1852.

Hultgren, G., Le commandement d'amour chez Augustin. Interpretation philosophique et theologique d'après les écrits de la période 386--400. Paris 1939.

Hunt, J., Religious Thought in England. Vol. I-III. London 1870-1873.

Hök G., I vad mån tillvaratar >Nådens ordning> det specifikt lutherska i vår tro? Några principiella linjer. (Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift 1944.)

Impeta, T. N., De Leer der Heiliging en Volmaking bij Wesley en Fletcher. Leiden 1913.

Inge, Studies of English Mystics. St. Margaret's Lectures 1905. Reprinted. London 1921.

Josefson, R., Ödmjukhet och tro. En studie i den unge Luthers teologi. Stockholm 1939.

Knox, A., Remarks. Supplement to Southey, The Life of Wesley.

Kristoffersen, A., Metodismens vesen. Grenselinjer og grunntrekk. (Metodismen. Oslo 1938.)

Köberle, A., Rechtfertigung und Heiligung. Eine biblische, theologiegeschichtliche und systematische Untersuchung. Dritte, erneut revidierte Auflage. Leipzig 1930.

Lang, A., Puritanismus und Pietismus. Studien zu ihrer Entwicklung von M. Butzer bis zum Methodismus. Neukirchen 1941.

Lecky, W. E. H., A History of England in the Eighteenth Century. II. London 1878.

Lee, U., John Wesley and Modern Religion. Nashville 1936.

Leger A., La Jeunesse de Wesley. Paris 1910.

Lerch D., Heil und Heiligung bei John Wesley, dargestellt unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Anmerkungen zum Neuen Testament. Zürich 1941.

Lezius F. E., Wesleys Perfektionismus und die Otley-Bewegung. (Reinhold-Seeberg-Festschrift, II. Leipzig 1929.)

Lindroth, Hj., Försoningen. En dogmhistorisk och systematisk undersökning. Uppsala 1935.

-----, Katolsk och evangelisk kristendomssyn. En typologisk studie. Uppsala 1933.

Lindström, Henning, Skapelse och frälsning i Melanchthons teologi. Stockholm 1944.

Ljunggren, G., Det kristna syndmedvetandet intill Luther. En dogmhistorisk studie. Uppsala 1924.

-----, Synd och skuld i Luthers teologi. Uppsala 1928.

Lockyer, Thos. F., Paul: Luther: Wesley. A Study in Religious Experience as illustrative of the Ethic of Christianity. First Edition. London 1922.

- Loofs, Fr., Methodismus. Art. in Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche.
- Mandel, H., Christliche Versöhnungslehre. Rine systematisch-historische Studie. Leipzig 1916.
- Mausbach, J., Die Ethik des heiligen Augustinus. I-II. Freiburg im Breisgau 1909.
- McConnell, F. J., John Wesley. New York, Cincinnati, Chicago 1939.
- McGiffert, A. C., Protestant Thought before Kant. London 1911.
- , The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas. New York 1915.
- Minkner, K., Die Stufenfolge des mystischen Erlebnisses bei William Law (1686-1761). München 1939.
- Mossner, E. C., Bishop Butler and the Age of Reason. A Study in the History of Thought. New York 1936.
- Müller J., Die christliche Lehre von der Sünde. Dritte, vermehrte und verbesserte Ausgabe. I-II. Breslau 1849.
- A New History of Methodism. Edited by W. J. Townsend, H. B. Workman, G. Eayrs. I-II. London 1909.
- Nuelsen, J. L., John Wesley und das deutsche Kirchenlied. Bremen und Zürich 1938.
- Nygren, A., Agape and Eros. A Study of the Christian Idea of Love. I-II, 1-2. London 1932-1939.
- Olsson, H., Calvin och reformationens teologi. I. Lund 1943.
- Overton, J. H., William Law. Nonjuror and Mystic. London 1868.
- , See: The English Church.
- Petri, Laura, John Wesley. Stockholm 1928.
- Piette, M., La réaction wesléyenne dans l'évolution protestante. Etude d'histoire religieuse. Bruxelles 1925.
- Platt, F., Arminianism. Art. in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
- , Perfection (Christian). Art. in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
- Plitt, H., Zinzendorfs Theologie. I-III. Gotha 1869-1874.
- Pope, W. B., A Compendium of Christian Theology. Being Analytical Outlines of a Course of

Theological Study, Biblical, Dogmatic, Historical. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged. I-III. London 1880.

Rattenbury, J. E., The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns. Second Impression. London 1942.

-----, Wesley's Legacy to the World. Six Studies in the Permanent Values of the Evangelical Revival. Second Edition. London 1928.

Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche. Herausgegeben von D. Albert Hauck. In dritter verbesserter und vermehrter Auflage. I ff. Leipzig 1896 ff.

Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. I ff. Zweite! völlig neubearbeitete Auflage. Tübingen 1927 ff.

Relton, F., See: The English Church.

Rydholm, P., Läran om nådens ordning i lutherska kyrkan. Göteborg 1896.

Schmidt, M., Die Bedeutung Luthers Mr John Wesleys Bekehrung. (Luther Jahrbuch 1938.)

-----, John Wesleys Bekehrung. Bremen 1938.

Schneckenburger, M., Vergleichende Darstellung des lutherischen und reformirten Lehrbegriffs. I-II. Stuttgart 1855.

-----, Vorlesungen über die Lehrbegriffe der kleineren protestantischen Kirchenparteien. Frankfurt a. M. 1863.

Scott, P., John Wesleys Lehre von der Heiligung, verglichen mit einem lutherisch-pietistischen Beispiel. Berlin 1939.

Silén, S., Den kristna miinniskouppfattningen intill Schleiermacher. En historisk-systematisk studie. Stockholm 1938. .

Sommer, J. W. E., John Wesley und die soziale Frage. Eine Quellenstudie. Bremen 1930.

Southey, R., The Life of Wesley; and Rise and Progress of Methodism. Third Edition with Notes by S. T. Coleridge and Remarks by Alexander Knox. I-II. London 1846.

Stephen, L., History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century. I-II. London 1881.

Taylor, E. R., Methodism and Politics 1791-1851. Cambridge 1935.

Townsend, W. J., See: A New History of Methodism.

**Tyerman, L.**, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley. I-III. Third Edition.* London 1876.

**Uttendörfer, O.**, *Zinzendorfs religiöse Grundgedanken.* Herrnhut 1935.

**Wakeman, H. O.**, *An Introduction to the History of the Church of England. From the Earliest Times to the Present Day. Fifth Edition.* London 1898.

**Wallau, R. H.**, *Die Einigung der Kirche vom evangelischen Glauben aus.* Berlin 1925.

**Watkin-Jones, H.**, *Methodist Thought in Contact with Modern History.* (The Hibbert Journal, October 1937.)

-----, *Two Oxford Movements: Wesley and Newman.* (The Hibbert Journal, October 1932.)

**Wheeler, H.**, *History and Exposition of the Twenty-five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church.* New York 1908.

**Workman, H. B.**, *The Place of Methodism in the Life and Thought of the Christian Church. (A New History of Methodism.)*