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## Abstract

### A Curriculum of Spiritual Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition For the Pegram United Methodist Church

by

Adrian W. Jones

John Wesley's (1703-1791) legacy to Christianity and to the Church of Jesus Christ has been his genius of thought and spiritual insight as it regards disciplined spirituality. No place is more revealing of this genius than the material found in his Sermons. This dissertation attempts to systematize and organize this doctrinal material which is found scattered throughout his sermons. More specifically, it attempts to display the material in a curriculum form to give aid and assistance to persons seeking a better understanding of Wesleyan spirituality.

Most of Wesley's sermons were preached at some period of his ministry. However, several were never preached, but put in written form for readers to study as resource material to the Scriptures. In any case, all of his sermons have been refined and possibly reduce to what is significant and important as a teaching tool for the Methodist lay-ministers who rode the circuits during the eighteenth century. His sermons (as well as his Notes and Minutes of conference), served as a "mobile seminary" for early Methodist preachers.

The curriculum begins at the earliest spiritual moment in humankind's history, (viz., the first parents in a paradise created by God for them), and methodically moves the reader through the various stages of becoming a Christian in full maturity. The key

doctrines lifted from out of the sermons are only those that deal with the individuals spiritual development, or toward spiritual formation. No attempt is made to carry the material beyond this earthly life to the next life, or what Wesley referred to as "glorification" That theme has been left for a future time.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the  
dissertation entitled

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FOR THE PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

presented by

Adrian W. Jones

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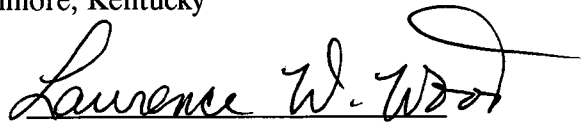
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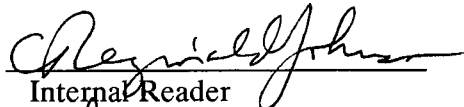
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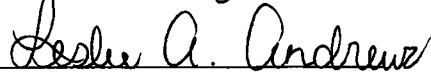
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A CURRICULUM OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN THE  
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FOR THE PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Seminary  
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Doctor of Ministry

by

Adrian W. Jones

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Adrian W. Jones

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## CHAPTER 1

### OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

#### The Problem

In guiding and developing Christian believers toward growth in their spiritual life, John Wesley (1703-1791), the founder of Methodism, was convinced that through the use of spiritual disciplines the "people called Methodist" could experience a fuller and more satisfying experience with God. The disciplines, as Wesley understood them, included the primary use of Scripture (both in the reading of Scripture and in the hearing it read), prayer and meditation, the Lord's Supper, fasting, and conference or cooperative fellowship with other Christian believers.

In the founding days of Methodism, Wesley's four volumes of Sermons, his Explanatory Notes Upon the Old and New Testament, and the Minutes of Conference, were the primary sources in providing his people with biblical knowledge regarding his "key" doctrines and the understanding of the use of the disciplines toward spiritual formation. The "Model Deed" of 1764 provided that these three sources were adequate for understanding of key Wesleyan doctrines and spirituality.

At some juncture in Methodist church history his Sermons seems at best to have taken a secondary place in our emphasis as a denomination. It is questionable, at least to this writer, whether or not Wesley's key doctrinal truths as found in his Sermons are still viewed seriously as relevant to our modern Wesleyan theology. While the idea of pluralism, ("catholic spirit"), has indeed opened its arms to those of varying faiths and beliefs, yet, it appears, on the other hand, to have removed the basic theological specifics necessary to the continual spiritual development of the "people called Methodist". The key doctrinal truths of Wesley's Sermons have traditionally provided Methodist people

with such basic doctrines of faith and assurance. It has provided an inner feeling of security and spiritual contentment. Thus, in the view of this writer, the departure from these key doctrinal truths toward Wesleyan spirituality found in Wesley's Sermons has seriously eroded and weakened the purposes and the resolves of the denomination's mission and ministry at both the lay and clergy levels. In the view of this writer when the primary and traditional roots of our key doctrines are removed, there follows closely behind both an identity crisis and a loss of spiritual direction, stability, and development.

This dissertation is intended to design and present a curriculum toward spiritual formation for the local church. The foundation or basis for this curriculum is Wesley's Standard Sermons. In the opinion of the writer these Sermons contain all the necessary and important doctrinal truths in the development of the spiritual life.

#### Statement of the Local Problem

The Pegram United Methodist Church (where I minister), has encountered questions of identity, beliefs, and spirituality. This came about, apparently, because of a lack of emphasis on basic Wesleyan doctrines and the serious use of spiritual disciplines in former days. With the exception of two or three former pastors, the church has been served primarily by student pastors whose understanding of key Wesleyan doctrines was limited, and who likewise failed to place adequate emphasis on the key doctrinal truths found in Wesley's Sermons. The present local membership has expressed both a concern and an interest in reviving and renewing an emphasis of those key Wesleyan doctrines which will lead to the spiritual development of the present generation of members and of the young people now in the wings of leadership. By stressing these key doctrines the membership has expressed hope of the rediscovering of their Wesleyan identity and mission. The congregation has already demonstrated tremendous advancement toward

enlarging their commitment to biblical truths and spiritual development from a Wesleyan perspective.

### Purpose of the Study

The project/dissertation came out of a pastoral concern for the Pegram United Methodist Church congregation as outlined above. In view of the stated local problem this writer undertook this project research in order to accomplish three things.

First, to determine the spiritual level of the congregation, i.e., to ascertain their level of knowledge and understanding of Wesleyan spirituality and of Wesley's "key" doctrines.

Second, to conduct the project research itself, i.e., the series of eight doctrinal sermons from a Wesleyan perspective, and the ten weeks Wesley Study Group sessions. The intent was to determine what changes, if any, in their belief would occur when intensely exposed to both the preaching and the teaching of Wesley's Sermons.

Third, to develop the material, form, and presentation of the curriculum of spiritual formation which follows in this dissertation.

### Definition of Terms

#### Spiritual Formation

Spiritual Formation, as used in this dissertation, is the intentional "process of being conformed to the image of Christ" as the result of the work of God's grace (Mulholland 27).

#### Spiritual Disciplines

Spiritual Disciplines, as used in this dissertation, refers to Wesley's "instituted means of grace", i.e., prayer, searching of the Scriptures, the taking of the Lord's Supper, religious fasting, and Christian fellowship. These are sometimes referred to by Wesley as "works of piety".

### Spirituality

In this dissertation, the meaning of the concept of "spirituality" is the meaning described by James Fehagen: "the response of the whole person to the action of the Spirit within us" (87).

### Spiritual Life

The term "spiritual life", as used in this dissertation, means the "quality of the totality of human development, informed and influenced by the Transcendent/ God/ spiritual dimension of existence" (Freeman 171).

### Wesley Study Group

There were sixteen to twenty-three persons from the Pegram United Methodist Church who formed this Wednesday night plenary group. They met once a week for a period of eleven weeks to consider, discuss, dissect, and disseminate Wesley's Standard Sermons.

### Cluster Groups

This constituted three smaller groups of persons out of the Wesley Study Group. The cluster groups specialized in certain of Wesley's sermons and their findings were reported and enlarged upon in the plenary group.

### Methodology of the Study

The project/dissertation blended the following types of research information toward a clearer understanding of our Wesleyan doctrinal heritage.

Wesley's Sermons. The primary source of the project/dissertation was Wesley's Sermons. Background Scripture was blended with these sermons as support or validation of the accuracy of Wesley's doctrinal themes.

Local Congregation. The local congregation at the Pegram United Methodist

Church was asked to participate in the project research.

Wesley Study Group. A select group of laypersons within the local congregation was asked to be on-going participants in the project research for a total period of eleven weeks.

### Wesley's Sermons

The four volumes of Wesley's Sermons, edited by Albert C. Outler (1984-7), were consulted and compared. At the same time that they were compared they were also correlated with the Scriptures of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The purpose of this correlation was to validate the reasonableness of Wesley's own doctrinal interpretation and application of Scripture. The four volumes of Sermons, correlated with Biblical truth, formed the primary documents in establishing and realizing the purpose of this project/dissertation, and the general presentation of Wesley's understanding of the development of the spiritual life.

Further, each sermon was carefully and intentionally examined by this writer in order to discern and discover Wesley's primary doctrinal themes. Many of Wesley's Sermons are focused toward specific doctrinal themes, e.g., Sermon No. 44, "Original Sin"; Sermon No. 45, "The New Birth"; and, Sermon No. 5, "Justification by Faith" In the first sermon the primary theme is "original sin", the cause and results thereof. Included in this sermon is also the primary theme of "atonement". In the second sermon the primary theme is "regeneration, or the new birth" Included in this sermon is also the theme, "sin of disobedience by humankind" The third sermon's primary theme is "justification by faith". Included in this sermon is another primary theme, of humankind's "condition" or "state" prior to the Fall.

The primary doctrinal themes were themselves correlated, and then applied in a

systematic manner. The gathered research material was applied by this writer in a series of eight Sunday morning worship service sermons. The themes covered and reviewed through the sermon series were: Original Sin and the Fall of Humankind; God's Love to Fallen Humanity; Justification by Faith; On Being Born Again; The Doctrine of Assurance; Christian Perfection, or Perfect Love; Holiness of Heart; and, Holiness of Life.

The gathered research was also used as the primary design and teaching materials for the ten Wednesday nights of the Wesley Study Group. These ten classes followed the various doctrinal themes discovered in Wesley's Sermons as follows: The Doctrine of Original Sin; the Universality of Sin; the Doctrine of Salvation; The Doctrine of Justification; The Doctrine of the New Birth; The Doctrine of Sanctification; Sin in the Believers; Spiritual Life Struggles; The Means and Discipline of Grace; and, Holy Life and Good Works.

Further, the information gathered from the correlation of the various doctrinal themes from Wesley's Sermons were later used in a systematic and orderly manner in the formation of the curriculum on spiritual formation which became the primary focus of this project/dissertation.

#### Local Congregation Participation

The local congregation at the Pegram United Methodist Church was asked to participate in the project research in the following manner. First, select officers of the church were asked to assist this writer in the development of a "Congregational Questionnaire/Survey" (see, Appendix A). Second, once the development of the above document was completed the surveys were distributed to the entire Sunday morning worship attendance of approximately thirty-five adults. The distribution took place on the



Sunday morning prior to the beginning of the sermon series on various Wesleyan doctrinal themes referred to above. The number of surveys returned by the congregation was approximately twenty-seven. Third, following the sermon series the same survey was distributed to the same worship attendance of approximately forty-five adults. The number returned was thirty-four.

The purpose of this "Congregational Questionnaire/Survey" was to determine the overall congregational understanding of Wesley's "key" doctrines, and what changes, if any, occurred in their understanding between the first and second distribution of the survey (See, Appendix A). Therefore, the congregation was asked to simply note their social security number on each form for correlation purposes. Any surveys returned that were not noted, or did not have a corresponding number were discarded and not included in the results which is provided in Appendix A.

The congregation itself is located one mile outside the metropolitan boundaries of Nashville-Davidson County, Tennessee. It's specific location is Cheatham County. Cheatham County is considered a rural community, for socio-economic analysis purposes. However, the town of Pegram, where the congregation is located, is a recipient and participates in the social, economic, and cultural advantages of the Nashville-Davidson County community. At the time of the first survey referred to above the congregation was made up of the following:

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Age range               |    |
| Zero to twelve years    | 4  |
| Nineteen to thirty-five | 4  |
| Thirty-six to sixty     | 24 |
| Sixty-one and up        | 7  |
| Sex                     |    |
| Males                   | 12 |
| Females                 | 27 |

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Education (adults only)       |    |
| High school (non-graduate)    | 14 |
| High school (graduate)        | 13 |
| College                       | 8  |
| Economic status (adults only) |    |
| Lower middle income           | 12 |
| Middle middle income          | 19 |
| Upper middle income           | 4  |

### Wesley Study Group Participants

A select group of sixteen to twenty-three laypersons from the local congregation (volunteers by choice), was asked to be participants in the project research in an intense manner. These persons met on eleven consecutive Wednesday nights for group study in the doctrinal themes discovered in Wesley's Sermons. The first meeting was for the purpose of orientation and the adoption of a class plan to be followed by the group as they participated in this intense study of Wesley's Sermons. The participants agreed to the following class plan. Each class would meet for exactly one-hour for ten weeks. The class time would be divided into three twenty minute segments. The first segment served as an introductory period by this writer regarding Wesley's Sermons designated for that session. During the second segment the group divided itself into three cluster groups. These three groups were always comprised of the same persons with the same facilitator. The cluster groups specialized in one or two questions regarding the Sermon(s) currently before the group (see, Appendix B, lesson questions). The three cluster groups then reconvened as a plenary group to discuss and evaluate their specific findings.

The pre and post lesson questionnaires (see, Appendix B), were distributed to the Wesley Study Group one lesson at a time one week prior to the designated class time for discussion (see class plan above). At the beginning of each class session the pre-questionnaires were returned in a completed form. At the close of the class, the same

questionnaire was distributed to the group to be completed by the next class session.

Therefore, beginning with the second class session, a post-questionnaire from the previous class session and a pre-questionnaire for the current class session was returned by each participant of the Wesley Study Group.

Further, copies of Wesley Sermons to be discussed were always provided to the participants one week prior to the designated class session. The primary sermons of Wesley that the group discussed and evaluated during this ten week period are as follows:

Sessions one and two,

Sermon No. 44, "Original Sin".

Sermon No. 57, "On the Fall of Man".

Sermon No. 21, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, I".

Sessions three through five,

Sermon No. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man".

Sermon No. 5, "Justification by Faith"

Sermon No. 62, "The End of Christ's Coming".

Sermon No. 45, "The New Birth".

Sermon No. 7, "The Way to the Kingdom".

Sermon No. 85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation".

Sermon No. 1, "Salvation by Faith"

Sermon No. 43, "The Scripture Way of Salvation".

Sermons No. 10-11, "The Witness of the Spirit"

Sermon No. 12, "The Witness of our Own Spirit".

Sessions six and seven,

Sermon No. 107, "On God's Vineyard".

Sermon No. 17, "The Circumcision of the Heart".

Sermon No. 40, "Christian Perfection".

Sermon No. 13, "On Sin in Believers".

Sermon No. 127, "On the Wedding Garment".

Sessions eight and nine,

Sermon No. 19, "The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God"

Sermon No. 16, "The Means of Grace".

Sermon No. 23, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, III".

Sermon No. 26, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, VI".

Sermon No. 32, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, XII"

Sermon No. 27, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, VII".

Session ten,

Sermon No. 26, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, VI".

Sermon No. 91, "On Charity".

Sermon No. 92, "On Zeal"

Sermon No. 18, "The Marks of the New Birth".

Sermon No. 23, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, III".

### Results of the Project Research

The specific results or outgrowth of this project research was applied in the following manner. First, the information gathered from the blended types of research referred to above, provided the necessary insight for this writer to determine the spiritual level of the Pegram United Methodist Church congregation and to ascertain their knowledge and understanding of Wesley's "key" doctrinal themes. This writer was able to witness an intense interest by the membership, especially the participants of the Wesley Study Group, in Wesleyan spirituality and the doctrinal themes that contributes to its development.

Secondly, the overall spiritual life awareness of the congregation has increased since this project research was completed. This writer has witnessed a greater level of sensitivity of several members of the local congregation toward active spiritual development both in their interior and exterior life. Additionally, there has been a numerical increase of 103 percent, and an increase in the monetary giving of 132 percent. Overall lay participation in the general ministry of the local congregation has now reached an average level of seventy-eight percent of the active membership.

The third result of this project research is the development of the curriculum on spiritual formation that forms the major portion of this dissertation. The curriculum provides both the clergy and laypersons with a systematic study of the basic elements of Wesley's doctrines as they pertain to the initiation and development of one's spiritual growth and development.

### Basic Assumption

If Wesley's teachings on the spiritual life, including the various disciplines to be described, were adequate and effective for his day, and for many years following his death, then those same basic and foundational "key" or kernel truths are still adequate and appropriate for the twenty-first century congregation seeking to follow Christ and the church in the Wesleyan tradition.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The writer surveyed the available literature and found very little information that serious investigation has been carried on by others into the problem of diminishing spirituality within the United Methodist Church because of declining interest in Wesley's Sermons. Bishop Richard B. Wilke published a book in 1986, entitled, And Are We Yet Alive?, in which he sought to reinforce a personal conviction that a return to the "key" truths and concepts contained in Wesley's sermons would encourage the local congregations toward Biblical spirituality and a rediscovery of Wesleyan identity, purpose, and mission.

The following books were investigated and reviewed by the writer in order to give credence to the stated problem and the thesis which deals with the problem. Each book and periodical has been annotated in order to describe in brief form the contents of each writing. These books have played a major role in the writer's understanding of the problem and the focus of the solution toward that problem.

#### Primary Sources Reviewed

John Wesley's Standard Sermons, written by the founder of Methodism, the Reverend Mr. John Wesley and edited by Albert C. Outler. These sermons contain the standard doctrines of Wesley and the Methodist Connexion. While this dissertation refers to the Sermons as the primary source of doctrinal truth for the "people called Methodists", be it understood that Wesley's Sermons are of themselves Biblical in content, concept, and interpretation. Wesley was true to Scripture as were many of his counterparts.

Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, also written by the Reverend Mr. John

Wesley, are the notes which Wesley used as a companion to his sermons noted above. In most cases, his notes are brief, but focused.

### Secondary Sources Reviewed

Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit, by Dr. Albert C. Outler. Professor Outler is recognized as the leading authority among Wesleyan theologians on Wesley's Sermons and Wesleyan theology. In this book, Outler cites the three main pillars of John Wesley's theology: Sin, Salvation, and Sanctification. The Curriculum, which forms the major portions of this dissertation, makes use of these three pillars in chapters four through six. To these the Curriculum adds Wesley's most important theme of "Holiness of Heart and Life" as chapters seven and eight.

John Wesley's Sermons: An Introduction, by Dr. Albert C. Outler. The writer introduces the founder, John Wesley, in the context of his environment, his style of preaching as "plain truth for plain people", and the Sermon Corpus. To that he adds the influences on Wesley's thought process, including Holy Scripture, the Classics, and Christian Antiquity, to name a few. This book serves as a background to the genius of Wesley's Sermons, including the various themes and order.

John Wesley's Theology Today, by Dr. Colin W. Williams. The writer gives a complete overview of Wesley's theology and applies it to today's needs.

Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition, by Dr. Thomas A. Langford. This book develops Wesleyan theology from Wesley through modern interpretation of Wesley's theology.

John Wesley's Message For Today, by Dr. Steven Harper. This book comes nearer to the purpose and intent of this project-dissertation than any of the other sources reviewed by this writer. Here Harper focuses on Wesley's "Order of Salvation". He

states that Wesley's sermons are at the "heart of Wesleyan theology"

Embrace the Spirit: An Invitation to Friendship with God, by Dr. Steven Harper.

This book was written in an attempt to assist Christians in discovering spiritual development. Harper refers to spiritual formation as "intensely personal".

Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition, by Dr. Steven Harper. This book is an overview of the major components of Wesley's devotional life.

Alive in Christ: The Dynamic Process of Spiritual Formation, by Dr. Maxie Dunnam.

In this book, Dunnam explores two experiential concepts of St. Paul: justification by grace through faith, and the indwelling Christ. Both themes are primary doctrinal themes in Wesleyan theology, both historical and modern.

Our Journey: A Wesleyan View of The Christian Way, by Dr. Maxie Dunnam. This

book surveys the "key" Wesleyan doctrines, using as its primary source the Bible.

Dunnam quotes Wesley frequently throughout the book.

And Are We Yet Alive?, by Bishop Richard B. Wilke. This book was mentioned in

the introduction to the chapter. The Bishop calls the United Methodist Church back to its Wesleyan roots, heritage, and mission.

Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation, by Dr. M.

Robert Mulholland, Jr. The writer presents a transforming plan of reading the Bible.

The emphasis is upon "formation", as opposed to information.

Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation, by Dr. Harald

Lindström. Lindström follows Wesley's order of Salvation beginning with Original Sin

through Final Salvation. Dr. Timothy Smith writes the Forward to this book. Smith

points out that the significance of this classic is that Lindström follows closely to Wesley's

Sermons in the unfolding of the Doctrine of Salvation.



Mysticism in the Wesleyan Tradition, by Robert G. Tuttle, Jr. The writer, after giving vital background information in "mysticism", then provides necessary information based on his own research of Wesley's Sermons as to those ancient writers that helped shape Wesley's thoughts and conclusions. The writer does not leave this influence in eighteenth century setting only, but also brings it forward to the contemporary scene and describes the significance of the early influences on our times.

These writers will serve as interpreters in the Curriculum portion of this dissertation. In some cases, they are cited as a means to clearer understanding where this writer has felt that Wesley's own explanation may come into question.

## CHAPTER 3

### INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRICULUM

Doctrinal standards was a primary concern of John Wesley in the formation and the stabilizing of the Methodist Societies. During the first "conference" of 1744, Wesley posed these questions to his preachers and assistants:

1. What to teach;
2. How to teach; and
3. What to do; that is, how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practice ("Minutes" 8: 275).

Preaching and teaching were both a vital part of John Wesley's life and ministry during most of the eighteenth century. Taking Susanna's advice, Wesley carefully steered clear of preaching philosophical essays in the pulpit. Instead he viewed preaching as the means by which people's lives are mended, and practical Christianity realized in human experience (Baker, Works 25: 217).

Wesley himself would be described by most to be nothing more than a "plain" preacher. After all, he did describe himself in these terms. For example, in the Preface to his Sermons, Wesley spoke his intent and purpose for the sermons in this manner:

I design plain truth for plain people. Therefore of set purpose I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations, from all perplexed and intricate reasonings, and as far as possible from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scriptures. I labour to avoid all words which are not easy to be understood, all which are used in common life; and in particular those kinds of technical terms that so frequently occur in bodies of divinity, those modes of speaking which men of reading are intimately acquainted with, but which to common people are an unknown tongue. Yet I am not assured that I do not sometimes slide into them unawares: it is so extremely natural to imagine that a word which is familiar to ourselves is so to all the world (Outler, Works 1: 104).

Outler ascribes to Wesley the designation of "folk-theologian" ("Folk-Theologian" 150-60), a term not used by Wesley of himself. However, the foregoing clearly indicates that

Wesley would have understood the designation to belong to his style. The word "theology" was not the word preferred by Wesley. Practical Divinity (Langford preface) was his peculiar designation of his brand of theology. Frank Baker suggests that for Wesley his kind of theology was the kind which is "interwoven with human experience". It means interactions between "the Creator and the creatures made in His image". "Clearly," Baker asserts, "the secret of true Christianity for Wesley was not faith in credal statements nor arduous religious exercises, but faith in a saving Christ" ("Practical Divinity" 9).

The phrase, "Practical Divinity" became for Wesley the structure in which he hung all of his standard doctrines. Baker suggests that there is a "pastoral" side to Wesley, a side which lends itself to the spiritual formation of a Christian believer. Baker also says that Wesley's pastoral commitment included a desire "to understand and serve the complete personality, body, mind, and soul, of those who came under his oversight. This [commitment] formed an important element in the development of his theology" ("Practical Divinity" 8).

#### Importance of Sermons to Wesleyan Spirituality

In 1746, Wesley took on the task of publishing his sermons in which he included his main theological or doctrinal beliefs. These sermons and treatises were published under the title, Sermons on Several Occasions. It took four volumes to incorporate those doctrines which Wesley "embrace(d) and taught as the essentials of true religion" (Outler, Works 1: 103). Wesley stated, "I have...set down in the following sermons what I find in the Bible concerning the way to heaven, with a view to distinguish this way of God from all those which are the inventions of men. 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..." (Outler, Works 1: 106).

Harper suggests, that "Wesley's sermons (is), where the heart of Wesley's theology can be found. He developed his theology not in the ivory tower, but in the marketplace. His theology is life-centered, not idea-saturated"... (Message 11).

Outler suggests, that "Wesley offers a treasure to the church of tomorrow that will leave it poorer if ignored" (qtd. in Message 14).

Thus, the sermons became the central feature of Wesley's practical theology or divinity. The "Model Deed" of 1764, was the answer to the three critical questions posed by Wesley to his preachers and assistants at the first conference in 1744. The Deed stated, that preachers in the Methodist Chapels were to preach "no other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's Notes on the Old and New Testaments, and the four volumes of Sermons published by Wesley" (Rupert 9: 19).

Outler summarizes the importance of the sermons to Wesleyan spirituality.

...More than anything else, it was Wesley's message that struck home: people not excited by his eloquence were moved by his vision of the Christian life and his gospel of universal redemption. This opened the door of hope for men and women who had been crowded off onto the margins of society. Moreover, it was hope in this world as well as in the world to come... (Outler, Introduction 27).

#### Key Doctrines Embraced by Wesley

Richard P. Heitzenrater points out that, "These sermons reflect Wesley's own attempt to understand and express the nature of 'the Scripture way of salvation' as experienced in his own spiritual pilgrimage that covered most of the eighteenth century..." (Outler, Introduction forward).

The following would be considered Wesley's key doctrines with a brief explanation of each:

**Original Sin.** By our first parents' disobedience, Adam and Eve and humankind universally has been begotten in sin. All have lost the image and likeness of God as

well as His perfect holiness and happiness. Death is the ultimate consequence of that fallen nature. The Doctrine of Original Sin was foundational to Wesley's understanding of Salvation.

Salvation. The solution, the remedy, the "cure" from our inherited sin is the salvation procured by Jesus Christ on the cross. It begins with "prevenient" grace, causing one to repent, resulting in justification (that which God does for us), and regeneration (that which God does in us). Salvation is not of works, but by faith through grace on the merit of Christ's Atonement. "Good works" follows salvation.

Sanctification. The renewing of the image of God, having the whole mind which was in Christ Jesus. It begins at the moment of justification and regeneration, and continues toward full maturity throughout the duration of one's life. In essence it is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, producing love to all humankind, especially the children of God.

Holiness of Heart and Life. A further practical description of the work of sanctification in a believer's life. It begins in complete surrender to Christ, and continues to develop through the various means of discipline, i.e., prayer, searching the Scriptures, taking of the Lord's Supper, fasting, and continual fellowship with the children of God. It results in charity toward one's neighbor.

Langford points out, that "Theology, for John Wesley, was intended to transform life.

Always in the service of presenting the gospel, theology was to underwrite the proclamation of the grace of God given in Jesus Christ for the redemption of all people" (24).

The following curriculum develops each of the key doctrines toward the forming of one's spirituality in the Wesleyan tradition. Wesley's sermons are the primary source of doctrinal tenets even though that doctrine is scattered as wheat upon the fields throughout his various sermons. However, the primary truth is thus systematized from his sermons to provide order in the presentation and understanding of these key doctrines.

### The Scripture Way of Salvation

In the Preface to his Sermons, Wesley wrote,

...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. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price give me the Book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be homo unius libri ("a man of one book"). Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone: only God is here. In his presence

I open, I read his Book; for this end, to find the way to heaven... (Outler, Works 1: 105-06).

Smith states, "...Whatever may be remarkable about Wesley's emphasis upon tradition, reason, and experience, and whatever may be one's critical judgment of his exegesis of biblical texts in the light of what I call his hermeneutic of holiness, there seems little doubt that Wesley's theology is rooted firmly in his understanding of what the plain words of Scripture declare" (Lindström forward).

The curriculum which follows demonstrates Wesley's intentional use of Scripture in his sermons. The scriptural quotes by Wesley in emphasizing and supporting his approach to his key doctrines are highlighted in the body of the text which will enable the reader to include in his/her personal research of Wesleyan spirituality, the process of Scripture. Thus the reader is able to determine the accuracy of interpretation and the understanding of doctrinal standards as discovered and taught by Wesley.

### Principles of Spiritual Formation

The importance of Wesley's sermons in the development of the spiritual life is found primarily in his use of Scripture as the foundational document, coupled with his own genius interpretation of scriptural principles. Outler expresses it best in these words:

Of all the genres in the Wesley corpus the sermons focus and expound his understanding of Christian existence most clearly. Wesley saw theology chiefly as practical; the idea of a speculative summa seems never to have crossed his mind. But his sermons -- together with the hymns of his brother Charles -- were practical tools for teaching and spiritual formation. Together, they constitute "a small body of divinity" more accessible than any systematic treatises could have been... (Outler, Works 1: xiii).

Beginning with a person's earliest inherited need, arising out of the sin of our first parents, and progressing up the path of salvation and to full maturity in Christ, one finally comes to the place of understanding more clearly the matters of Christian faith and practice. Wesley did not necessarily connect the beginning of the spiritual life with the

end. Growth and development was the better part of the Christian believer's walk with God. The exercise of spiritual discipline, the "going on to perfection", i.e., perfection in love, and the expression of that love both toward God and neighbor culminates in personal happiness not associated or connected with this world. Wesley's sermons follow this path most seriously, but also most practical.

Harper has enlarged on this matter of spiritual formation under the principles of renewal coming out of a study of Wesley's ministry. He emphasizes five of those principles, in which I have thus paraphrased.

First, he says, Wesley urged all people to personally experience Christ. "Too many churches", Harper says, "have settled into a moralistic view of Christianity that is fundamentally humanistic rather than Christocentric. The emphasis is on being good and doing good, but with little emphasis on the power to accomplish this kind of living..." (Message 131-3).

Second, Wesley urged Christians to greater degrees of discipline. "In a very real sense, his whole life was an example of Christian disciplines..."(Harper, Message 133).

Here Harper interprets Wesley's idea and need for discipline. From a theological point of view, "Discipline is essential because of humanity's 'bent to sinning.' If we are left to ourselves to merely 'do our own thing' and 'go with the flow', we will shun the disciplined life. Christian maturity is not automatic, it must be cultivated. Discipline is the means of that cultivation" (Message 134).

From a legalistic point of view, "discipline must not be viewed in a narrow, legalistic, or even cultic sense..."(Harper, Message 134).

"Wesley's discipline was all-encompassing.... The goal for Wesley was holiness, which he called 'the fullness of faith.' The outcome was not this or that particular expression,

but rather the renewal of the image of God. In order for this transformation to take place, Wesley knew that nothing less than consecration of one's entire self to God would suffice. He trusted the individual, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, to work out the specifics of that consecration..." (Harper, Message 135).

The third principle Harper emphasizes is that Wesley got believers together in groups. "It was by proclamation that Wesley sought to extend the kingdom. By the societies he sought to mature it. These twin activities formed the heart of early Methodist evangelism..." (Message 135-6).

Fourth, Wesley called for a renewed appreciation of the sacraments. He "saw them as divinely instituted means for conveying grace to people.... The sacraments were an important way for people to continually remember the objectivity of Christianity. It is of grace, not of ourselves that we are what we are. The sacraments were constant reminders of this truth..."(Harper, Message 137-8).

The fifth principle of renewal for Wesley was his emphasis upon offering Christ to everyone. "There is no doubt that he would exhort us never to forget that the world is still our parish.... Wesley's social concern was inextricably rooted in the Christian faith. He was fundamentally an earnest Christian, who sought through a variety of means to effect redemption of fallen humanity..." (Harper, Message 138-9).

### Summary

The presentation of Wesley's key doctrinal standards in the following pages will both enlighten and enhance the reader's spiritual understanding and progress toward fullness of faith and practice. All references are from Wesley's Sermons, with an occasional interpretation by a current Wesleyan theologian. The only exception is found in the introduction of each chapter. Additionally, Wesley's Sermons are filled with Scripture



and thus incorporated in the text for the reader's personal research and conclusion.

## CHAPTER 4

## WESLEY'S UNDERSTANDING OF SIN

Without a clear understanding of the doctrine of sin, its origin, the Fall of humankind, and the consequences thereof, humankind would never be in a position to understand the importance of the redemption provided by God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Wesley gave emphasis to the doctrine of sin under the caption, "...the proper nature of religion,..." (Outler, Works 2: 184), i.e., the religion of Jesus Christ. It is, in his words, "...the only true method of healing a distempered soul", "God's method of healing a soul which is thus diseased" (Outler, Works 2: 184). The importance of this doctrine therefore lies ultimately in the doctrine of redemption.

Wesley's Sermons on Sin

The doctrine of sin is found scattered throughout several of Wesley's sermons as here noted. In some cases, they represent the key elements of his doctrine, while in other cases they serve only as references and/or support to that which is clear from the most important sermons on this doctrine.

The list is rather long, but they are listed here in the order in which they are recorded in the Outler Series, and not to their place of importance to the doctrine.

Sermon No. 5, "Justification by Faith". This sermon represents Wesley's "first fully positive exposition of his 'new' soteriology-- 'faith alone',..." (Outler, Works 1: 181). It is, according to Outler, "a landmark sermon to which all subsequent ones may be compared" (Outler, Works 1: 182). The key statement is paragraph I.6, as follows:

Thus "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And so death passeth 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 offence of one "judgment came upon

all men to condemnation" (Romans 5:12, etc.) (Outler, Works 1: 185).

Sermon No. 21, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, I". This sermon deals with the attitude of the sinner. Wesley states that humility is the primary means whereby a sinner comes to God. It is the attitude of those who "know themselves, who are convinced of sin;..."(Outler, Works 1: 477).

Sermon No. 44, "Original Sin". This sermon represents Wesley's best overview of the doctrine of sin. The sermon is an enlargement on Sermon No. 5, "Justification by Faith" (Outler, Works 2: 170f).

Sermon No. 45, "The New Birth" This sermon provides humankind with the remedy to the problem of sin, i.e., the experience of the "New Birth" or regeneration (Outler, Works 2: 186f).

Sermon No. 57, "On the Fall of Man" In this sermon, Wesley deals with the problem of pain and evil.

Why is there pain in the world? Seeing God is "loving to every man, and his mercy is over all his works" (cf. Psalm 145:9)? Because there is sin: had there been no sin there would have been no pain. But pain (supposing God to be just) is the necessary effect of sin. But why is there sin in the world? Because man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27; 9:6): because he is not mere matter, a clod of earth, a lump of clay, without sense or understanding, but a spirit like his Creator; a being endued not only with sense and understanding but also with a will exerting itself in various affections. To crown all the rest, he was endued with liberty, a power of directing his own affections and actions, a capacity of determining himself, of choosing good or evil.... And having this power, a power of choosing good or evil, he chose the latter--he chose evil. Thus "sin entered into the world" (Romans 5:12), and pain of every kind, preparatory to death (Outler, Works 2: 400-01).

Sermon No. 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man". Outler points out that Wesley's constant theme in this sermon is to lift up the importance of sin's entry into human society. Outler, in the introductory comments, states, "Its theme, though not its text, is a constant in Wesley's soteriology...that without creating man to sin, God's omnipotent

grace has wrought an even more wonderful glory for creation than if man had continued in his original innocence and obedience ("if Adam had not fallen, Christ had not died") (Outler, Works 2: 422).

Sermon No. 62, "The End of Christ's Coming" In this sermon, Wesley once again deals with "the problem of evil" and on "Christ's coming" as its saving remedy (Outler, Works 2: 471).

### The Primitive State of Humankind

Wesley's doctrine of man in his primitive condition is seen more clearly in his Sermon, "Justification by Faith".

In the image of God was man made (Genesis 1:27; 9:6); holy as he is that created him is holy, merciful as the author of all is merciful, perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48)...He was accordingly pure, as God is pure, from every spot of sin. He knew not evil in any kind or degree, but was inwardly and outwardly sinless and undefiled. He "loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and soul, and strength" (cf. Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27) (Outler, Works 1: 184).

Wesley's reliance upon and use of Scripture (cf. Genesis 1:26, 27; 9:6) to document the original state and condition of humankind before sin's entry into the human race is never more evident than here. Wesley was committed to Scripture as his only means and final authority upon which he built this doctrine. His conclusion that Adam was made in the "likeness of God" is made clear in this sermon by such use of the words, holy, merciful, perfect, pure, and love. These ideas, Wesley understood, expressed the true character of God (cf. Genesis 1:26).

In describing the state and the condition of the first man, Adam, Wesley did not intend to minimize the impact of sin and its consequence on human society. Neither did he intend to ignore the need for redemption which followed the acknowledgment of sin's entry into the world. Wesley is simply reflecting on what the human condition was like

prior to the origin of sin. At that historical moment, sin was not to be found as existing among humankind.

#### Adam Created in the Image of God

Wesley's key Sermon, "The New Birth", describes the created act of God in three categories (Outler, Works 2: 188).

The first category is Wesley's description of the natural image. In the natural image, God creates within Adam understanding, will, and liberty, or the freedom of personal choice. Wesley understood this in terms of man's immortality.

The second category is that of political image. In this image, Adam was given the authority to serve as "the governor of the lower world, having dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth" (cf. Genesis 1:26, 28-31).

The third category is seen by Wesley as the chief purpose of humankind's creation. This Wesley refers to as the moral image. Quoting St. Paul he asserts that Adam's moral image consisted of "righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). This becomes for Wesley a foundational statement toward the later development of his doctrine of Christian Holiness, or Christian Perfection.

#### Adam Created in Love

Because God is love (cf. I John 4:8, 16), the whole creation has been filled with love. Because God is holy, merciful, and pure, Adam was created in like manner. Wesley points out that Adam thus loved the "Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and soul, and strength" (cf. Matthew 22:36-40). This concept became part of Wesley's foundational understanding of spirituality in actual faith and practice (Outler, Works 2: 188).

### Adam Created for Happiness and Holiness

This Sermon ("The New Birth") further describes God's ideal for humankind as living within the context of God's holiness and righteous living. Again, this state or condition of Adam prior to the entry of sin into humankind is in harmony with the character of God Himself and also forms part of Wesley's foundational understanding toward the development of the doctrine of Christian Perfection.

### Summary

Thus we now have from his Sermon, "The New Birth", Wesley's understanding of the state and the condition of humankind, i.e., Adam, in his original or primitive state. He was created in the "image of God", with the full capabilities of love as that of the Creator, and for the purpose of happiness and holiness.

### The Fall of Humankind

#### The Origin of Sin

Wesley sought to raise questions for his hearers, and then provide Scriptural answers to the questions. One such important question had to do with the origin of sin, "How came evil into the world?"

...It came from "Lucifer, son of the morning" (Isaiah 14:12): it was "the work of the devil". "For the devil", saith the Apostle, "sinneth from the beginning" (I John 3:8); that is, was the first sinner in the universe; the author of sin; the first being who by the abuse of his liberty introduced evil into the creation (Outler, Works 2: 476).

Wesley describes both the character of Lucifer, and the promptings toward evil in these two ways:

First, he was "self-tempted to think too highly of himself."

Second, "he freely yielded to the temptation, and gave way first to pride, then to self-will" Lucifer said, "I will sit upon the sides of the north; I will be like the Most High" (cf. Isaiah 14:13-14) (Outler, Works 2: 476).

The results or consequences of Lucifer's sin of pride and self-will was that one-third of the stars of heaven fell with Lucifer, thus losing their glory and happiness, i.e., they were driven from their former habitation (Outler, Works 2: 476).

### The Temptation and Fall of Adam and Eve

Characteristic of Wesley, no detail is overlooked or ignored in his describing the events which led to the entry of sin into the world. Following the Scriptural account, he provides a detail record of the first temptation.

- a. Lucifer concealed or disguised himself in the form of a serpent, the most subtle, or intelligent of all the brute creatures (Outler, Works 2: 476).
- b. He then deceived Eve by mingling truth with falsehood: "Hath God said, 'Ye may not eat of every tree of the garden?'" (Genesis 3:1), thus persuading Eve to disbelieve God.
- c. Eve then gave in to the "whole temptation: -to 'the desire of the flesh'; for the tree was 'good for food': To 'the desires of the eyes'; for it was 'pleasant to the eyes': And to 'the pride of life': for it was 'to be desired to make one wise'(Genesis 3:6; cf. I John 2:16) and consequently honoured".
- d. "So unbelief begot pride. She thought herself wiser than God; capable of finding a better way to happiness than God hath taught her. It begot self-will: She was determined to do her own will, not the will of Him that made her. It begot foolish desires; and completed all by outward sin: 'She took the fruit and did eat'" (Outler, Works 2: 476-7).
- e. "She then 'gave to her husband, and he did eat'" (Genesis 3:6).

Thus Wesley describes how sin first entered the world by the "abuse of his (Lucifer) liberty," and then how sin entered the human race through the first parents (cf. Genesis 2:17) (Outler, Works 2: 477).

### The Consequences of the Fall

Having already described the state or the condition of humankind prior to the Fall of Adam, Wesley now turns toward describing the consequences following the Fall. The reversal, it is noted, includes all of the characteristics already described, plus several

additional ones.

### Adam Loses his Moral "Imago Dei"

The primary consequence of the Fall, the tragedy following the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, was the forfeiture of the "image of God" Wesley writes,

...Adam...freely preferred evil to good. He chose to do his own will rather than the will of his Creator. He "was not deceived", but knowingly and deliberately rebelled against his Father and his King. In that moment he lost the moral image of God, and, in part, the natural. He commenced un-holy, foolish, and unhappy...(Outler, Works 2: 410).

### Adam Loses his Happiness and Holiness

Included in this loss was also the loss of human happiness and human fulfillment initially intended by God for humankind. This loss appears to be of grave concern for the Methodist Founder. Outler writes,

...how else will we account for the amplitude, universality and tragedy of our failures to attain to God's moral design for human happiness? Why is there so much of "man's inhumanity to man"? Our answers, whatever they may be, are the nucleus of our doctrines of original sin. This, in turn, will help to shape one's doctrine of justification (by faith or good works). That, in turn, will affect all one's notions of the Christian life: how it is entered, how Christians mature, what our Christian hopes may be--here and hereafter. This, then, will direct our vision of "salvation"--i.e., the terms of human fulfillment and human happiness... (Theology 29).

### Corruption and Evil

The third consequence was likewise tragic in that corruption and evil entered by Adam into the human race. Wesley emphasized this corruption and evil in his use of his primary text, Genesis 6:5, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Outler, Works 2: 173).

Lindström states, that, "The Fall completely reversed the conditions of human life.



Primitive perfection was replaced by total corruption of man's nature" (26).

### The Universality of Sin

Wesley asserts that the effects of Adam's sin and disobedience affected the whole human race. Sin thus became universal. "As by the disobedience of one man many (that is, all men) were constituted sinners (539). "In Adam all died" (I Corinthians 15:22), i.e., "spiritually died" (Ephesians 2:1,3) "without hope" (Ephesians 2:12); "children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3); that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:22,23). This, for Wesley, constituted God's view of fallen humankind (Outler, Works 2: 173).

...[Christianity] declares that all men are "conceived in sin", and "shapen in wickedness" (Psalms 51:5); that hence there is in every man a "carnal mind which is enmity against God, which is not, cannot be, subject to his law" (cf. Romans 8:7), and which so infects the whole soul that "there dwelleth in him, in his flesh", in his natural state, "no good thing" (cf. Romans 7:18); but "all the imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil", "only evil", and that "continually" (Outler, Works 2: 183).

The doctrine of the universality of sin became for Wesley the fourth consequence of the Fall of humankind.

### Guilt Enters Humankind

In a Sermon entitled "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount: I", Wesley clearly understood and believed that guilt is a consequence of the fall of Adam (Outler, Works 1: 478).

[Man's] guilt is now also before his face: he knows the punishment he has deserved, were it only on account of his "carnal mind" (Romans 8:7), 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 doubt for a moment but the least of these deserves the damnation of hell, "the worm that dieth not", and the "fire that never shall be quenched" (cf. Mark 9:44-48). Above all, the guilt of "not believing on the name of the only-begotten Son of God" (John 3:18) lies heavy upon him. "How (saith he) shall I escape, who neglect so great a salvation" (Hebrews 2:3)! "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18), and "the wrath of God abideth on him" (Outler, Works 1: 478).

Lindström interprets Wesley's doctrine of guilt in this statement,

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. He is subject to guilt and punishment, the consequence of sinful actions. 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... (28).

### Death as the Ultimate Consequence

In Wesleyan theology death is the ultimate or final consequence of sin. Death,

Wesley says, arises directly out of the Adam's act of disobedience.

Man did disobey God; he "ate of the tree of which God commanded him, saying, Thou shalt not eat of" (Genesis 3:1-8; 17). And in that day he was condemned by the righteous judgment of God. Then also the sentence whereof he was warned before began to take place upon him. For the moment he tasted that fruit he died. His soul died, was separated from God;...His body likewise became corruptible and mortal, so that death then took hold on this also. And being already dead in spirit, dead to God, dead in sin (cf. Ephesians 2:1-3), he hastened on to death everlasting, to the destruction both of body and soul in the fire never to be quenched (Mark 9:43) (Outler, Works 1: 185).

Wesley, in his Notes to Romans 5:12, provides further description of what happened in death as a consequence of the disobedience of Adam. He writes,

...As by one man --Adam; who is mentioned, and not Eve, as being the representative of mankind. Sin entered into the world --Actual sin, and its consequences, a sinful nature. And death --With all its attendants. It entered into the world when it entered into being; for till then it did not exist. By sin -- Therefore it could not enter before sin... (537).

### The Character of a Sinner

Wesley, in declaring a doctrine of sin and total depravity, defines and explains the concept of original sin over against the results of universal sin. Deschner points out Wesley's methodology is to address the theme by describing the character of a sinner under three sub-headings: the sinful nature of a sinner, the sinful tempers of a sinner, and the sinful actions of a sinner (70).

## The Sinful Nature

Wesley, relying heavily upon Scripture, is quite clear to the effects original sin has imposed upon humankind. There is a clear progression of sin from the insult of Lucifer, the "Son of the morning", upon humankind to the whole human race, to the present moment in time. Wesley, beginning with the fall of Lucifer, asserts,

..."The heart of man is desperately wicked." In considering this we have no need to refer to any particular sins (these are no more than the leaves, or at most the fruits, which spring from that evil tree), but rather to the general root of all. See how this was first planted in heaven itself by Lucifer, "Son of the morning" (Isaiah 14:12) --till then undoubtedly "one of the first, if not the first archangel" "Thou saidst, I will sit upon the side of the north" (cf. Isaiah 14:13). See self-will, the first born of Satan! "I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:14). See pride, the twin sister of self-will. Here was the true origin of evil. Hence came the inexhaustible flood of evils upon the lower world. When Satan had once transfused his own self-will and pride into the parents of mankind, together with a new species of sin -- love of the world, the loving the creature above the Creator (see Romans 1:25) -- all manner of wickedness soon rushed in, all ungodliness and unrighteousness, shooting out into crimes of every kind, soon covering the whole face of the earth with all manner of abominations. It would be an endless task to enumerate all the enormities that broke out... (Outler, Works 4: 152).

But Wesley continues the progression. See how self-will, pride, and the love of the world likewise passes on to our first parents.

From the devil the spirit of independence, self-will, and pride, productive of all ungodliness and unrighteousness, quickly infused themselves into the hearts of our first parents in paradise. After they had eaten of the tree of knowledge, wickedness and misery of every kind rushed in with a full tide upon the earth, alienated us from God, and made way for all the rest -- atheism (now fashionably termed "dissipation") and idolatry, love of the world, seeking happiness in this or that creature, covered the whole earth.... It would be endless to enumerate all the species of wickedness, whether in thought, word, or action, that now overspread the earth, in every nation and city and family. They all centre in this atheism, or idolatry: pride, either thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think, or glorying in something which they have received as though they had not received it; independence and self-will, doing their own will, not the will of him that made them. Add to this, seeking happiness out of God, in gratifying the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life (I John 2:16). Hence it is a melancholy truth that (unless when the Spirit of God has made the difference) "all mankind" now, as well as four thousand years ago, "have corrupted their ways before the Lord" (cf.

Genesis 6:12); and every "imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is evil" (cf. Genesis 6:5), only evil, and that continually. However, therefore, men may differ in their outward ways (in which undoubtedly there are a thousand differences), yet in the inward root, the enmity against God, atheism, pride, self-will, and idolatry, it is true of all that "the heart of man", of every natural man, "is desperately wicked" (Outler, Works 4: 154-5).

Original sin, for Wesley, was the sin of disobedience that entered into the hearts and minds of all humankind, of every generation since our first parents, Adam and Eve (see, Genesis 3:1-6). Wesley took his cue from the Book of Psalm (see, Psalm 51:5). Here the writer of this psalm is clear in his assertion that the whole human race has been infected, i.e., "conceived in sin", and "shapened in wickedness". Hence, the result: every person is born in this world with a "carnal mind", a mind which is constantly and continually at war with God, the Creator (see, Romans 8:7). This inherited carnal mind, Wesley says, affects that which was in the beginning good. The "imagination and the thoughts of heart is evil", "only evil", and that "continually" (Outler, Works 2: 183).

When the Methodist Church in America was being formed, Wesley abridged the Ninth Article of the "Thirty-Nine Articles" of the Book of Common Prayer.

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 (Discipline 62).

Lindström interprets Wesley's doctrine of original sin in this manner.

...The Fall...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... (27).

### Sinful Tempers

The sinful nature, which began with Lucifer, progresses onward unhindered into our first parents, Adam and Eve. Expressions of that nature Wesley describes as "evil

tempers". The progression means, therefore, that all humankind is characterized by these evil tempers, which he defines as pride, self-will, love of the world, lust, and inordinate affection. These tempers dwells in the being of every person and are contrary to the "mind which was in Christ". The sinner is powerless to conquer these evil tendencies (Outler, Works 1: 337-9; 1: 320).

Added to these are those evil tempers regarding our relationship with our neighbor. These include, jealousies, malice, hatred, bitterness, envy, resentment, anger, and covetousness. These tempers dwell in all humankind universal. The sinner has not the power to control these feelings of motion (Outler, Works 1: 339-40).

### Sinful Actions

It was never Wesley's intention to leave the impression that the doctrine of sin and total depravity was no more than a principle, or a historical event. He pressed the principle and the Eden event toward a more pragmatic understanding of human behavior: actual and personal sins. He asked,

...How wide do those parent sins extend, from which all the rest derive their being: "that carnal mind which is enmity against God" (cf. Romans 8:7), pride of heart, self-will, 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 (see, Hebrews 12:15), infecting all our words, and tainting all our actions? And how innumerable an offspring do they bring forth, in every age and nation! Even enough to cover the whole earth with "darkness and cruel habitations" (Psalms 74:21) (Outler, Works 1: 665).

Having now acquired a working definition or understanding of the sinful nature and the results of this sinful nature, i.e., evil tempers, Wesley now reinforces his view of the seriousness of sin in pressing the point that humankind is also powerless to stop the progression of actual and personal sins by the sinner. This, Wesley points out, is his

doctrine of original sin and total depravity and is a direct and uncontrollable expression of inherited sin.

The following assertion by Wesley is a clue of how he arrived at his conclusion that all outward and actual sin is an outcome expression of the inward principle of sin.

How exactly does matter of fact, do all things round us, even the face of the whole world, agree with this account [i.e., the fall of Adam]? Open your eyes! Look round you! See darkness that may be felt; see ignorance and error; see vice in the ten thousand forms; see consciousness of guilt, fear, sorrow, shame, remorse, care, covering the face of the earth! See misery, the daughter of sin. See on every side sickness and pain, inhabitants of every nation under heaven, driving on the poor, helpless sons of men, in every age, to the gates of death! So they have done wellnigh from the beginning of the world. So they will do till the consummation of all things (Outler, Works 2: 410).

Actual or personal sins are further described as sins of commission and omission.

The sins of commission are those sins generally understood by Wesley to be voluntary sins or wilful transgressions (Outler, Works 1: 124), i.e., a voluntary transgression of a known law of God (Outler, Works 1: 436; 3: 79,85).

The sins of omission he describes primarily as "inward sins", i.e., those good things one knows to do, but does not do them.

...He fell step by step, first into negative, inward sin -- not "stirring up the gift of God" (cf. II Timothy 1:6) which was in him, not "watching unto prayer" (cf. I Peter 4:7), not "pressing on to the mark of the prize of his high calling" (cf. Philippians 3:14); then into positive, inward sin -- inclining to wickedness with his heart, giving way to some evil desire or tempers. Next he lost his faith, his sight of a pardoning God, and consequently his love of God. And being then weak and like another man he was capable of committing even outward sin (Outler, Works 1: 439).

It is noted in this statement that Wesley is addressing his remarks primarily to the saved person. However, the steps into outward and personal sins follows, in Wesleyan theology, in the same manner.

#### Sin as Bondage

The further development and fruit of all sin is bondage, i.e., spiritual "slavery to our

own self-deceptions, to our illusions about life and society that stir up utopias that never quite transpire" (Outler, Theology 40).

Wesley defines this part of man's spiritual condition in terms of the "natural man" The natural man living in the bondage of sin is, according to Wesley, the "servant of sin": the Scripture represents him as in a "state of sleep" (Outler, Works 1: 250-5; 1: 142f).

The enlarged description given by Wesley is provided in two other sermons. First, is from Wesley's sermon, "Original Sin"

...It was above a thousand years after that God declared by David concerning the children of men, "They are all gone out of the way" of truth and holiness; "there is none righteous, no, not one" (cf. Psalm 14:4). And to this bear all the prophets witness in their several generations. So Isaiah concerning God's peculiar people..."The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores" (Isaiah 1:5-6). The same account is given by all the apostles, yea, by the whole tenor of the oracles of God. From all these we learn concerning man in his natural state, unassisted by the grace of God, that "all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart" are still "evil, only evil", and that "continually". ...In like manner, so long as men remain in their natural blindness of understanding they are not sensible of their spiritual wants, and of this in particular. But as soon as God opens the eyes of their understanding they see the state they were in before;...(Outler, Works 2: 176-7).

The second enlargement on this description of the natural state or condition of sinful humanity comes from Wesley's sermon, "The New Birth".

And "in Adam all died" (cf. I Corinthians 15:22), all humankind, all the children of men who were then in Adam's loins. The natural consequence of this is that everyone descended from him comes into the world spiritually dead, dead to God, wholly "dead in sin" (cf. Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 2:13); entirely void of the life of God, void of the image of God, of all that "righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:24) wherein Adam was created. Instead of this every man born into the world now bears the image of the devil, in pride and self-will; the image of the beast, in sensual appetites and desires...(Outler, Works 2: 190).

Wesley's commentary on the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer offers some further insight of the results of this spiritual bondage. He 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 (cf. Proverbs 7:27). 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" (cf. Luke 7:42) us all (Outler, Works 1: 586).

### Benefits of the Fall

Wesley acknowledges that both from God's perspective and humankind's perspective there are at least three benefits that came to humankind as a result of the fall of our first parent, Adam. In summary, they are,

First, the power of God's wondrous grace would not have been made known to all humankind.

Secondly, and because of this wondrous grace humankind can enjoy more of a state of holiness and happiness on earth than if Adam had not fallen.

Third, and when finally humankind (saved by His grace) reach Heaven, humankind would then be far more happier than he/she would have been otherwise.

Wesley says,

...He [God] saw that to permit the fall of the first man was far best for mankind in general; that abundantly more good than evil would accrue to the posterity of Adam by his fall; that if "sin abounded" thereby over all the earth, yet "grace would much more abound" (cf. Romans 5:20);....

...May the Lover of men open the eyes of our understanding to perceive clearly that by the fall of Adam mankind in general have gained a capacity,

First, of being more holy and happy on earth; and

Secondly, of being more happy in heaven, than otherwise they could have been (Outler, Works 2: 424-5).

### Summary

The Wesleyan emphasis on the doctrine of sin is critical to an overall understanding of humankind in general, and of the doctrines of Salvation in particular. Wesley based his doctrine of sin on Scripture and reason, i.e., "All have sinned"; all need a Savior from sin. By "one man", Adam, sin entered into the human race, and thus death became the



ultimate consequence of the disease. By "one Man", Jesus Christ, the cure for sin and uncleanness was achieved. The Son of God was manifested to take away the sins of the world (cf. I John 3:5).

## CHAPTER 5

### WESLEY'S UNDERSTANDING OF SALVATION

The systematic approach to Wesley's Doctrine of Salvation is generally scattered throughout his sermons. However, the most identifiable system is, in part, his Sermon, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation" where he provides a general overview of his approach to the doctrine of salvation. This is Wesley's order:

First, salvation begins with "Prevenient Grace"

Second, it is carried on by "Convincing Grace".

Third, afterwards, Christian salvation proper, i.e., justification and sanctification follows (Outler, Works 3: 203-4).

#### Wesley's Order of Salvation

Langford provides a working summary of Wesley's ordo salutis.

There was for Wesley an "order of salvation", a dynamic movement of the Christian life from its inception to its fulfillment. Moving from conscience to conviction of sin, to repentance, to justification, to regeneration, to sanctification, to glorification, there is a pattern of gracious development. This development is built upon the active presence of the Holy Spirit as it encounters, wins assent, and transforms life. Hence justification results in regeneration. Forgiveness brings a changed condition of life. The old nature is set aside as new creation occurs. Those who are redeemed have been given a new nature, for they have had restored in them the image of God... (35-6).

#### Wesley's Sermons on Salvation

The following sermons are annotated for the reader's understanding and comprehension of the doctrine of salvation which has been systematized in the following pages.

Sermon No. 16, "The Means of Grace". This sermon sets in motion the generally accepted process and provisions whereby a sinner may seek and find salvation. The key passage is Wesley's own definition of the term "means of grace". He states,

By "means of grace" I understand outward signs, words, or actions ordained of God, and appointed for this end- to be the ordinary channels whereby he might

convey to men preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace (Outler, Works 1: 376f; 1: 381).

Sermon No. 85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation". This sermon gives insight to the cooperation in the paradox of "prevenient grace and human agency" (Outler, Works 3: 199f). Every person has a measure of this grace whereby he is drawn to God. As God works within us, we are then able to cooperate in our own salvation (Outler, Works 3: 207).

Sermon No. 7, "The Way to the Kingdom". In this sermon, Wesley describes the "Kingdom of God" and the "Kingdom of Heaven" and the way one enters into that kingdom. The first step described is the way of repentance (Outler, Works 1: 225). Repentance here is also referred to by Wesley as "convincing grace" (Outler, Works 3: 204), a term used in the above sermon.

Sermon No. 5, "Justification by Faith". This is Wesley's landmark sermon on justification as coming by "faith alone" The sermon begins with a description of the state and condition of humankind prior to the Fall of Adam and the universal impact of that fall upon all of human society. In addition, he summarizes the plan of atonement through which humankind is returned to some extent, at least, to his original state or condition experienced in paradise (Outler, Works 1: 181f).

Sermon No. 21, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, I". This sermon likewise shares in the same theme as the sermon above. It more precisely "teaches us the true way to life everlasting, the royal way which lead to the kingdom" (Outler, Works 1: 466f).

Sermon No. 1, "Salvation by Faith". "Salvation by Faith" describes the kind of faith necessary toward salvation, i.e., it is faith in Christ. It is more than a mere assent to the gospel of Christ, it is a full reliance on the blood of Christ, a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection. It is sure confidence in God through the merits of Christ

(Outler, Works 1: 109f).

Sermon No. 43, "The Scripture Way of Salvation". This sermon pulls together the entire order of salvation beginning with "prevenient grace" through the living out of the Christian life through "works of piety" and "works of mercy". The common thread running all the way through this sermon is how "faith" makes it all possible (Outler, Works 2: 153f).

Sermon No. 9, "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption" In this sermon, Wesley picks up again the theme that salvation is by "faith alone" The "evangelical" person, Wesley says, has found "grace", or favour in the sight of God. He has been adopted in the family of God where God is now his "Father" (Outler, Works 1: 248f).

Sermon No. 45, "The New Birth" Using the familiar text from John 3:7, ("...Ye must be born again.") Wesley's sermon explains what it means to be "born again", i.e., he states that the new birth is "the great work which God does in us, in renewing our fallen nature" (Outler, Works 2: 186f).

Sermon No. 18, "The Marks of the New Birth". In this sermon, Wesley takes seriously the realities of evangelical conversions. Even so, he does not diminish in any way his traditional sacramental (i.e., Baptism) beliefs. His crucial assertion is that the spiritually regenerated person receive power whereby he does not commit sin (Outler, Works 1: 415f).

Sermon No. 19, "The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God". This sermon has been paired with No. 18 above, because both deal with basically the same doctrine. This sermon, however, defines clearer Wesley's thoughts on sin, i.e., the distinctive differences between voluntary and involuntary sins (Outler, Works 1: 431f).

Sermon Nos. 10 & 11, "The Witness of the Spirit, I & II". Basic to Wesley's doctrine

of salvation is doctrine of assurance. This was a paramount concern for Wesley. In these two sermons, he points out that it is the Holy Spirit Himself that bear witness with our spirit that we are born of God (Outler, Works 1: 267-98).

Sermon No. 12, "The Witness of Our Own Spirit". This is a sequel to sermons nos. 10 & 11, above. His emphasis in this sermon is to point out that our own spirit, i.e., our own good conscience itself correlates with the Holy Spirit in enabling us to know with assurance that we are indeed children of God (Outler, Works 1: 299f).

Sermon No. 62, "The End of Christ's Coming". The chosen text here is I John 3:8. The sermon deals with the "problem of evil and 'Christ's' coming as its saving remedy" (Outler, Works 2: 471f).

Sermon No. 20, "The Lord Our Righteousness" This sermon deals primarily with the righteousness of Christ, but also includes at least one excellent comment regarding Christ's atoning work (Outler, Works 1: 444f).

#### General Nature of Salvation

In this section, Wesley deals with the various stages toward which a sinner becomes a Christian. Beginning with God's action upon us in "prevenient grace", to the full "assurance" that a sinner has been forgiven from all past and present sins, to a renewed "mind of Christ", and a complete and real inward change.

#### Prevenient Grace

Wesley states that salvation begins with "preventing (prevenient) grace". What is meant by this term is that all persons are endowed by God with a measure of grace that leads them to a recognition of their need for salvation, and then leads them to a sense of convictions for their sins. It is this grace that ultimately leads them to make a choice between their sins and that of the redemption that Christ offers them.

...For allowing that all the souls of men 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. Everyone has sooner or later good desires, although the generality of men stifle them before they can strike deep root or produce any considerable fruit. Everyone 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 (cf. John 1:9). And everyone, unless he be one of the small number whose conscience is seared as with a hot iron (cf. I Timothy 4:2), 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 (Outler, Works 3: 207).

Langford states that, "The grace of God in Christ creates a new possibility for human life, and to every human life God is antecedently and enablingly present" (34).

Another statement from Wesley enables us to move into the next part of this section. From his Sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," he states,

...all the "drawings" of "the Father" (cf. John 6:44), the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more; all that "light" wherewith the Son of God "enlightened everyone that cometh into the world" (cf. John 1:9), showing every man "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God" (Micah 6:8); all the convictions which his Spirit from time to time works in every child of man... (Outler, Works 2: 156-7).

Prevenient grace, then, becomes God's method of working in the human life, of convicting and convincing the sinner of his need for salvation.

Sources of Conviction. Wesley points out two sources from which conviction takes place. The first is the conscience or ordinary means by which God draws us to Himself. The second is the Word of God itself as the extraordinary means by which a person is finally convicted of his/her need for salvation. These two sources are emphasized in his Sermon, "The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law" He states,

...But it is the ordinary method of the Spirit of God to convict sinners by the law. It is this which, being set home on the conscience, generally breaketh the rocks in pieces. It is more especially this part of the "word of God" which "is"..., "quick

and powerful", full of life and energy, "and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). This, in the hand of God and of those whom he hath sent, "pierces" through all the folds of a deceitful heart, and "divides asunder even the soul and the spirit", yea, as it were, the very "joints and marrow." By this is the sinner discovered to himself. All his fig leaves are torn away, and he sees that he is "wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked" (cf. Revelation 3:17). The law flashes conviction on every side. He feels himself a mere sinner. He has nothing to pay. His "mouth is stopped," and he stands "guilty before God" (cf. Romans 3:19) (Outler, Works 2: 15).

Results of Conviction. Wesley now describes the results of this conviction by the conscience (because of the law) and by the word of God (which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword). He describes the emotions of the soul of humankind under conviction in these words from his Sermon, "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption."

[Natural man] not only sees, but feels in himself, by an emotion of souls which he cannot describe, that for the sins of his heart, were his life without blame (which yet it is not, and cannot be; seeing "an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit") (cf. Matthew 7:18; Luke 6:43), he deserves to be cast into "the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:43). He feels that "the wages", the just reward, "of sin", of his sin above all, "is death" (Romans 6:23); even the second death (Revelation 21:8), the death which dieth not, the destruction of body and soul in hell (Matthew 10:28).

Here ends his pleasing dream, his delusive rest, his false peace, his vain security. His joy now vanishes as a cloud; pleasures once loved delight no more. They pall upon the taste; he loathes the nauseous sweet; he is weary to bear them. The shadows of happiness flee away, and sink into oblivion; so that he is stripped of all, and wanders to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none (Matthew 12:43; Luke 11:24).

The fumes of those opiates being now dispelled, he feels the anguish of a wounded spirit. He finds that sin let loose upon the soul (whether it be pride, anger, or evil desire; whether self-will, malice, envy, revenge, or any other) is perfect misery. He feels sorrow of heart for the blessings he has lost, and the curse which is come upon him; remorse for having thus destroyed himself, and despised his own mercies; fear, from the lively sense of the wrath of God, and of the consequences of His wrath; of the punishment which he has justly deserved, and which he sees hanging over his head; fear of death, as being to him the gate of hell, the entrance of death eternal; fear of the devil, the executioner of the wrath and righteous vengeance of God; fear of men, who if they were able to kill his body, would thereby plunge both body and soul into hell (Matthew 10:28);

fear, sometimes arising to such a height that the poor, sinful, guilty soul is terrified with everything, with nothing, with shades, with a leaf shaken of the wind (Leviticus 26:36). Yea, sometimes it may even border upon distraction, making a man "drunken, though not with wine" (cf. Isaiah 29:9; 51:21), suspending the exercise of the memory, of the understanding, of all the natural faculties. Sometimes it may approach to the very brink of despair; so that he who trembles at the name of death may yet be ready to plunge into it every moment, to "choose strangling rather than life" (cf. Job 7:15). Well may such a man "roar", like him of old, "for the very disquietness of his heart" (cf. Psalms 38:8). Well may he cry out, "The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities; but a wounded spirit who can bear" (cf. Proverbs 18:14)?

Now he truly desires to break loose from sin, and begins to struggle with it. But though he strive with all his might he cannot conquer; sin is mightier than he. He would fain escape; but he is so fast in prison that he cannot get forth. He resolves against sin, but yet sins on; he sees the snare, and abhors-and runs into it. So much does his boasted reason avail -- only to enhance his guilt, and increase his misery! Such is the freedom of his will-- free only to evil; free to "drink in iniquity like water" (cf. Job 15:16); to wander farther and farther from the living God, and do more "despite to the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29) (Outler, Works 1: 256-8)!

### Convincing Grace

Wesley's Definition. "Convincing grace" is Wesley's term for "repentance." In repentance there is the idea of self-knowledge and self-revelation.

...Know thyself to be a sinner, and what manner of sinner thou art. Know that corruption of thy inmost nature, whereby thou art very far gone from original righteousness, whereby "the flesh lusteth" always "contrary to the Spirit" (cf. Galatians 5:17), through "the carnal mind which is enmity against God", which "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (cf. Romans 8:7). Know that thou art corrupted in every power, in every faculty of thy soul, that thou art totally corrupted in every one of these, all the foundations being out of course. The eyes of thine understanding are darkened, so that they cannot discern God or the things of God (Ephesians 1:18; 4:18). The clouds of ignorance and error rest upon thee, and cover thee with the shadow of death. Thou knowest nothing yet as thou oughtest to know, neither God, nor the world, nor thyself. Thy will is no longer the will of God, but is utterly perverse and distorted, averse from all good, from all which God loves, and prone to all evil, to every abomination which God hateth. Thy affections are alienated from God, and scattered abroad over all the earth. All thy passions, both thy desires and aversions, thy joys and sorrows, thy hopes and fears, are out of frame, are either undue in their degree, or placed on undue objects. So that there is no soundness in thy soul, but "from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot" (to use the strong expression of the prophet) there are only "wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores" (cf. Isaiah 1:6) (Outler, Works 1: 225-6).



He sees corruption in a person's nature, spiritual capacity (soul), and the foundations of one's being. The results of this corruption affects the eyes, the mind, and death (both physical and spiritual). A person's will is distorted. One's affections are not toward the Creator, but is directed toward wherever it finds pleasure. One's passion is distorted. The soul is without an anchor.

Knowledge (i.e., self-revelation), is the first step toward personal salvation in Wesley's understanding of repentance.

Two Kinds of Repentance. For Wesley, repentance was of two sorts; legal and evangelical. Legal repentance is a "thorough conviction of sin." Evangelical repentance for Wesley is "a change of heart (consequently of life) from all sin to all holiness" (Wesley 23).

### Justification

Wesley's Definition. Wesley's definition for the word "justification" is "pardon, the forgiveness of sins."

...It is that act of his 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" (cf. Romans 3:25). This is the easy, natural account of it given by St. Paul throughout his whole Epistle. So he explains it himself, more particularly in this and in the following chapter. Thus in the next verses but one to the text, "Blessed are they (saith he) whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:7,8; cf. Psalms 32:1,2). To him that is justified or forgiven God "will not impute sin" to his condemnation. He will not condemn him on that account either in this world or in that which is to come. His sins, all his past sins, in thought, word, and deed, "are covered", are blotted out; shall not be remembered or mentioned against him, any more than if they had not been. God will not inflict on that sinner what he deserved to suffer, because the Son of his love hath suffered for him. And from the time we are "accepted through the Beloved", "reconciled to God through his blood" (cf. Ephesians 1:6,7; Romans 5:9, 10), he loves and blesses and watches over us for good, even as if we had never sinned (Outler, Works 1: 189-90).

Outler points out that Wesley was committed to a doctrine of justification that

involved both a relative and real change in the forgiven sinner. Wesley's doctrine states that "Justification,...is both acquittal and renewal, imputation and impartation, a relative and yet also a real change" (Theology 52-3).

In his Sermon, "Justification by Faith," Wesley raises the important question: "Who are they that are justified?", i.e., "Who are they that are pardoned, forgiven, acquitted, and renewed?" It is "the ungodly: he, that is, God, 'justifieth the ungodly'..." (Romans 4:5) (Outler, Works 1: 190). Further,

...It is only sinners that have any occasion for pardon: it is sin alone which admits of being forgiven. Forgiveness therefore has an immediate reference to sin and (in this respect) to nothing else. It is our "unrighteousness" to which the pardoning God is "merciful"; it is our "iniquity" which he "remembereth no more" (cf. Hebrews 8:12) (Outler, Works 1: 190).

In the next paragraph Wesley further states,

...For it is not a saint but a sinner that is forgiven, and under the notion of a sinner. God justifieth not the godly, but the ungodly; not those that are holy already, but the unholy... (Outler, Works, 1: 191).

The summary of Wesley's doctrine of justification is found in his Sermon, "Salvation by Faith." He says,

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 power of sin, through Christ "formed in his heart" (cf. Galatians 4:19). So that he who is thus justified or saved by faith is indeed "born again"... (Outler, Works 1: 124).

By Grace. The central theme to Wesley's doctrine of salvation is that salvation is from God to humankind. It is free, undeserved, our having no claim to it whatsoever. Out of the sole goodness of God, as demonstrated in the Biblical idea that Christ, having thereby made a "full and sufficient sacrifice" (Outler, Works 1: 195), and satisfaction for the sins of the world. The only condition was of accepting pardon or forgiveness because

of grace.

All the blessings which God hath bestowed upon man are of his mere grace, bounty, or favour: his free, undeserved favour, favour, altogether undeserved, man having no claim to the least of his mercies (Genesis 32:10). It was free grace that "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him a living soul" (cf. Genesis 2:7), and stamped on that soul the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and "put all things under his feet" (Psalms 8:6; I Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 1:22). The same free grace continues to us, at this day, life, and breath, and all things (Acts 17:25). For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God's hand. "All our works thou, O God, hast wrought in us" (cf. Isaiah 26:12). These therefore are so many more instances of free mercy: and whatever righteousness may be found in man, this is also the gift of God (Outler, Works 1: 117-8).

Wesley is clear that the justification we receive from God is freely of His own doing. Commenting on Romans 11:6, Wesley points out that, "There is something so absolutely inconsistent between the being justified by grace, and the being justified by works, that, if you suppose either, you of necessity exclude the other. For what is given to works is the payment of a debt; whereas grace implies an unmerited favour. So that the same benefit cannot, in the very nature of things, be derived from both" (564).

Again, wanting to be sure that his hearers understood that justification is from the free grace of God and not of our own works, Wesley raises the question, "Wherewithal then shall a sinful man atone for any the least of his sins? With his own works? No... (Outler, Works 1: 118).

It is clear that Wesley was in no ways given to the idea that works or righteousness (i.e., of the sinner), would even begin to atone for his sins. The Atonement of Christ, the Righteousness of Christ could only satisfy the means toward humankind's ultimate salvation.

Wesley is Scripturally sure that it is only by God's grace that humankind is saved. The results is that he placed great emphasis on the Atonement and the Righteousness of Christ in our stead. It was at the great cost of Christ's supreme sacrifice as our

atonement that we are forgiven, we are saved by His grace, and by His grace alone.

Through Faith. Wesley's doctrine of Salvation emphasizes two basic elements regarding the experience of salvation: (1) That salvation is a gift from God to humankind and nothing that a person does can merit or earn this gift. (2) That this gift of salvation is received and accepted by the sinner through an act of his faith in Christ. Christ, and God through Christ, are the proper objects of our faith. Wesley uses two primary verses of Scripture to give credence to this doctrine of salvation by grace through faith: first, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved "(Romans 10:9), and secondly, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness..."(Romans 10:10) (Outler, Works 1: 118f).

Wesley defines Christian faith as both "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..." (Outler, Works 1: 121).

He further defines faith as "trust and confidence".

...The true, living, Christian faith, which whosoever hath is "born of God", is not only an assent, an act of the understanding, but a disposition which God hath wrought in his heart; "a sure trust and confidence in God that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God". This implies that a man first renounce himself; that, in order to be "found in Christ" (cf. Philippians 3:9), to be accepted through him, he totally reject all "confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3,4); that, "having nothing to pay", having no trust in his own works or righteousness of any kind, he come to God as a lost, miserable, self-destroyed, self-condemned, undone, helpless sinner, as one whose "mouth" is utterly "stopped", and who is altogether "guilty before God" (Romans 3:19). Such a sense of sin (commonly called "despair" by those who speak evil of the things they know not), together with a full conviction, such as no words can express, that of Christ only cometh our salvation, and an earnest desire of that salvation must precede a living faith: a trust in him who "for us paid our ransom by his death, and for us fulfilled the law in his life" This faith, then, whereby we are born of God, is "not only a belief of all the articles of our faith, but also a

true confidence of the mercy of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Outler, Works 1: 418-9).

Faith, is for Wesley, thus the only condition to one's salvation. He states,

By affirming that this faith is the term or condition of justification I mean, first, that there is no justification without it. "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18); and so long as he believeth not that condemnation cannot be removed, "but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). As "there is no other name given under heaven than that of Jesus of Nazareth," no other merit whereby a condemned sinner can ever be saved from the guilt of sin; so there is no other way of obtaining a share in his merit, than "by faith in his name" (Acts 4:10, 12; 3:16). So that as long as we are without this faith we are "strangers to the covenant of promise", we are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel", and "without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). Whatsoever virtues (so called) a man may have--I speak of those unto whom the gospel is preached; "for what have I to do to judge them that are without" (I Corinthians 5:12)? --whatsoever good works (so accounted) he may do, it profiteth not: he is still a "child of wrath" (cf. Ephesians 2:3), still under the curse, till he believes in Jesus.

Faith therefore, is the necessary condition of justification. Yea, and the only necessary condition thereof. This is the second point carefully to be observed: that the very moment God giveth faith (for "it is the gift of God") (Ephesians 2:8,9) to the "ungodly", "that worketh not", that "faith is counted to him for righteousness" (cf. Romans 4:5). He hath no righteousness at all antecedent to this, not so much as negative righteousness or innocence. But "faith is imputed to him for righteousness" the very moment that he believeth...(Outler, Works 1: 195-6).

This faith, which is the only necessary condition to justification, this faith which is itself the gift from God, when exercised leads to pardon and forgiveness.

### The New Birth (Regeneration)

The Need for New Birth. Wesley compares the natural state of humankind with his spiritual state. Before a child is born into the world he has eyes, but sees not; he has ears, but does not hear. He has an imperfect use of his various senses. He has no knowledge of the things of the world. It is only when he is born into the world that he begins to live, i.e., to actually see, hear, feel, and experience life as it really is. This serves for Wesley as the best description of the state of a natural person, i.e., a person not yet born of the Spirit of God. The natural person has no knowledge of God, no communica-

tion with Him, and no acquaintance with Him. He has no knowledge of the things of God, either spiritual or eternal. As soon as he is born of God, there is a total change in all these things. God, by His Spirit, quickens him to new life in Jesus Christ. He continually breathes upon the person's soul, and the soul is breathing unto God. Grace is descending into the heart. Prayer and praise ascends to heaven. Communication and fellowship exist between God and the new born person (Outler, Works 2: 192-3).

Smith states, "In the year 1738 Wesley discovered what he often thereafter took care to explain, that in the New Testament the term 'salvation' did not refer simply to eternal blessedness in heaven. It signified, rather, the experience of new life in Christ that enabled believers to live 'soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world'" (Lindström forward).

The New Birth and Justification Compared. In the introduction to his Sermon, "The New Birth" Wesley compares the two terms, New Birth and Justification. He states,

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" (John 3:6,8); 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 (Outler, Works 2: 187).

Further,

From hence it manifestly appears what is the nature of the new birth. 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.... In a word, it is that change whereby the "earthly, sensual, devilish" mind (James 3:15) is turned into "the mind which was in Christ" (Philippians 2:5). This is the nature of the new birth. "So is everyone that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8) (Outler, Works 2: 193-4).

The New Birth and Sanctification Compared. In comparing the new birth with

sanctification Wesley is clear that the two are not the same. He states,

...the new birth is not the same with sanctification.... This [regeneration, the new birth] is a part of sanctification, not the whole; it is the gate to it, the entrance into it. When we are born again, then our sanctification, our inward and outward holiness, begins. And thenceforward we are gradually to "grow up in him who is our head" (cf. Ephesians 4:15). This expression of the Apostle admirably illustrates the difference between one and the other, and farther points out the exact analogy there is between natural and spiritual things. A child is born of a woman in a moment, or at least in a very short time. Afterward he gradually and slowly grows till he attains the stature of a man. In like manner a child is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment. But it is by slow degrees that he afterward grows up to the measure of full stature of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). The same relation therefore which there is between our natural birth and our growth there is also between our new birth and our sanctification (Outler, Works 2: 198).

Outler makes a clear interpretation regarding Wesley's comparison and distinction between the new birth and sanctification. He states,

Regeneration ("new birth," "change of heart") is a concurrent effect alongside justification. The sense of God's unmerited favor prompts an inner transformation, a new disposition toward God and neighbor, a new self-understanding, a new outlook and hope. Even so, "this is only the threshold of sanctification...." The Christian life goes on from here, in a dynamic process of nurture, piety, activity--and of expectation: that what is imputed in justification will be imparted in the Christian life and its fulfillment. This is "Christian perfection"--"to be made perfect in love in this life," even if only in the hour of death (which was Wesley's normal "calendar" for it) (Theology 73-4).

Holiness began in the experience of the new birth and increases as the Christian walks with God. For Wesley, the new birth began the formation of the Spiritual life, but the development of it continued throughout his life under the process of holiness, or Christian living. In other words, there was an order to Wesley's doctrine of ultimate salvation, as pointed out by Langford. He states,

There was for Wesley an "order of salvation," a dynamic movement of the Christian life from its inception to its fulfillment. Moving from conscience to conviction of sin, to repentance, to justification, to regeneration, to sanctification, to glorification, there is a pattern of gracious development. This development is built upon the active presence of the Holy Spirit as it encounters, wins assent, and transforms life. Hence justification results in regeneration. Forgiveness brings a changed condition of life. The old nature is set aside as new creation

occurs. Those who are redeemed have been given a new nature, for they have had restored in them the image of God. Wesley was emphatic about the change that God's grace effect in human life; it is characteristic of his thought that he placed great emphasis upon the new life in Christ. This altered status is the most important fact of human existence; grace has changed the affections, the mind, and the will. Christians are new creatures, set once more in proper relationship with God and their neighbors (35-6).

One other statement by Wesley will point out the differences between (in this case) justification and sanctification. He says,

Justification...is not the being made actually just and righteous. This is sanctification; which is indeed in some degree the immediate fruit of justification, but nevertheless is a distinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature. The one implies what God does for us through his Son; the other what he works in us by his Spirit...(Outler, Works 1: 187).

The Marks of the New Birth. To conclude this section on the New Birth, we look at one more Sermon on the subject. Wesley lays down quite clearly the distinguishing marks or proof of a persons experience of new birth. He says,

Thus have I plainly laid down those marks of the new birth which I find laid down in Scripture. Thus doth God himself answer that weighty question what is it to be born of God. Such, if the appeal be made to the oracles of God, is "every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). This it is, in the judgement of the Spirit of God, to be a son or a child of God. It is so to believe in God through Christ as "not to commit sin" (cf. I John 3:9), and to enjoy, at all times and in all places, that "peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). It is so to hope in God through the Son of his love as to have not only the "testimony of a good conscience" (cf. II Corinthians 1:12; I Peter 3:21), but also "the Spirit of God bearing witness with your spirits that ye are the children of God" (cf. Romans 8:16): whence cannot but spring the "rejoicing evermore in him through whom ye have received the atonement" (cf. Romans 5:11). It is so to love God, who hath thus loved you, as you never did love any creature: so that ye are constrained to love all men as yourselves; with a love not only ever burning in your hearts, but flaming out in all your actions and conversations, and making your whole life one "labor of love" (I Thessalonians 1:3; Hebrews 6:10), one continued obedience to those commands, "Be ye merciful, as God is merciful" (cf. Luke 6:36); "Be ye holy, as I the Lord am holy" (cf. I Peter 1:16; Leviticus 11:44,45); "Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48) (Outler, Works 1: 427-8).

Three characteristics or marks of a person having been born of the Spirit of God: they believe in God, not in words only, but in actually reframing from sin; they hope in



God; and they love God with a love that surpasses all other love.

### Assurance of Salvation Considered

The doctrine of Assurance became for Wesley the first pragmatic link between the experience one receives in justification and the development of the spiritual life toward full maturity. The Sermons, "The Witness of the Spirit," and "The Circumcision of the Heart," became, for Wesley, the primary sermons on assurance. In these sermons, as is in all of his sermons, he relied heavily upon Scripture toward the development of this doctrine. The exception in this case: he also relied heavily upon rational conclusions and experience toward a full understanding of this most important Wesleyan doctrine.

In this doctrine the primary task Wesley endeavored to answer was how one could know, and thus accept, the assurance of salvation. That is to say, how one could truly know and enjoy the assurance of being a "child of God".

Wesley's General Conclusion. In general, Wesley concluded by Scripture and reason that if a person is being led by the Spirit of God obviously that person is, by that fact alone, a child of God. He thus states,

...And by the reason or understanding that God has given him--which religion was designed not to extinguish, but to perfect,... Every man applying those scriptural marks to himself may know whether he is a child of God. Thus if he know, first, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God" into all holy tempers and actions, "they are sons of God" (for which he has the infallible assurance of Holy Writ) (cf. Romans 8:14); secondly, I am thus "led by the Spirit of God" -he will easily conclude, "Therefore I am a 'son of God'" (Outler, Works 1: 271-2).

Williams points out that in Wesley's understanding of the doctrine, "Assurance is the witness of God's Spirit that we are forgiven (justification) and accepted as children of God (adoption). It is not an assurance that we are worthy" (111).

Wesley's Use of Scripture. "... (for which he has the infallible assurance of Holy Writ);..." (Outler, Works 1: 272). This expression from Wesley indicates the primary im-

portance he placed on Scripture in support of personal knowledge and assurance of a "heartfelt experience with God". For his primary text he refers to St. Paul: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Here Wesley is again connecting the doctrine of prevenient grace with the doctrine of assurance, i.e., "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). Langford points out that Wesley emphasized assurance as the "assurance of love, the assurance of present pardon, the certitude of God's presence as sustaining positive relationship" (37).

To his primary text, Romans 8:16, he added other supporting scripture from the Gospel of St. John, as follows: 2:3,5,29; 3:14,19,24; and 4:13. For Wesley, the scriptures testify to the basis of our assurance, i.e., it describes repentance, (or conviction of sin), as constantly going before this witness of pardon. It describes the new birth "as a mighty change; a change from 'darkness to light', as well as 'from the power of Satan unto God'; as a 'passing from death unto life', a resurrection from the dead". It describes that "joy in the Lord which accompanies the witness of his Spirit as an humble joy, a joy that abases to the dust; that makes a pardoned sinner cry out, 'I am vile!'" The Scriptures teach, "This is the love of God" (the sure mark thereof) "that we keep his commandments" (I John 5:3) (Outler, Works 1: 279-80).

The Christian as a Child of God. To be a child of God, three things are implied: (1) A child of God loves, delights, and rejoices in God; (2) A child of God bears the fruits of the Spirit; and, (3) The child of God keeps the commandments of God.

Referring again to his text (Romans 8:16), Wesley raises the critical question of Christian assurance in the sermon, "The Witness of the Spirit." The question is: "How does the Spirit of God 'bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,' so as to exclude all doubt, and evince the reality of our sonship?" Wesley answers thus:

...And, first, as to the witness of our spirit: the soul as intimately and evidently perceives when it loves, delights, and rejoices in God, as when it loves and delights in anything on earth; and it can no more doubt whether it loves, delights, and rejoices, or no, than whether it exists, or no. If, therefore this be just reasoning: He that now loves God that delights and rejoices in him with an humble joy, an holy delight, and an obedient love- is a child of God; But I thus love, delight, and rejoice in God; Therefore I am a child of God; then a Christian can in no wise doubt of his being a child of God. Of the former proposition he has as full an assurance as he has that the Scriptures are of God. And of his thus loving God he has an inward proof, which is nothing short of self-evidence. Thus the "testimony of our own spirit" is with the most intimate conviction manifested to our hearts; in such a manner as beyond all reasonable doubt to evince the reality of sonship (Outler, Works 1: 275-6).

Wesley further states that a person can know that they are a child of God by the bearing of the "fruits of the Spirit", i.e., "love, joy, peace" (Galatians 5:22); "bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering" (cf. Colossians 3:12). And the outward fruits are, Wesley states, "the doing good to all men, the doing no evil to any, and the walking in the light--a zealous, uniform obedience to all the commandments of God" (Outler, Works 1: 283).

Another question Wesley answered in this same sermon is the question, "how does he", (i.e., the Holy Spirit) "bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?"

His answer:

...the testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly "witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God"; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me (Galatians 2:20); and that all my sins are blotted out (Acts 3:19), and I, even I, am reconciled to God (Outler, Works 1: 274).

Wesley continues:

That this "testimony of the Spirit of God" must needs, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the "testimony of our own spirit" may appear from this single consideration: we must be holy of heart and holy in life before we can be conscious that we are so, before we can have "the testimony of our spirit" that we are inwardly and outwardly holy. But we must love God before we can be holy at all; this being the root of all holiness... (Outler, Works 1: 274).

Further:

...This is that testimony of our own spirit which, so long as we continue to love God and keep his commandments, continues joined with the testimony of God's Spirit, "that we are the children of God" (Outler, Works 1: 275).

Assurance and Faith. It is important in Wesleyan theology that the Christian believer understand the connection between "faith of assurance," and "faith of adherence" Wesley addresses this point in his sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation". He states,

But is this the "faith of assurance" or "faith of adherence"? The Scripture mentions no such distinction. The Apostle says: "There is one faith, and one hope of our calling," one Christian, saving faith, as "there is one Lord" in whom we believe, and "one God and Father of us all" (cf. Ephesians 4:4-6). And it is certain this faith necessarily implies an assurance (which is here only another word for evidence, it being hard to tell the difference between them) that "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). For "he that believeth" with the true, living faith, "hath the witness in himself" (I John 5:10). "The Spirit witnesseth with his spirit that he is a child of God" (Romans 8:16). "Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father" (cf. Galatians 4:6); giving him an assurance that he is so, and a childlike confidence in him. But let it be observed that, in the very nature of the thing, the assurance goes before the confidence. For a man cannot have a childlike confidence in God till he knows he is a child of God. Therefore confidence, trust, reliance, adherence, or whatever else it be called, is not the first, as some have supposed, but the second branch or act of faith. It is by this faith we "are saved", justified and sanctified, taking that word in its highest sense... (Outler, Works 2: 161-2).

Langford summarizes Wesley's doctrine of Assurance by stating that, "...To know God is to know God as Savior. To know God savingly is to be consciously aware of God's redemptive presence. Wesley claimed that assurance, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the revelation of Christ are all integrally related. With a cry of discovery, he affirmed, 'I know that I am accepted'" (39).

#### Provisions of Salvation

In this section, Wesley looks at the whole doctrine of Atonement, beginning with the primary person involved in our atonement, Christ, Himself. Then, Wesley asserts, Christ became our Savior. He was crucified for our sins. In that sacrificial act He became our

Redeemer acclaiming victory over the power of sin for the believer. The primary act of healing expresses Wesley's deepest understanding of the merits of the atonement, i.e., Christ became our Great Physician. He has healed us from all our diseases.

### Christ, as Person

Wesley's doctrine of sin had a dynamic impact on his understanding of the atonement and Christ's part in our redemption. His explanation of sin raises an important question: Is there any hope for humankind? Is there any remedy or deliverance from the sin which binds and controls humankind? Who will deliver us from the bondage of sin? Wesley turned to the Scripture for the answer to these important questions. He concludes that it is only by and through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that we are freed from the bondage of sin. Throughout Wesley's sermons one will find that his central theme and approach to all of theology was the Person of Jesus Christ. He clearly understood the implications of Christ's redeeming work for humankind. In his Sermon, "The End of Christ's Coming", he addresses the question of Christ's redemptive work. He states that His primary work was to destroy the "works of the devil" (Outler, Works 2: 477). But how did He do this? How did Christ destroy the works of the devil? Wesley explains that it came through his various manifestations and appearances.

First, the Son of God manifested Himself to the creatures of the Old Testament. The understanding of the earliest patriarchs was that no one had or could ever see God face to face. But, according to Wesley, Christ appeared in the form of someone else to our first parents and other prominent members of the Hebrew nation (Outler, Works 2: 478-9).

Second, the Son of God appeared to the whole human race when he was born of woman. At this point, Wesley begins to unfold the redemption story of how Christ went

about preparing for our redemption. He states,

...It was in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4) (in just the middle age of the world, as a great man largely proves) that God "brought his first-begotten into the world, made of woman" (cf. Hebrews 1:6), by the power of the Highest overshadowing her (Luke 1:35). He was afterwards manifested to the shepherds; to devout Simeon; to Anna, the prophetess; and to "all that waited for redemption in Jerusalem" (Outler, Works 2: 479).

Third, at the age of thirty, He manifested Himself again through His priestly ministry.

When he was of due age for executing his priestly office he was manifested to Israel, "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God in every town and in every city" (cf. Matthew 4:23; 9:35). And for a time he was glorified by all, who acknowledged that he "spake as never man spake" (cf. John 7:46); that he "spake as one having authority" (cf. Matthew 7:29), with all the wisdom of God, and the power of God. He was manifested by numberless "signs and wonders, and mighty works which he did" (cf. II Corinthians 12:12); as well as by his whole life, being the only one born of a woman "who knew no sin" (II Corinthians 5:21); who from his birth to his death "did all things well" (cf. Mark 7:37), doing continually "not his own will, but the will of him that sent him" (cf. John 6:38) (Outler, Works 2: 479).

Fourth, at the age of thirty-three, He manifested Himself through His death on the Cross.

After all, "Behold the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world" (cf. John 1:29)! This was a more glorious manifestation of himself than any he had made before. How wonderfully was he manifested to angels and men when he "was wounded for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5), when he "bore all our sins in his own body on the tree" (cf. I Peter 2:24); when, having by that one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, he cried out, "It is finished; and bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30)... (Outler, Works 2: 480).

Fifth, following His death on the Cross, he again manifested Himself through the resurrection, ascension, and in the sending forth of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Further quoting Wesley,

...We need but just mention those farther manifestations his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, into the glory which he had before the world began (John 17:5); and his pouring out the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost (Book of Acts, chp. 2); both of which are beautifully described in those well-

known words of the Psalmist: "He hath ascended up on high; he hath led captivity captive; he hath received gifts for men; yea, even for his enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among, or in them" (cf. Psalms 68:18) (Outler, Works 2: 480).

### Christ, as Savior

Outler suggests that Wesley's one consistent message was Jesus Christ and Him crucified, i.e., Christus crucifixus, Christus redemptor, and Christus victor (Theology 45).

Christ, the Crucified One. By the use of Scripture Wesley was able to place emphasis and meaning to the work of Christ as it relates to His act of a "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." In his Sermon, "Justification by Faith", Wesley's focus on Christus crucifixus is put into perspective. He states,

In this state we were, even all mankind, when "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end we might not perish but have everlasting life" (cf. John 3:16). In the fullness of time he was made man, another common head of mankind, a second general parent and representative of the whole human race. And as such it was that "he bore our griefs", the Lord "laying upon him the iniquities of us all" (Isaiah 53:5,6). Then "was he wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). "He made his soul an offering for sin" (Isaiah 53:10). He poured out his blood for the transgressors. He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (I Peter 2:24), that "by his stripes we might be healed" (Isaiah 53:5). And "by that one oblation of himself once offered" he "hath redeemed me and all mankind"; having thereby "made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world" (cf. Ephesians 5:2) (Outler, Works 1: 185-6).

Deschner makes the point that "The grand theme of the Wesleyan atonement is Christ's bearing of our guilt and punishment on the cross" (116).

Williams emphasizes Wesley's doctrine of the Cross: "Christ on the Cross represents the whole human race; there he is the 'general Savior of mankind', the Second Adam constituting a new covenant in which all are offered membership through the gift of faith" (86). Again Williams states that,

...His central emphasis is on Christ the Representative of all men, dying on the

Cross to open a new covenant of grace, so that man can be taken out of the legal order of merit and justified and sanctified by faith alone through the new relationship to God mediated by Christ. The grace made available through the Atonement is free for all and works in all as prevenient grace so that all may be brought to Christ through the faith that justifies... (88-9).

The most common word to put Wesley's doctrine of the Atonement into perspective is the word, "evangelical", which Outler defines as "...salvation by faith in Christ crucified, salvation as the gift of God's unmerited grace, provided freely in and through Christ's suffering love, with no prior moral achievement or merit from the human side" (Theology 48).

Christ, the Redeemer. One of Wesley's favorite texts was, I Corinthians 1:30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:...." He preached or made reference to this text at least 72 times (Outler, Theology 45). His doctrine of Atonement centered or focused around the idea of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of humankind. The three key words in Wesley's understanding of the Atonement are love, satisfaction, and reconciliation.

The gospel in a nutshell, for Wesley, was the revelation of God's love for fallen humanity. It was this love which led Christ to His Cross to suffer for the sins of the whole world, and to give Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sinful humanity. He states in his Sermon, "The Way to the Kingdom",

"The gospel" (that is, good tidings, good news for guilty, helpless sinners) in the largest sense of the word means the whole revelation made to men by Jesus Christ; and sometimes the whole account of what our Lord did and suffered while he tabernacled among men (John 1:14). The substance of all is, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" (I Timothy 1:15); or, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end we might not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16); or, "He was bruised for our transgressions, he was wounded for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5) (Outler, Works 1: 229).

In another Sermon, Wesley further develops the theme of the gospel as God's



revelation of love to fallen humanity. Quoting from St. Paul's letter to the Romans (5:12), he states,

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 "judgement came upon all men to condemnation."

In this state we were, even all mankind, when "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end we might not perish but have everlasting life..." (Outler, Works 1: 185).

Williams explains that "Wesley insisted that in the Atonement something 'objective' took place, which is the only basis for the 'subjective' change that can take place in us now. The satisfaction of God's wrath by Christ's death is the only basis for the pardon of our sins. We can have Christ as our Pattern only when first we have accepted him as the Reconciler" (79). He quotes Wesley as follows:

...Christianity begins just where heathen morality ends: "poverty of spirit", "conviction of sin" (cf. John 8:46), the "renouncing ourselves" (cf. II Corinthians 4:2; Mark 8:34), the "not having our own righteousness" (cf. Philippians 3:9), the very first point in the religion of Jesus Christ, leaving all pagan religion behind.... Sink under the mighty hand of God, as guilty of death eternal; and cast off, renounce, abhor all imagination of ever being able to help thyself! Be it all thy hope 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" (I Peter 2:24)!... (Outler, Works 1: 480-1).

There are several key thoughts in Wesley's statement above, but the primary thought for our purposes here is the last phrase, "...who himself bare all our sins in his own body on the tree"! Christ, here, becomes our Representative, the Satisfier for our sin and guilt.

Wesley further develops this idea of Christ becoming the Satisfier to God's wrath, in the following statement:

...In the fullness of time he was made man, another common head of mankind, a second general parent and representative of the whole human race. And as such

it was that "he bore our griefs", the Lord "laying upon him the iniquities of us all". Then "was he wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities" (cf. Isaiah 53:4-6). "He made his soul an offering for sin" (Isaiah 53:10). He poured out his blood for the transgressors. He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree"(I Peter 2:24), that "by his stripes we might be healed" (Isaiah 53:5). And "by that one oblation of himself once offered" (cf. Hebrews 10:12) he "hath redeemed me and all mankind"; having thereby "made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world" (Outler, Works 1: 185-6).

Wesley's third key word in his understanding of the doctrine of Atonement is the word, "reconciliation". Here again, Christ becomes both the Means and the Reconciler Himself between God and His creation. This statement provides clarity to this idea of reconciliation.

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" (cf. Romans 3:23), we all became "children of wrath" (cf. Ephesians 2:3); or, as the Apostle expresses it, "Judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Romans 5:18). 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" (cf. Romans 8:1), but we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ" (cf. Romans 3:24) (Outler, Works 1: 187).

Williams' interpretation of Wesley's understanding of Christ as our Reconciler is as follows: "The cross, then, is an objective event in which God provides his Son as a sacrifice to atone for man. It is only by reliance upon Christ as the Atonement that we can be reconciled to God, receiving Christ as the Pattern because he is first the Saviour" (81).

Christ, The Victorious One. Lindström emphasizes Wesley's understanding that the Atonement is seen as Christ's victory over the devil. He goes on to link Wesley's understanding of the Atonement with Christ's office as High Priest. The victorious and liberating aspect of Christ's work in the Atonement finds its greatest expression in his role as High Priest or Mediator (71-2).

Wesley states that the "Son of God was manifested, to destroy the works of the devil" "We know," he says, "that he was manifested to take away our sins" (cf. I John 3:5,8) (Outler, Works 2: 473-4). Take note how Wesley describes this attack upon the devil, i.e., how Christ goes about destroying the works of the devil. He says,

...as Satan began his work in Eve by tainting her with unbelief, so the Son of God begins his work in man by enabling us to believe in him. He both opens and enlightens the eyes of our understanding. Out of darkness he commands light to shine, and takes away the veil which the god of this world had spread over our hearts. And we then see, not by a chain of reasoning, but by a kind of intuition, by a direct view, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their former trespasses" (II Corinthians 5:19), not imputing them to me. In that day "we know that we are of God" (I John 5:19), children of God by faith, "having redemption through the blood" of Christ, "even the forgiveness of sins" (cf. Colossians 1:14). "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ"(Romans 5:1): that peace which enables us in every state therewith to be content (Philippians 4:11); which delivers us from all perplexing doubts, from all tormenting fears, and in particular from that "fear of death whereby we were all our lifetime subject to bondage" (cf. Hebrews 2:15).

At the same time the Son of God strikes at the root of that grand work of the devil, pride;.... He strikes at the root of self-will,.... He destroys the love of the world,.... He saves them from seeking or expecting to find happiness in any creature.... Thus it is, by manifesting himself, he destroys the works of the devil, restoring the guilty outcast from God to his favour, to pardon and peace; the sinner in whom dwelleth no good thing (Romans 7:18), to love and holiness; the burdened, miserable sinner, to joy unspeakable (I Peter 1:8), to real, substantial happiness (Outler, Works 2: 480-1).

The most important element of Wesley's victorious Christ is the fact of Christ being our Supreme High Priest. Deschner points out that, "There are clearly two principle elements in the priestly office: the atonement, whereby Christ is the sacrifice for sin, reconciling men to God by His blood, and the priestly intercession, whereby the living Christ bears His wounds to heaven and there intercedes for transgressors before the throne of grace" (74-5). Lindström enlarges upon this interpretation by adding, that, "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" (66-7).

Wesley's Notes on Romans 4:5, states, in part, that,

...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 applied 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! (Wesley 532).

In developing this idea of Christ as our High Priest, Wesley goes further to explain that,

...To preach Christ as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed (II Timothy 2:15) is to preach him not only as our great "High Priest, taken from among men, and ordained for men, in things pertaining to God" (Hebrews 5:1); as such, "reconciling us to God by his blood" (cf. Romans 5:9,10), and "ever living to make intercession for us" (Hebrews 7:25); but likewise as the Prophet of the Lord, "who of God is made unto us wisdom" (I Corinthians 1:30), who by his word and his Spirit "is with us always" (cf. Matthew 28:20), "guiding us into all truth" (cf. John 16:13); yea, and as remaining a King for ever; as giving laws to all whom he has bought with his blood; as restoring those to the image of God whom he had first reinstated in his favour; as reigning in all believing hearts until he has "subdued all things to himself" (cf. Philippians 3:21); until he hath utterly cast out all sin, and "brought in everlasting righteousness" (cf. Daniel 9:24) (Outler, Works 2: 37-8).

Williams explains Wesley's point of view regarding Christ as our Mediator, or as our High Priest. He says,

Christ is the Mediator, who though he was God, yet became the representative of man, perfectly obeying God on our behalf (active righteousness) and suffering God's due punishment against us (passive righteousness), in order that full atonement might be made for us and that God's mercy for all might be revealed. It is this atonement that is the basis for our forgiveness (86).

### Christ, as the Great Physician

Wesley is clear in his endeavor to describe and define the proper nature of the religion of Jesus Christ. He states,

It is...God's method of healing a soul which is thus diseased. Hereby the great Physician of souls applies medicine to heal this sickness; to restore human nature, totally corrupted in all its faculties... (Outler, Works 2: 184).

Further,

...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.... Know your disease! Know your cure! Ye were born in sin; therefore "ye must be born again" (John 3:7), "born of God" (I John 3:9; cf. John 3:8). By nature ye are wholly corrupted; by grace ye shall be wholly renewed. "In Adam ye all died;" in the second Adam, "in Christ, ye all are made alive" (cf. I Corinthians 15:22). You "that were dead in sins hath he quickened" (cf. Ephesians 2:5). He hath already given you a principle of life, even "faith in him who loved you, and gave himself for you" (cf. Galatians 2:20)! Now "go on" (Hebrews 6:1) "from faith to faith" (Romans 1:17), until your whole sickness be healed, and all that "mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5) (Outler, Works 2: 185)!

This description of human nature and the healing of the diseased soul is referred to by some under the title, "The Therapeutic Model". Lindström states,

...He (Wesley) is fond of describing sin as an injury, as corruption, as disease. Original sin he pictures as leprosy infecting mankind, and the sins proceeding from it as "wounds" and "disease" 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... (41).

Wesley points out that salvation is a "present salvation". It is something, he says, that is "actually attainable on earth, by those who are partakers of this faith" (Outler, Works 1: 121).

For Wesley, we are saved from sin. That includes salvation from all sins, from original and actual sins, from past and present sin, the sins of the "flesh" and the sins of the "spirit" We are saved, he says, from both the guilt of sin and the power of sin. Being saved from the "guilt" of sin implies both a healing of the mind and soul, and being saved from the "power" of sin implies a victorious freedom from sin in the future. "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. Colossians 3:3). And as a "newborn babe he gladly receives the... sincere milk of the word, and grows thereby" (cf. I

Peter 2:2.); "going on in the might of the Lord his God" (cf. Ephesians 6:10), "from faith to faith" (Romans 1:17), "from grace to grace" (cf. John 1:16), until at length he comes unto "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (cf. Ephesians 4:13) (Outler, Works 1: 122-4).

Outler points out that, "Wesley understood justification as God's work for the repentant sinner, with Christ's mediatorial sacrifice as its sole meritorious cause to which our only proper response is 'acceptance' (i.e., faith). But in the very same transaction there is also a work of divine grace in the sinner's heart and moral disposition. Wesley calls this 'regeneration' or 'new birth,' the beginning of the actual restoration of the imago Dei, the impartation, by grace, of our 'original justice': our God-given power to love God above all else and all else in God...We have no part in our own justification before God, save the passive act of accepting and trusting the merits of Christ. But we do have a crucial part to play in further business of 'growing up into Christ, unto the stature of the perfect man'" (Theology 57-8).

## CHAPTER 6

## WESLEY'S UNDERSTANDING OF SANCTIFICATION

In a letter addressed to a Mr. Robert Brackenbury of Raithby Hall, Wesley summarized his commitment to the doctrine of Holiness of Heart and Life. The letter is written on September 15, 1790, just a short period of time before Wesley's death.

...I am glad Brother D \_\_\_\_\_ has more light with regard to full sanctification. 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 (Telford 5: 238).

The one document or tract that Wesley wrote that provides the "people called Methodist" a clearer understanding of his doctrine of Holiness is the one entitled, "The Character of a Methodist", written in the year 1742. In it Wesley describes a perfect Christian in scriptural terms. In it he also seeks to give the proper meaning to the term "Methodist". The points are summarized as follows:

...a Methodist is one who has "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him" (Romans 5:5); one who "loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength" (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). 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" (Psalms 73:25)! My God and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever (Psalm 73:26) (Davies (9: 35)!

These paraphrased words of Wesley focuses more intensely on the perfect Christian:

He is therefore happy in God.... He "rejoices in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4; I Thessalonians 5:16),.... He has been redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:22; Titus 2:14; I Peter 1:18,19), i.e., his sins have been forgiven. He believes that he now has the witness in himself (Romans 8:16), i.e., he a son of God. He is content, he is therefore anxious for nothing. He prays without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17). This commandment is written in his heart, that "he who loveth God, loves his brother also". Accordingly he "loves his neighbour as himself" (Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27), i.e., his heart is full of love to all mankind.

He is "pure in heart" (Matthew 5:8). He hath now "put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering" (cf. Galatians 5:22,23);

so that he "forbears and forgives, if he had a quarrel against any; even as God hath forgiven him" (cf. Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13). His one intention at all times and in all things is, not to please himself, but him who his soul loveth. All that is in the soul is holiness to the Lord. Because he loves God, "he keeps his commandments" (cf. John 14:15; 15:10; 15:12), and that with all his might. Whatsoever he doth, it is all to the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31). He allows nothing to hinder him from "running the race which is set before him" (Hebrews 12:1). He is disciplined. He does not speak evil of his neighbor. He cannot lie either to God or to man. He cannot speak idle words (cf. Matthew 12:36). He "does good unto all" (cf. II Corinthians 9:8; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:10). He is willing to "spend and to be spent herein" (cf. II Corinthians 12:15). "These are the principles and practices of our sect; these are the marks of a true Methodist" (Davis 9: 35-41).

In a letter to Henry Venn, Vicar of Huddersfield (1763), Wesley wrote, "What I want is holiness of heart and life" (Gill 124-5).

Wesley was not satisfied to just express the fine points of full sanctification as in his tract, "The Character of a Methodist". Wesley went on to give the positive side of holiness as a restoration of idea of happiness. In the sermon, "The Sermon on the Mount; VIII", he states,

...Surely "light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to see the sun" (cf. Ecclesiastes 11:7). But how much more to see the sun of righteousness continually shining upon the soul! And if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love (Philippians 2:1), if any peace that passeth all understanding (Philippians 4:7), if any rejoicing in hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:2), they all belong to him whose eye is single. Thus is his "whole body full of light" (Matthew 6:22). He walketh in the light as God is in the light (I John 1:7), rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17), and in everything giving thanks; enjoying whatever is the will of God concerning him in Christ Jesus (I Thessalonians 5:16-18) (Outler, Works 1: 615).

### Wesley's Sermons on Holiness

Wesley's sermons have provided the "people called Methodists" with the doctrinal basis for the doctrine of holiness. One of the clearest and important sermons on the doctrine of Holiness of Heart and Life is his sermon, "On God's Vineyard". This sermon was primarily written to Methodist people, but its publication has claimed a much broader audience than was ever anticipated or expected by Wesley. In this sermon Wesley



capitalizes the doctrine in this most important statement:

Who then is a Christian, according to the light which God hath vouchsafed to this people? He that, being justified by faith, hath peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1); and at the same time is "born again", "born from above", "born of the Spirit" (John 3:3-8), inwardly changed from the image of the devil to that "image of God wherein he was created" (cf. Colossians 3:10). He that finds the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him (Romans 5:5); and whom this love sweetly constrains to "love his neighbour", every man, "as himself" (cf. Mark 12:33; Matthew 22:38-40). He that has learned of his Lord to be meek and lowly in heart (Matthew 11:29), and in every state to be content (Philippians 4:11). He in whom is that whole mind, all those tempers, which were also in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5). He that abstains from all appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22) in his actions, and that "offends not" with "his tongue" (cf. Psalm 39:1). He that walks in all the commandments of God, and in all his ordinances, blameless (Luke 1:6). He that in all his intercourse with men does to others as he would they should do to him (Matthew 7:12); and in his whole life and conversation, whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he doth, doth all to the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31) (Outler, Works 3: 507-8).

Outler points out that there were six additional landmark sermons developed by Wesley that provides insight to Wesley's doctrine of holiness. One of the earliest sermons preached by Wesley that has significant importance to this theme is, "The Circumcision of the Heart" This was his first full definition of the holy-life tradition: "Christian perfection understood as perfect love of God and neighbour, rooted in a radical faith in Christ's revelation of that love and its power" (Outler, Works 1: 399). Outler's introductory remarks to Wesley's sermon on "Christian Perfection" provides additional understanding for Wesley's conscious intent on his sermon, "The Circumcision of the Heart". Outler points out that this sermon "had described the goal of Christian living as 'the being so "renewed in the image of our mind" as to be "perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect"'" (Outler, Works 2: 98).

His second sermon dealing with the theme of holiness ("Christian Perfection"), is a further development of this distinctive doctrine. The significant contribution this sermon has had in the development of the doctrine is best described by Outler in his introduction

to this sermon:

If, for Wesley, salvation was the total restoration of the deformed image of God in us, and if its fullness was the recovery of our negative power not to sin and our positive power to love God supremely, this denotes that furthest reach of grace and its triumphs in this life that Wesley chose to call "Christian Perfection" Just as justification and regeneration are thresholds for the Christian life in earnest ("what God does for us"), so also sanctification is "what God does in us", to mature and fulfil the human potential according to his primal design (Outler, Works 2: 97).

Outler summarizes the significance of this sermon in this way:

...Thus, "Christian Perfection" came to be the most distinctive and also the most widely misunderstood of all Wesley's doctrines. He continued to teach it, however, in season and out, as the farthest horizon of his vision of Christian existence, an idea with radical implications for personal ethics and for social transformation as well. First and last, it is his doctrine of grace carried to its climax--"grace abounding"... (Outler, Works 2: 98-9).

The third landmark sermon in this series was Wesley's sermon, "Sin in Believers' According to Outler this sermon was an "afterthought" of Wesley to counter or to correct any suggestion or interpretation by his critics that the sermon of Christian Perfection intended to imply a kind of "sinless perfection" Wesley never believed nor advocated such a state of perfection (Theology 75).

The fourth important sermon is, "The Lord Our Righteousness". The central issue in this sermon was (according to Outler) "whether Christ's atoning death is to be understood as the 'formal' or the 'meritorious' cause of a sinner's justification". "Formal" cause implied some kind of correlated view of predestination and irresistible grace. "Meritorious" cause allows for prevenient grace, free-will, and universal redemption... (Outler, Works 1: 445).

Landmark sermon number five is, Sermon No. 5, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation". This sermon brought together the two themes of salvation by "faith alone" and "holy living" (Outler, Theology 76). The text of this sermon is from St. Paul's letter

to the church at Philippi, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (2:12-3) (Outler, Works 3: 199-209).

The climatic sermon in this series in the development of the doctrine of holiness is the sermon, "The Wedding Garment" In this sermon, Wesley understands the kind of holiness identified in the Book of Hebrews (12:14), "...without which no man shall see the Lord" (Outler, Works 4: 139-48).

### Wesley's Definition of Terms

Gospel holiness. This is the term used by Wesley in his sermon, "The New Birth":

...gospel holiness is no less than the image of God stamped upon the heart. It is no other than the whole mind which was in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5). It consists of all heavenly affections and tempers mingled together in one. It implies such a continual, thankful love to him who hath not withheld from us his Son, his only Son (cf. John 3:16), as makes it natural, and in a manner necessary to us, to love every child of man; as fills us with "bowels of mercies, kindness, gentleness, long-suffering" (cf. Colossians 3:12). It is such a love of God as teaches us to be blameless in all manner of conversation; as enables us to present our souls and bodies, all we are and all we have, all our thoughts, words, and actions, a continual sacrifice to God, acceptable through Christ Jesus (I Peter 2:5). Now this holiness can have no existence till we are renewed in the image of our mind. It cannot commence in the soul till that change be wrought, till by the power of the highest overshadowing us (Luke 1:35) we are brought "from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18); that is, till we are born again; which therefore is absolutely necessary in order to holiness.

But "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (cf. Hebrews 12:14), shall see the face of God in glory. Of consequence the new birth is absolutely necessary in order to eternal salvation (cf. John 3:3-8) (Outler, Works 2: 194-5).

Sanctification. This is the term used by Wesley in his sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation". In a sense, Wesley views the two terms, "new birth" and "sanctification" as interchangeable. "Justification" is, for Wesley, a relative change, whereas "sanctification" or being "born from above" is a real change. He states,

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" (John 3:3,7), "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6,8). 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" (cf. Romans 5:5), 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" (James 3:15) mind into "the mind which was in Christ Jesus" (cf. Philippians 2:5) (Outler, Works 2: 158).

Christian perfection. Wesley views Christian Perfection as "perfect love". This term and definition is used in his sermon, "On Perfection" as follows,

What is then the perfection of which man is capable while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is the complying with that kind command, "My son, give me thy heart" (cf. Proverbs 23:26). It is the "loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind" (cf. Matthew 22:37). This is the sum of Christian perfection: it is all comprised in that one word, love. The first branch of it is the love of God: and as he that loves God loves his brother also (I John 4:21), it is inseparably connected with the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 19:19). Thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:40): these contain the whole of Christian perfection (Outler, Works 3: 74).

#### Validating Scriptures Used by Wesley

Scripture was the primary source of truth and doctrine for Wesley and there is no place that this is more clearly attested than in his selection of scriptural text in the various sermons on the doctrine of Holiness. Following are the sermons noted in this part of the curriculum and the selected text used by Wesley.

Sermon No. 107, "On God's Vineyard" (1787).

Text: Isaiah 5:4, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

Sermon No. 17, "The Circumcision of the Heart" (1733).

Text: Romans 2:29, "Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter".

Sermon No. 40, "Christian Perfection" (1741).

Text: Philippians 3:12, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect".

Sermon No. 13, "Sin in Believers" (1763).

Text: II Corinthians 5:17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature"

Sermon No. 20, "The Lord our Righteousness" (1765).

Text: Jeremiah 23:6, "This is his name whereby he shall be call, The Lord our righteousness"

Sermon No. 85, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation" (1785).

Text: Philippians 2:12-13, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Sermon No. 127, "On The Wedding Garment" (1790).

Text: Matthew 22:12, "How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?"

Sermon No. 76, "On Perfection" (1784).

Text: Hebrews 6:1, "Let us go on to perfection"

Sermon No. 19, "The Great Privilege of those that are  
Born of God" (1748).

Text: I John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin".

#### Wesley's Order of Salvation Explained

In his sermon, "The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption", Wesley gives order to his doctrine of salvation ("ordo salutis"). Humankind is described in three states or conditions: natural, legal, and evangelical. Lindström provides an excellent summary and outline of these three states or conditions (109-10).

| <u>The natural state</u>                                      | <u>The legal state</u>         | <u>The evangelical state</u>                               |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| 1) Man sleeps in death  | Is awakened                    | Is a child of God  |
| 2) Neither fears nor loves God                                | Fears God                      | Loves God  |
| 3) Has no light in the things of God; walks in utter darkness | Sees the painful light of hell | Sees the joyous light of Heaven                            |
| 4) Has false peace  | Has no peace                   | Enjoys true peace  |
| 5) Has fancied liberty  | Is in bondage                  | Enjoys true liberty  |
| 6) Sins willingly   | Sins unwillingly               | Does not sin   |
| <u>Concluding</u>   |                                |  |
| 7) Neither conquers nor fights                                | Fights but does not conquer    | Fights and conquers; is more than conqueror (Romans 8:37). |

The sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation", describes the six steps in which a person moves from being in the "natural" state to the "evangelical" state. The first step is "prevenient grace". Wesley believed that "...all the 'drawings' of 'the Father' (cf. John 6:44), the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more; all that 'light' wherewith the Son of God 'enlightened everyone that cometh into the world' (cf. John 1:9), showing every man 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God' (cf. Micah 6:8); all the convictions which his Spirit from time to time works in every child of man..." (Outler, Works 2: 156-7).

The second step is "repentance" Wesley understood repentance as knowledge of one's self, "know thyself to be a sinner, and what manner of sinner thou art", he said (Outler, Works 1: 225). He also described repentance as "ceasing from doing evil", and as "learning to do well" (Outler, Works 2: 162).

The third step in the order of progressing from the "natural" state to the

"evangelical" state is justification itself, which Wesley said is another word for "pardon" and "forgiveness" of sins. It implies acceptance with God (Outler, Works 1: 189).

The fourth step is the "new birth". For Wesley, justification was the relative change, whereas the new birth is the real change. In the new birth, we are inwardly renewed by the power of God. God's love is shed abroad in our hearts (cf. Romans 5:5), producing love to all humankind. Our love for the world is expelled. Pride, anger, self-will, and evil tempers are changed (James 3:15). The mind which was in Christ Jesus is now in us also (cf. Philippians 2:5) (Outler, Works 2: 158).

The fifth step in our movement is the kind of repentance after justification which leads us toward sanctification.

I say "repentance rightly understood"; for this must not be confounded with the former repentance. The repentance consequent upon justification is widely different from that which is antecedent to it. This implies no guilt, no sense of condemnation, no consciousness of the wrath of God. It does not suppose any doubt of the favour of God, or any "fear that hath torment" (cf. John 4:18). It is properly a conviction wrought by the Holy Ghost of the "sin" which still "remains" (cf. John 9:41) in our heart,... "the carnal mind" (Romans 8:7), which "does still remain", as our Church speaks, "even in them that are regenerate" although it does no longer reign, it has not now dominion over them. It is a conviction of our proneness to evil, of an heart "bent to backsliding" (Hosea 11:7), of the still continuing tendency of the "flesh" to "lust against the Spirit" (cf. Galatians 5:17). Sometimes, unless we continually watch and pray, it lusteth to pride, sometimes to anger, sometimes to love of the world, love of ease, love of honour, or love of pleasure more than of God. It is a conviction of the tendency of our heart to self-will, to atheism, or idolatry; and above all to unbelief, whereby in a thousand ways, and under a thousand pretenses, we are ever "departing" more or less "from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

With this conviction of the sin remaining in our hearts there is joined a clear conviction of the sin remaining in our lives, still cleaving to all our words and actions. In the best of these we now discern a mixture of evil, either in the spirit, the matter, or the manner of them; something that could not endure the righteous judgment of God, were he "extreme to mark what is done amiss" (Psalms 130:3). Where we least suspected it we find a taint of pride of self-will, of unbelief or idolatry; so that we are now more ashamed of our best duties than formerly of our worst sins. And hence we cannot but feel that these are so far from having anything meritorious in them, yea, so

far from being able to stand in sight of the divine justice, that for those also we should be guilty before God were it not for the blood of the covenant (Exodus 24:8; Hebrews 10:29).

Experience shows that together with this conviction of sin remaining in our hearts and cleaving to all our words and actions, as well as the guilt which on account thereof we should incur were we not continually sprinkled with the atoning blood, one thing more is implied in this repentance, namely, a conviction of our helplessness, of our utter inability to think one good thought, or to form one good desire; and much more to speak one word aright, or to perform one good action but through his free, almighty grace, first preventing us, and then accompanying us every moment (Outler, Works 2: 164-6).

The final step in the movement from the "natural" to the "evangelical" state is entire sanctification, or what Wesley refers to as "full salvation from all our sins".

From the time of our being "born again" the gradual work of sanctification takes place. We are enabled "by the Spirit" to "mortify the deeds of the body" (cf. Romans 8:13), of our evil nature. And as we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive to God. We go on from grace to grace, while we are careful to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22), and are "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14), "as we have opportunity doing good to all men" (cf. Galatians 6:10); while we walk in all his ordinances blameless (cf. Luke 1:6), therein worshipping him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23,24); while we take up our cross and deny ourselves every pleasure that does not lead us to God.

It is thus that we wait for entire sanctification, for a full salvation from all our sins, from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief, or, as the Apostle expresses it, "Go on to perfection" (Hebrews 6:1). But what is perfection? The word has various senses: here it means perfect love. It is love excluding sin; love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul. It is love "rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, in everything giving thanks" (I Thessalonians 5:16-18) (Outler, Works 2: 160).

### Further Development of the Doctrine of Sanctification

#### Relative Perfection

Wesley made it quite clear that the perfection he taught in and through his sermons was not perfection in every sense of the word. For example, we are not made perfect in this life from ignorance, nor mistakes, nor from infirmities, nor from temptation. For Wesley, the term, Christian perfection was "only another term for holiness....



Thus everyone that is perfect is holy, and everyone that is holy is, in the Scripture sense, perfect" (Outler, Works 2: 104).

In another sermon, he states that this perfection is not the perfection of angels, nor of the perfection applicable to Adam before his fall (Outler, Works 3: 72-3).

He points out that:

...You know how God wrought in your own soul when he first enabled you to say, "The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). He did not take away your understanding, but enlightened and strengthened it. He did not destroy any of your affections; rather they were more vigorous than before. Least of all did he take away your liberty, your power of choosing good or evil; he did not force you; but being assisted by his grace you, like Mary, chose the better part (cf. Luke 10:42). Just so he has assisted five in one house to make the happy choice, fifty or five hundred in one city, and many thousands in a nation, without depriving any of them of that liberty which is essential to a moral agent (Outler, Works 2: 489).

### Holiness as a Growing Process

Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection is always a movement forward, a growing process. He states,

It is of these chiefly I speak in the latter part of this discourse; for these only are properly Christians. But even babes in Christ (cf. I Corinthians 3:1) are in such a sense perfect, or "born of God" (I John 3:9; 4:7) (an expression taken also in divers senses) as, first, not to commit sin. If any doubt of this privilege of the sons of God, the question is not to be decided by abstract reasonings, which may be drawn out into an endless length, and leave the point just as it was before. Neither is it to be determined by the experience of this or that particular person. Many may suppose they do not commit sin when they do, but this proves nothing either way. "To the law and to the testimony" (cf. Isaiah 8:20) we appeal. "Let God be true, and every man a liar" (Romans 3:4). By his Word will we abide, and that alone. Hereby we ought to be judged (Outler, Works 2: 105-6).

### Sin and the Sanctified Person

Regarding sin in a person who has been sanctified, he states:

But we should likewise be convinced that as sin remains in our hearts, so it cleaves to our words and actions. Indeed it is to be feared that many of our words are more than mixed with sin, that they are sinful altogether. For

such undoubtedly is all uncharitable conversation, all which does not spring from brotherly love, all which does not agree with that golden rule, "What ye would that others should do to you, even so do unto them" (cf. Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31)... (Outler, Works 1: 341).

And how much sin, if their conscience is thoroughly awake, may they find cleaving to their actions also? Nay, are there not many of these which, though they are such as the world would not condemn, yet cannot be commended, no, nor excused, if we judge by the Word of God? Are there not many of their actions which they themselves know are not "to the glory of God" (cf. I Corinthians 10:31)? Many wherein they did not even aim at this, which were not undertaken with an eye to God?... (Outler, Works 1: 342).

Again: how many sins of omission are they chargeable with? We know the words of the Apostle, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). But do they not know a thousand instances wherein they might have done good, to enemies, to strangers, to their brethren, either with regard to their bodies or their souls, and they did it not?... (Outler, Works 1: 343).

But besides these outward omissions, may they not find in themselves inward defects without number? Defects of every kind: they have not the love, the fear, the confidence they ought to have toward God. They have not the love which is due to their neighbour, to every child of man; no, nor even that which is due to their brethren, to every child of God, whether those that are at a distance from them, or those with whom they are at immediately connected... (Outler, Works 1: 344).

### Stages in the Christian's Life

Wesley summarizes the various stages of the Christian life in his sermon, "Christian Perfection". He states:

In what sense then are Christians perfect? This is what I shall endeavour, in the second place, to show. But it should be premised that there are several stages in Christian life as well as in natural: some of the children of God being but new-born babes, others having attained to more maturity. And accordingly St. John, in his first Epistle (I John 2:12), applies himself severally to those he terms little children, those he styles young men, and those whom he entitles fathers. "I write unto you, little children", saith the Apostle, "because your sins are forgiven you;" because thus far ye have attained, being "justified freely" (cf. Romans 3:24), you "have peace with God, through Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one;" or (as he afterwards adds) "because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you." Ye have quenched the fiery darts of the wicked one (cf. Ephesians 6:16), the doubts

and fears wherewith he disturbed your first peace, and the witness of God that your sins are forgiven now "abideth in your heart" (cf. I John 2:14, 27). "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning." Ye have known both the Father and the Son and the Spirit of Christ in your inmost soul. Ye are "perfect men, being grown up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13) (Outler, Works 2: 105).

### Perfect Love Further Explained

Wesley points out seven ways in which this Christian perfection expresses itself through the Christian believer.

#### Perfect love for God and neighbor.

What is then the perfection of which man is capable while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is the complying with that kind command, "My son, give me thy heart" (cf. Proverbs 23:26). It is the "loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind" (cf. Matthew 22:37). This is the sum of Christian perfection: it is all comprised in that one word, love. The first branch of it is the love of God: and as he that loves God loves his brother also (I John 4:21), it is inseparably connected with the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19). Thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:40): these contain the whole of Christian perfection (Outler, Works 3: 74).

#### The indwelling mind of Christ.

Another view of this is given us in those words of the great Apostle, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). For although this immediately and directly refers to the humility of our Lord, yet it may be taken in a far more extensive sense, so as to include the whole disposition of his mind, all his affections, all his tempers, both toward God and man. Now it is certain that as there was no evil affection in him, so no good affection or temper was wanting. So that "whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are lovely" (cf. Philippians 4:8), are all included in "the mind that was in Christ Jesus" (Outler, Works 3: 74).

#### Evidence of the fruits of the Spirit.

St. Paul, when writing to the Galatians, places perfection in yet another view. It is the one undivided "fruit of the Spirit", which he describes thus: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace; long-suffering, gentleness, goodness; fidelity (so the word should be translated here), "meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22-23). What a glorious constellation of graces is

here! Now suppose all these to be knit together in one, to be united together in the soul of a believer--this is Christian perfection (Outler, Works 3: 75).

### The putting on of the "new man".

Again, He writes to the Christians at Ephesus of "putting on the new man, which is created after God in righteousness and true holiness" (cf. Ephesians 4:24). And to the Colossians of "the new man, renewed after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:10); plainly referring to the words in Genesis: "So God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:27). Now the moral image of God consists (as the Apostle observes) "in righteousness and true holiness". By sin this is totally destroyed. And we never can recover it till we are "created anew in Christ Jesus" (cf. Ephesians 2:10). And this is perfection (Outler, Works 3: 75).

### Universal holiness.

St. Peter expresses it in a still different manner, though to the same effect: "As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (I Peter 1:15). According to this Apostle, then, perfection is another name for universal holiness--inward and outward righteousness--holiness of life arising from holiness of heart (cf. I Thessalonians 4:3) (Outler, Works 3: 75).

To the same effect St. Peter says, "Ye are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5). But what sacrifices shall we offer now, seeing the Jewish dispensation is at an end? If you have truly presented yourselves to God, you offer up to him continually all your thoughts, and words, and actions, through the Son of his love, as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving (Outler, Works 3: 76).

Inward and outward holiness. Wesley referred to the term, "Inward and Outward Holiness" as the "two grand branches", on which "hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Outler, Works 1: 221).

The first and great branch of Christian righteousness, Wesley says, is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment"... (Outler, Works 1: 221).

The second great branch of Christian righteousness is closely connected: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Outler, Works 1: 221).

And the second commandment is like unto this; the second great branch of Christian righteousness is closely and inseparably connected therewith, even "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). "Thou shalt love"-thou shalt embrace with the most tender good-will, the most earnest and cordial affection, the most inflamed desires of preventing or removing all evil and of procuring for him every possible good-- "thy neighbour"; that is, not only thy friend, thy kinsman, or thy acquaintance; not only the virtuous, the friendly, him that loves thee, that prevents or returns thy kindness; but every child of man, every human creature, every soul which God hath made: not excepting him whom thou never hast seen in the flesh, whom thou knowest not either by face or name; not excepting him whom thou knowest to be evil and unthankful, him that still spitefully uses and persecutes thee (Matthew 5:44). Him thou shalt "love as thyself"; 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 (Outler, Works 1: 221-2).

Saved from the root of sin.

Thus you experience that he whose name is called Jesus does not bear that name in vain; that he does in fact "save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21), the root as well as the branches. And this "salvation from sin", from all sin, is another description of perfection, though indeed it expresses only the least, the lowest branch of it, only the negative part of the great salvation (Outler, Works 3: 76).

Thus Wesley is looking for a complete renewal and a reversal from the consequences of the fallen nature.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERIOR LIFE

Harper has made an important observation regarding the growth of the spiritual life. He states, "Your Christian growth is in the lifelong process of closing the gap between yourself and God." Then again, "He (God) accepts us as we are, but does not leave us as we are!" Both of these statements by Harper are Wesleyan in true style (Embrace preface).

Harper, in another book, provides a general overview of Wesley's concept for the spiritual development of the interior life. "The Wesleyan equation is this: Grace plus response equals growth. There is no point in life where we can say, 'I have all I need'" (Message 75). According to Harper, the outline of this "Wesleyan" equation follows this pattern:

First, Wesley taught that we grow in grace out of a sense of assurance (Romans 8:16).... Authentic growth takes place when there is a security and love in a relationship.... Wesley...preached assurance as a motivation to growth.... For Wesley, assurance dealt with one's present relationship, it was no guarantee for the future. Only continued obedience and faithfulness could take care of the future.... Here is the point of assurance: Christ has powerfully entered our lives, and it is His intention to stay (Message 75-7).

Wesley's second major teaching on growth in grace had to do with the practical ways in which such growth takes place. For him, it occurred through the use of the means of grace (Message 79).

He summarizes the Wesleyan concept of spiritual development in this manner:

"The key to Christian growth is not feeling but faithfulness. God has expressed his faithfulness by providing means of grace. We express our faithfulness by taking advantage of them" (Message 85).

#### John Wesley, A Man of Devotion

The caption of this section is borrowed from Harper's book, Devotional Life in the

Wesleyan Tradition 11). Harper underscores five important facts regarding Wesley's personal and private devotional life.

First, Wesley's devotional life was realistic. He is described by Harper as a "fellow pilgrim in the faith".

Second, Wesley's devotional life was disciplined. For more than sixty years he faithfully practiced the spiritual disciplines.

Third, Wesley's devotional life had breadth. He based his devotional life on the Scriptures. He continually referred to himself as homo unis libri a man of one book. But he did not limit his readings to the Bible alone. Wesley searched for meaningful inspiration from a wide assortment of devotional materials.

Fourth, Wesley never allowed his spirituality to deteriorate into a private religion. Whenever and wherever he could, he shared his insights with others.

Fifth, Wesley's devotional life had a church dimension about it. Wesley knew that to be a Christian was to be a functioning member of the body of Christ. For Wesley, there is no such thing as authentic spirituality apart from the church. God has called us to be in fellowship with the people of God (12-7).

### Three Things Which Concerned Wesley

The formation of the various Methodist societies and class meetings prompted Wesley toward the understanding and the continual monitoring of the spiritual progress of the "people called Methodist". There was, for Wesley, a continual concern for three primary areas of spiritual development: (1) having only a religion of creeds and words; (2) the possibility of a believer breaking the existing fellowship between himself or herself and God, and; (3) the threat of one's spiritual growth being stunned and even stopped.

A Religion of creeds and words. For Wesley, the religion that makes a difference

in a person's spiritual life consist primarily as a religion of the heart. To this Wesley explained that "justification implies only a relative change" and "the new birth implies a real change" (Outler, Works 1: 431-2). God in justifying us does something for us. God in begetting us does something in us. Justification changes our outward relation to God, so that now we are no longer enemies to God, but are children of God. The new birth changes our inmost souls, so that of sinners we become saints. Justification restores us to God's favor. The new birth restores us to the image of God. Justification takes away the guilt of our sins. The new birth takes away the power of sin (Outler, Works 1: 431-2).

St. John, Wesley points out, asserts that "Whoever is born of God..."(I John 3:9). The question that he raises is this, "what does it mean to be born of God?" To this he answers, "...in general,...it implies not barely the being baptized, or any outward change whatever; but a vast inward change; a change wrought in the soul by the operation of the Holy Ghost, a change in the whole manner of our existence;..." (Outler, Works 1: 432). Spiritual formation, then, for Wesley begins with a genuine heart change, a change that affects the whole of one's relationship both with God and with one's self.

Another reason for Wesley's emphasis upon a religion of the heart is the connection it has with the doctrine of "perfect love" or heart purity.

But in process of time, when "the love of many waxed cold" (cf. Matthew 24:12), some began to mistake the means for the end, and to place religion rather in doing those outward works than in a heart renewed after the image of God. They forgot that "the end of" every "commandment is love, out of a pure heart, with faith unfeigned" (cf. I Timothy 1:5): the loving the Lord their God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves (Matthew 22:37,39); and the being purified from pride, anger, and evil desire, by a "faith of the operation of God" (Colossians 2:12)... (Outler, Works 1: 378).

Wesley describes his brand of heart religion as "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). "This alone is religion, truly so called:..." he states (Outler, Works 1: 221).



To the concept of "righteousness", Wesley connects the "royal law", the law of "perfect love" for both God and neighbor (Mark 12:30,31).

...And what is righteousness but the life of God in the soul, the mind which was in Christ Jesus (cf. Philippians 2:5), the image of God stamped upon the heart, now renewed after the likeness of him that created it? What is it but the love of God because he first loved us (I John 4:19), and the love of all mankind for his sake (Outler, Works 1: 481)?

To the concept of "peace" he associates the word "happiness" Wesley explains it thus:

But true religion, or a heart right toward God and man, implies happiness as well as holiness. For it is not only righteousness, but also "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17)... (Outler, Works 1: 223).

And what is this peace, the peace of God, but that calm serenity of soul, that sweet repose in the blood of Jesus, which leaves no doubt of our acceptance in him? Which excludes all fear but the loving, filial fear of offending our Father which is in heaven (Outler, Works 1: 481)?

Finally, the word, "joy", the joy which is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

With this peace of God, wherever it is fixed in the soul, there is also "joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17); joy wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, by the ever-blessed Spirit of God. He it is that worketh in us that calm, humble rejoicing in God, through Christ Jesus, "by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:11),...the reconciliation with God; and that enables us boldly to confirm the truth of the royal Psalmist's declaration, "Blessed is the man" (or rather, happy,...) "whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered" (cf. Psalms 32:1). He it is that inspires the Christian soul with that even, solid joy which arises from the testimony of the Spirit that he is a child of God; and that gives him to "rejoice with joy unspeakable" (I Peter 1:8), "in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2)--hope both of the glorious image of God, which is in part and shall be fully "revealed in him" (cf. Romans 8:18), and of that crown of glory which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him (I Peter 1:4; 5:4) (Outler, Works 1: 223-4).

Wesley's idea of the religion of the heart circumvents all tendencies to place our faith in anything outside of the renewing Spirit of God.

...the distinguishing mark of a true follower of Christ, of one who is in a state of acceptance with God, is not either outward circumcision or baptism, or any other outward form, but a right state of soul--a mind and spirit

renewed after the image of him that created it--... (Outler, Works 1: 402).

The breaking of fellowship with God. One of Wesley's greatest concerns for the Christian disciple was his or her's "going on to perfection", i.e., going on to full maturity in Jesus Christ. The basis for his concern was that their fellowship or communion with God need never be interrupted. In a sermon, Wesley terms this continual, uninterrupted fellowship with God as the "reaction of the soul", or the "continuance of the divine life therein" He states:

...For it plainly appears God does not continue to act upon the soul unless the soul re-acts upon God. He prevents us indeed with the blessings of his goodness. He first loves us, and manifests himself unto us. While we are yet afar off he calls us to himself, and shines upon our hearts (Luke 15:20). But if we do not then love him who first loved us (I John 4:19); if we will not hearken to his voice; if we turn our eye away from him, and will not attend to the light which he pours upon us: his Spirit will not always strive; he will gradually withdraw, and leave us to the darkness of our own hearts. He will not continue to breathe into our soul unless our soul breathes toward him again; unless our love and prayer, and thanksgiving return to him, a sacrifice wherewith he is well pleased (Outler, Works 1: 442).

Earlier in the same sermon, Wesley raises an important observation regarding St. John's assertion that "whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin" (Outler, Works 1: 438). His response to this problem follows:

...so long as "he that is born of God keepeth himself" (which he is able to do by the grace of God) "the wicked one toucheth him not" (I John 5:18). But if he keepeth not himself, if he abide not in the faith, he may commit sin even as another man (Outler, Works 1: 438).

Wesley continues:

It is easy therefore to understand how any of these children of God might be moved from his own steadfastness, and yet the great truth of God, declared by the Apostle, remain steadfast and unshaken. He did not keep himself by that grace of God which was sufficient for him (II Corinthians 12:9). He fell step by step, first into negative, inward sin not "stirring up the gift of God" (cf. II Timothy 1:6) which was in him, not "watching unto prayer" (cf. I Peter 4:7), not "pressing on to the mark of the prize of his high calling" (cf. Philippians 3:14); then into positive, inward sin inclining to wickedness with his heart, giving way to some evil desire or temper. Next he

lost his faith, his sight of a pardoning God, and consequently his love of God. And being then weak and like another man he was capable of committing even outward sin (Outler, Works 1: 438-9).

The stopping of spiritual development. Wesley, in his sermon, "The Means of Grace", is clear as to his intent regarding the use of ordinary channels or sacraments. It is to convey to believers the "preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace" of God (Outler, Works 1: 381). The purpose, he asserts, is to "advance inward holiness" (Outler, Works 1: 379), and to "conduce to the knowledge and love of God" (Outler, Works 1: 381), and the "renewal of one's soul in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24) (Outler, Works 1: 396-7).

#### Disciplines to Spiritual Formation

Wesley was convinced that a sinner could be lifted by God's grace, could experience a genuine, real change in his heart and life, could remain in constant fellowship with God through active obedience, and could grow in Christian grace by serious attention upon the "means of grace" on a regular basis.

By "means of grace", Wesley meant "outward signs, words, or actions ordained of God,...." Wesley's term, "means of grace", here means "sacrament" He states that, "...a sacrament is 'an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same'" (Outler, Works 1: 381).

Harper writes,

John Wesley sought for ways to express his spiritual life throughout the day. He found the way in what he called the "means of grace." These were spiritual disciplines which people used to express their faith and receive God's grace. They were divided into two categories: the instituted means of grace and the prudential means of grace. The instituted means were those disciplines evident in the life and teaching of Jesus. The prudential means were those which had been developed by the church to give further order and expression to the Christian life. Taken together, they enabled a person to live a devotional life... (Devotional Life 19).

Wesley thus defined the instituted means of grace as "works of piety",

...such as public prayer, family prayer, and praying in our closet; receiving the Supper of the Lord; searching the Scriptures by hearing, reading, meditating; and using such a measure of fasting or abstinence as our bodily health allows (Outler, Works 2: 166).

He likewise defines prudential means of grace as "works of mercy",

...whether they relate to the bodies or souls of men; such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or variously afflicted; such as the endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the stupid sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering, to comfort the feeble-minded (I Thessalonians 5:14), to succour the tempted (Hebrews 2:18), or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death. This is the repentance, and these the fruits meet for repentance, which are necessary to full sanctification. This is the way wherein God hath appointed his children to wait for complete salvation (Outler, Works 2: 166).

### Works of Piety Explained

Wesley now proceeds to spell out the five primary spiritual disciplines that, if followed in the right manner and in the right spirit, will lead Christian believers in a deeper and more satisfying relationship with God.

#### The Means of Prayer

Wesley used the term, "means of grace", as a way of explaining that prayer, in this case, is a "...channel through which the grace of God is conveyed" (Outler, Works 1: 391).

The purpose of prayer. For Wesley, the purpose of any use of the means of grace is to "see God in his ordinances". It is to "pay him the honour due unto his name, and worship him in the beauty of holiness" (cf. Psalms 96:8,9). Wesley states, "...In all these his appointed ways they find such a near approach as cannot be expressed. They see him, as it were, face to face, and 'talk with him as a man talking with his friend'(cf. Exodus 33:11)--a fit preparation for those mansions above wherein they shall 'see him as he is'" (I John 3:2) (Outler, Works 1: 514).

A guide to proper praying. Wesley gives four Biblical rules to assist us in our prayers to God. First, he says, that prayer should not take the form of hypocritical prayer.

...Prayer is the lifting up of the heart to God: all words of prayer without this are mere hypocrisy. Whenever therefore thou attemptest to pray, see that it be thy one design to commune with God, to lift up thy heart to him, to pour out thy soul before him" (Outler, Works 1: 575).

Secondly, prayer should always be for the promoting of the glory of God.

...Any temporal view, any motive whatever of this side eternity, any design but that of promoting the glory of God, and the happiness of men for God's sake, makes every action, however fair it may appear to men, an abomination unto the Lord (Outler, Works 1: 576).

Third, prayer is to be conducted with the privacy of one inner prayer closet, except at those appointed times when prayer is conducted in the congregation.

"But when hast thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." There is a time when thou art openly to glorify God, to pray and praise him in the great congregation (Psalms 40:9). But when thou desirest more largely and more particularly to make thy requests known unto God (Philippians 4:6.), whether it be in the evening or in the morning or at noonday (Psalms 55:17), "enter into thy closet and shut the door"... (Outler, Works 1: 576).

Finally, Wesley warns against using the same words over and over again, as do the heathen, in order to impress God.

"But when ye pray", even in secret, "use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do."... Do not use abundance of words without any meaning. Say not the same thing over and over again; think not the fruit of your prayers depends on the length of them, like the heathens; "for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking."

The thing here reprov'd is not simply the length, no more than the shortness of our prayers (Outler, Works 1: 576-7).

The summary of Wesley's guide to proper praying is an understanding of what prayer is really intended to accomplish.

...So that the end of your praying is not to inform God, as though he knew

not your wants already; but rather to inform yourselves, to fix the sense of those wants more deeply in your hearts, and the sense of your continual dependence on him who only is able to supply all your wants. It is not so much to move God -who is always more ready to give than you to ask- as to move yourselves, that you may be willing and ready to receive the good things he has prepared for you (I Corinthians 2:9) (Outler, Works 1: 577).

A model for proper praying. Wesley now follows with the Biblical model for prayer, viz., "The Lord's Prayer", taken from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6:9-13. This he refers to as the "model and standard of all our prayers- 'After this manner therefore pray ye'" (Outler, Works 1: 577).

Wesley describes three general observations regarding the use of divine prayer. First, he says, this model prayer "contains all we can reasonably or innocently pray for. There is nothing which we have need to ask of God, nothing which we can ask without offending him, which is not included either directly or indirectly in this comprehensive form" (Outler, Works 1: 577-8). The second observation he makes is that "it contains all we can reasonably or innocently desire; whatever is for the glory of God, whatever is needful or profitable, not only for ourselves, but for every creature in heaven and earth. And indeed our prayers are the proper test of our desires, nothing being fit to have a place in our desires which is not fit to have a place in our prayers; what we may not pray for, neither should we desire" (Outler, Works 1: 578). The third observation of this model and standard for all our prayers, is, "it contains all our duty to God and man; whatsoever things are pure and holy (Philippians 4:8), whatsoever God requires of the children of men, whatsoever is acceptable in his sight (Psalms 19:14), whatsoever it is whereby we may profit our neighbor, being expressed or implied therein" (Outler, Works 1: 578).

Wesley, for our understanding, has thus broken down the model prayer into three parts: the preface, the petitions, and the doxology (or conclusion) (Outler, Works 1: 578).

The first component part of the prayer is the preface, "Our Father which art in heaven" This, Wesley asserts, "lays a general foundation for prayer; comprising what we must first know of God before we can pray in confidence of being heard. It likewise points out to us all those tempers with which we are to approach to God, which are most essentially requisite if we desire either our prayers or our lives should find acceptance with him" (Outler, Works 1: 578).

"Our Father." If he is a Father, then he is good, then he is loving to his children. And here is the first and great reason for prayer. God is willing to bless; let us ask for a blessing. "Our Father"--our Creator, the Author of our being;.... "Our Father"--our Preserver, who day by day sustains the life he has given; of whose continuing love we now and every moment receive life and breath and all things. So much the more boldly let us come to him, and "we shall find mercy and grace to help in time of need" (cf. Hebrews 4:16).... Therefore we know that he heareth us always; therefore we "pray" to him "without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). We pray, because we love. And "we love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19).

"Our Father"--not mine only who now cry unto him, but ours, in the most extensive sense. The "God and Father of the spirits of all flesh" (cf. II Corinthians 1:2; also Numbers 16:22; 27:16);.... Therefore with him there is no respect of persons (Acts 10:34; I Peter 1:17). He loveth all that he hath made. He "is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works" (Psalms 145:9)... Outler, Works 1: 578-9).

Then follows the six petitions themselves:

(a) "Hallowed be thy name." This is the first of the six petitions whereof the prayer itself is composed. The name of God is God himself--the nature of God so far as it can be discovered to man. It means, therefore, together with his existence, all his attributes or perfections--his eternity,.... His "fullness of being" (cf. Ephesians 3:19; Colossians 2:9), denoted by his other great name, "I am that I am" (Exodus 3:14); his omnipresence;--his omnipotence (cf. Luke 11:20);.... And he is the spring of action in every creature, visible and invisible, which could neither act nor exist without the continued influx and agency of his almighty power;--his wisdom,....--his Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity, discovered to us in the very first line of his Written Word,....--his essential purity and holiness;--and above all his love, which is the very brightness of his glory (Hebrews 1:3).

In praying that God, or his "name", may "be hallowed" or glorified, we pray that he may be known, such as he is, by all that are capable thereof, by all intelligent beings, and with affections suitable to that knowledge: that he

may be duly honoured and feared and loved by all in heaven above and in the earth beneath (Joshua 2:11); by all angels and men, whom for that end he has made capable of knowing and loving him to eternity (Outler, Works 1: 580-1).

(b) "Thy kingdom come." This has a close connection with the preceding petition. In order that the name of God may be hallowed, we pray that his kingdom, the kingdom of Christ, may come. This kingdom then comes to a particular person when he "repents and believes the gospel" (cf. Mark 1:15); when he is taught of God not only to know himself but to know Jesus Christ and him crucified (I Corinthians 2:2). As "this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent" (cf. John 17:3), so it is the kingdom of God begun below, set up in the believer's heart. The Lord God omnipotent then reigneth (Revelation 19:6), when he is known through Christ Jesus. He taketh unto himself his mighty power; that he may subdue all things unto himself (Philippians 3:21). He goeth on in the soul conquering and to conquer (Revelation 6:2), till he hath put all things under his feet, till "every thought" is "brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (cf. II Corinthians 10:5) (Outler, Works 1: 581-2).

(c) "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." This is the necessary and immediate consequence wherever the kingdom of God is come; wherever God dwells in the soul by faith, and Christ reigns in the heart by love (Outler, Works 1: 583).

(d) "Give us this day our daily bread." In the three former petitions we have been praying for all mankind. We come now more particularly to desire a supply for own wants. Not that we are directed, even here, to confine our prayer altogether to ourselves; but this and each of the following petitions may be used for the whole church of Christ upon earth.

By "bread" we may understand all things needful, whether for our souls or bodies (II Peter 1:3):... (Outler, Works 1: 584).

(e) "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us"... (Outler, Works 1: 585).

"Our trespasses." The word properly signifies "our debts" Thus our sins are frequently represented in Scripture; every sin laying us under a fresh debt to God, to whom we already owe, as it were, ten thousand talents. What then can we answer when he shall say, "Pay me that thou owest" (Matthew 18:24,28)? We are utterly insolvent; we have nothing to pay; we have wasted all our substance (Luke 15:13). Therefore if he deal with us according to the rigour of his law, if he exact what he justly may, he must command us to be "bound hand and foot" (John 11:44), "and delivered over to the tormentors" (cf. Matthew 18:34)... (Outler, Works 1: 586).

The word translated "forgive" implies either to forgive a debt, or to



unloose a chain. 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" (cf. Acts 26:18). Sin has lost its power; it has no dominion over those who "are under grace" (Romans 6:14,15), that is, in favour with God. As "there is now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus" (cf. Romans 8:1), so they are freed from sin as well as from guilt. "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them", and they "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (cf. Romans 8:4).

"As we forgive them that trespass against us." In these words our Lord clearly declares both on what condition and in what degree or manner we may look to be forgiven of God. All our trespasses and sins are forgiven us if we forgive, and as we forgive, others. First, God forgives us if we forgive others. This is a point of the utmost importance.... But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). Secondly, God forgive us as we forgive others. So that if any malice or bitterness, if any taint of unkindness or anger remains, if we do not clearly, fully, and from the heart, forgive all men their trespasses, we far cut short the forgiveness of our own. God cannot clearly and fully forgive us. He may show us some degree of mercy. But we will not suffer him to blot out all our sins, and forgive all our iniquities (Jeremiah 18:23) (Outler, Works 1: 586-7).

(f) "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." "Lead us not into temptation." The word translated "temptation" means trial of any kind. And so the English word "temptation" was formerly taken in an indifferent sense, although now it is usually understood of solicitation to sin. St. James uses the word in both these senses: first in its general, then its restrained acceptation. He takes it in the former sense when he saith, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried", or approved of God, "he shall receive the crown of life" (James 1:12). He immediately adds, taking the word in the latter sense: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust," or desire,...drawn out of God, in whom alone he is safe, "and enticed", caught as a fish with a bait (cf. James 1:13-14). Then it is, when he is thus "drawn away and enticed", that he properly "enters into temptation" The temptation covers him as a cloud; it overspreads his whole soul. Then how hardly shall he escape out of the snare! Therefore we beseech God "not to lead us into temptation", that is (seeing "God tempteth no man") (cf. James 1:13) not to suffer us to be led into it. "But deliver us from evil"; rather "from the evil one"(I John 2:13-14; 3:12; 5:18);... (Outler, Works 1: 587-8).

The third and final component part to the Lord's Prayer is the doxology or the

conclusion. Wesley asserts:

The conclusion of this divine prayer, commonly called the doxology, is a solemn thanksgiving, a compendious acknowledgement of the attributes and works of God. "For thine is the kingdom"--the sovereign right of all things that are or ever were created; yea, thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all ages (Daniel 4:3). "The power"--the executive power whereby thou governest all things in thy everlasting kingdom, whereby thou dost whatsoever pleaseth thee, in all places of thy dominion. "And the glory"--the praise due from every creature for thy power, and the mightiness of thy kingdom, and for all thy wondrous works which thou workest from everlasting, and shalt do, world without end, "for ever and ever! Amen" (Matthew 6:13). So be it (Outler, Works 1: 588-9)!

Summary thoughts on prayer. Two summary statements by Wesley are appropriate to conclude this section on prayer. The first is a statement regarding our access to God. The second statement has to do with prayer as being the "breath" of every soul.

According to this, according to the decision of Holy Writ, all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the means which he hath ordained; in using, not in laying them aside.

And first, all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the way of prayer. This is the express direction of our Lord himself. In his Sermon upon the Mount, after explaining at large wherein religion consists, and describing the main branches of it, he adds: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8). Here we are in the plainest manner directed to ask in order to, or as a means of, receiving; to seek in order to find the grace of God, the pearl of great price (Matthew 13:46); and to knock, to continue asking and seeking, if we would enter into his kingdom (Outler, Works 1: 384).

But when he is born of God, born of the Spirit, how is the manner of his existence changed! His whole soul is now sensible of God, and he can say by sure experience, "Thou art about my bed, and about my path;" I feel thee in "all my ways" (Psalms 139:2). "Thou besettest me behind and before, and layest thy hand upon me" (Psalms 139:5 (AV)). The Spirit or breath of God is immediately inspired, breathed into the new-born soul; and the same breath which comes from, returns to God. As it is continually received by faith, so it is continually rendered back by love, by prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving--love and praise and prayer being the breath of every soul which is truly born of God. And by this new kind of spiritual respiration, spiritual life is not only sustained but increased day by day, together with spiritual strength and motion and sensation; all the senses of the soul being

now awake, and capable of "discerning" spiritual "good and evil" (cf. Hebrews 5:14).

"The eyes of his understanding" (cf. Ephesians 1:18) are now open, and he "seeth him that is invisible"....(Hebrews 11:27)

His ears are now opened, and the voice of God no longer calls in vain. He hears and obeys the heavenly calling: he "knows the voice of his shepherd" (cf. John 10:4)... (Outler, Works 1: 434-5).

### The Means of Scripture

Wesley points out that the second means whereby we become recipients of the grace of God is through the "searching of the Scriptures" (Outler, Works 1: 386-7).

Wesley's own commitment to the Scriptures is made clear in this expression:

...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. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price give me the Book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be homo unius libri, [A man of one book]. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone: only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his Book; for this end, to find the way to heaven... (Outler, Works 1: 105-6).

The purpose of the scriptures. The Scriptures, Wesley asserts, testify of Christ (John 5:39). The intention is clear: "that they might believe in him" (Outler, Works 1: 387).

Our Lord's direction with regard to the use of this means is likewise plain and clear. "Search the Scriptures", saith he to the unbelieving Jews, "for [...] they [...] testify of me" (John 5:39). And for this very end did he direct them to search the Scriptures, that they might believe in him....

And what a blessing from God attends the use of this means appears from what is recorded concerning the Bereans, who, after hearing St. Paul, "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed"--found the grace of God in the way which he has ordained (Acts 17:11-12).

It is probable, indeed, that in some of those who had "received the word with all readiness of mind" (Acts 17:11), "faith came (as the same Apostle speaks) by hearing" (cf. Romans 10:17), and was only confirmed by reading the Scriptures. But it was observed above that under the general term of

"searching the Scriptures" both hearing, reading, and meditating are contained (Outler, Works 1: 387).

The second purpose of Scripture is to confirm and increase a Christian believer in true wisdom.

And that this is a means whereby God not only gives, but also confirms and increases true wisdom, we learn from the words of St. Paul to Timothy: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15). The same truth (namely, that this is the great means God has ordained for conveying his manifold grace to man) is delivered, in the fullest manner that can be conceived, in the words which immediately follow: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (consequently, all Scripture is infallibly true), "and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" to the end "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

It should be observed that this is spoken primarily and directly of the Scriptures which Timothy had "known from a child"; which must have been those of the Old Testament, for the New was not then wrote. How far then was St. Paul (though he was "not a whit behind the very chief of the apostles" (cf. II Corinthians 11:5), nor therefore, I presume, behind any man now upon earth) from making light of the Old Testament! Behold this, lest ye one day "wonder and perish" (Acts 13:41), ye who make so small account of one half of the oracles of God!. Yea, and that half of which the Holy Ghost expressly declares that it is "profitable", as a means ordained of God for this very thing, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness": to the end [that] "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (cf. II Peter 1:19) (Outler, Works 1: 387-8).

The rule of right and wrong. Wesley asserts that the Word of God, i.e., the writings of both the Old and New Testament, is the Christian's rule of right and wrong.

But what is the rule whereby men are to judge of right and wrong; whereby their conscience is to be directed? The rule of heathens (as the Apostle teaches elsewhere) is "the law written in their hearts" (Romans 2:15). "These (saith he) not having the (outward) law, are a law unto themselves: who show the work of the law", that which the outward law prescribes, "written in their heart" by the finger of God; "their conscience also bearing witness" whether they walk by this rule or not; "and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or even excusing", acquitting, defending them (Romans 2:14-15)... But the Christian rule of right and wrong is the Word of God, the writings of the Old and New Testament: all which the prophets and "holy men of old" wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (cf. II Peter

1:21); "all" that "Scripture" which was "given by inspiration of God", and which is indeed "profitable for doctrine", or teaching the whole will of God; "for reproof" of what is contrary thereto; "for correction" of error; and "for instruction (or training us up) in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16).

This "is a lantern unto a" Christian's "feet, and a light in all his paths" (Psalms 119:105). This alone he receives as his rule of right or wrong, of whatever is really good or evil. He esteems nothing good but what is here enjoined, either directly or by plain consequence. He accounts nothing evil but what is here forbidden, either in terms or by undeniable inference. Whatever the Scripture neither forbids nor enjoins (either directly or by plain consequence) he believes to be of an indifferent nature, to be in itself neither good nor evil: this being the whole and sole outward rule whereby his conscience is to be directed in all things (Outler, Works 1: 302-3).

The order and manner of using this ordinance. In Wesleyan spirituality Scripture becomes primary in the sinner's search for salvation. Thus Wesley provides the order of how one is saved through the use of this ordinance.

But this being allowed--that all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the means he hath ordained--it may still be inquired how those means should be used, both as to the order and the manner of using them.

With regard to the former, we may observe there is a kind of order wherein God himself is generally pleased to use these means in bringing a sinner to salvation. A stupid, senseless wretch is going on in his own way, not having God in all his thoughts, when God comes upon him unawares, perhaps by an awakening sermon or conversation, perhaps by some awful providence; or it may be an immediate stroke of his convincing Spirit, without any outward means at all. Having now a desire to flee from the wrath to come (Matthew 3:7; Luke 3:7), he purposely goes to hear how it may be done. If he finds a preacher who speaks to the heart, he is amazed, and begins "searching the Scriptures" (cf. John 5:39), whether these things are so. The more he hears and reads, the more convinced he is; and the more he meditates thereon day and night (Joshua 1:8). Perhaps he finds some other book which explains and enforces what he has heard and read in Scripture. And by all these means the arrows of conviction sink deeper into his soul. He begins also to talk of the things of God, which are ever uppermost in his thoughts; yea, and to talk with God, to pray to him, although through fear and shame he scarce knows what to say. But whether he can speak or no, he cannot but pray, were it only in "groans which cannot be uttered" (cf. Romans 8:26). Yet being in doubt whether "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" (Isaiah 57:15) will regard such a sinner as him, he wants to pray with those who know God, with the faithful "in the great congregation" (Psalms 22:25). But here he observes others go up to "the table of the Lord" (Malachi 1:7, 12). He considers, Christ has said, "do this" (cf. I Corinthians 11:24). How

is it that I do not? I am too great a sinner. I am not fit. I am not worthy. After struggling with these scruples a while, he breaks through. And thus he continues in God's way--in hearing, reading, meditating, praying, and partaking of the Lord's Supper--till God, in the manner that pleases him, speaks to his heart, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7:50) (Outler, Works 1: 393-4).

...And thus may we lead him step by step through all the means which God has ordained; not according to our own will, but just as the providence and the Spirit of God go before and open the way (Outler, Works 1: 395).

### The Lord's Supper

The third means by which a Christian believer may increase of the grace of God is through the partaking of the Lord's Supper.

... all who desire an increase of the grace of God are to wait for it in partaking of the Lord's Supper. For this also is a direction himself hath given: "The same night in which he was betrayed, he took bread, and brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body" (that is, the sacred sign of my body). "This do in remembrance of me. Likewise he took the cup, saying, This cup is the New Testament" (or covenant) "in my blood" (the sacred sign of that covenant): "this do ye...in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:23-26)--ye openly exhibit the same by these visible signs, before God, and angels, and men; ye manifest your solemn remembrance of his death, till he cometh in the clouds of heaven. ...Let all, therefore, who truly desire the grace of God, eat of that bread and drink of that cup (Outler, Works 1: 389-90).

The purpose of the Lord's Supper. Like the other means of grace before, the partaking of the Lord's Supper is intended to honor God, and worship him in the beauty of holiness.

But in a more especial manner they see God in his ordinances. Whether they appear in the great congregation to "pay him the honour due unto his name, and worship him in the beauty of holiness" (cf. Psalms 96:8,9); or "enter into their closets" and there pour out their souls before their "Father which is in secret" (Matthew 6:6); whether they search the oracles of God, or hear the ambassadors of Christ proclaiming glad tidings of salvation; or by eating of that bread and drinking of that cup (I Corinthians 11:28) "show forth his death till he come" (I Corinthians 11:26)--in the clouds of heaven (Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62). In all these his appointed ways they find such a near approach as cannot be expressed. They see him, as it were, face to face, and "talk with him as a man talking with his friend" (cf. Exodus 33:11)

-a fit preparation for those mansions above wherein they shall "see him as he is" (I John 3:2) (Outler, Works 1: 514).

The validity of the ordinance. Wesley did not believe that the validity of the serving or the administration of the Lord's Supper depended on the goodness of the person serving, "but on the faithfulness of him that ordained it; who will and doth meet us in his appointed ways" (Outler, Works 1: 682-3).

The Lord's Supper as a means to salvation. The table of the Lord was, for Wesley, also a place where sinners could be saved. Thus, after going through the entire list of steps toward salvation, or the call to salvation, Wesley asserts the following:

...But here he observes others go up to "the table of the Lord" (Malachi 1:7,12). He considers, Christ has said, "Do this" (cf. I Corinthians 11:24). How is it that I do not? I am too great a sinner. I am not fit. I am not worthy. After struggling with these scruples a while, he breaks through. And thus he continues in God's way--in hearing, reading, meditating, praying, and partaking of the Lord's Supper--till God, in the manner that pleases him, speaks to his heart, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7:50) (Outler, Works 1: 394).

### Religious Fasting

Wesley's primary sermon on fasting appears to be Sermon No. 27, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, VII". The term, "religious fasting", as a "means of grace" is the concept to which this sermon gives itself (Outler, Works 1: 592-611).

The nature of fasting. Wesley's definition of "fasting" comes from his account of the inspired writers of both the Old and the New Testaments, such as, David, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jesus, and the apostles. The word, "fast" means, "not to eat, to abstain from food", i.e., "not to eat for a time prescribed" (Outler, Works 1: 594).

As to the degrees or measures of fasting, Wesley points out the Scripture more often mentions one day, from morning till evening. This was the fast most commonly observed among the ancient Christians (Outler, Works 1: 595). Wesley encourages

fasting on the basis that those who "desire to walk humbly and closely with God, will find frequent occasion for private seasons of thus afflicting their souls before their Father which is in secret" (Outler, Works 1: 597).

The reasons of fasting. Wesley provides five reasons why some people fast. The first is, for those persons who are "overwhelmed with the sorrow for sin, and a strong apprehension of the wrath of God", these, he says, sometime forget to eat their bread (Outler, Works 1: 598).

The second reason given is, when a "God-fearing" person realizes that they have been abused the privilege of eating, how they have disregarded temperance, or how they have indulged their sensual appetites, these then keep at a distance from all excess eating (Outler, Works 1: 599).

The third reason, to refrain from the use of indulgences of the "inferior appetites" which tend to chain one down to earth and to thus to pollute it (Outler, Works 1: 600).

Fourth, fasting is used by some as a "holy revenge" upon themselves for having abused the good gifts of God, of turning things which should have been for their health into an occasion of falling (Outler, Works 1: 600).

And finally, fasting is a way of life for some to help one in their private prayer life. Wesley suggests that this has often been "found a means in the hand of God of confirming and increasing ...seriousness of spirit, earnestness, sensibility, and tenderness of conscience; deadness to the world, and consequently the love of God and every holy and heavenly affection" (Outler, Works 1: 600).

The manner in which we are to fast. First, we are to fast as an acceptable service unto the Lord, i.e., we are to fast with our eye singly fixed on him.

...Let our intention herein be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father which is in heaven; to express our sorrow and shame for our manifold



transgressions of his holy law; to wait for an increase of purifying grace, drawing our affections to things above; to add seriousness and earnestness to our prayers; to avert the wrath of God, and to obtain all the great and precious promises which he hath made to us in Christ Jesus.

Let us beware of mocking God, of turning our fast as well as our prayer into an abomination unto the Lord, by the mixture of any temporal view, particularly by seeking the praise of men... (Outler, Works 1: 608).

Second, we are not to seek, by our fasting, to gain anything of God. In fasting, "we wait for the unmerited mercy of God". The performance of fasting should not be to receive any blessing from God (Outler, Works 1: 608-9).

Thirdly, we are to let both our public and private fasting be a time whereby we exercise those holy affections which are implied in an broken and contrite heart (Psalms 51:17). That is to say, let it be a time in which we express a godly sorrow for sin (Outler, Works 1: 609).

Fourthly, we are to join our fasting with prayer, i.e., confessing our sins; humbling ourselves under his mighty hand (I Peter 5:6): laying open before him all our wants, and all our guiltiness and helplessness. This is the time for us to enlarge our prayers in our behalf and also in behalf of our brethren (Outler, Works 1: 610).

And finally, we are to join with our fasting works of mercy, both to the bodies and to the souls of humankind (Outler, Works 1: 610).

### Christian Conference

Harper points out Wesley's method of nurturing and renewal was through the means of Christian conference, i.e., group experiences which were provided through the United Societies (Devotional Life 54).

As it turned out, this means became the primary instrument of early Methodist renewal. Wherever Wesley preached, he sought to organize believers into bands, classes, and societies for their continuing nurture. In 1743, he organized these groups into the United Societies, a movement within the Church of England. Methodism remained as a "little church"

within the larger body until shortly after Wesley's death (Harper, Message 83).

### The Holy Spirit in Spiritual Formation

Wesley contends that the Holy Spirit is the primary means of grace in the development of the spiritual life. Specifically, he names four areas wherein the Holy Spirit works: assurance of salvation, continual inspiration, the fruits of the Spirit in the life of the believer, and the assistance of the Spirit in spiritual disciplines of prayer, Scripture, and the receiving of the Lord's Supper.

#### The Assurance of Salvation

The initial work of the Holy Spirit in the development of the life of a Christian is to bear testimony with the spirit of the Christian that we are indeed children of God.

Quoting St. Paul, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16), Wesley emphasizes that,

...the testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly "witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God"; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me (Galatians 2:20), that all my sins are blotted out (Acts 3:19), and I, even I, am reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:20).

That this "testimony of the Spirit of God" must needs, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the "testimony of our own spirit" may appear from this single consideration: we must be holy of heart and holy in life before we can be conscious that we are so, before we can have "the testimony of our spirit" that we are inwardly and outwardly holy. But we must love God before we can be holy at all; this being the root of all holiness. Now we cannot love God till we know he loves us: "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). And we cannot know his pardoning love to us till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. Since therefore this "testimony of his Spirit" must precede the love of God and all holiness, of consequence it must precede our inward consciousness thereof, or the "testimony of our spirit" concerning them (Outler, Works 1: 274-5).

#### The Continual Inspiration of the Holy Spirit

Not only does the Holy Spirit assure us of our salvation, that is to say, our standing

in right relationship with God, but the Spirit of God continues to inspire us, breathing into our souls the continual presence of God. To this Wesley asserts the following.

...what the life of God in the soul of a believer is, wherein it properly consists, and what is immediately and necessarily implied therein. It immediately and necessarily implies the continual inspiration of God's Holy Spirit: God's breathing into the soul, and the soul's breathing back what it first receives from God; a continual action of God upon the soul, the re-action of the soul upon God; an unceasing presence of God, the loving, pardoning God, manifested to the heart, and perceived by faith; and an unceasing return of love, praise, and prayer, offering up all the thoughts of our hearts, all the words of our tongues, all the works of our hands, all our body, soul, and spirit, to be a holy sacrifice, acceptable unto God (Romans 12:1) in Christ Jesus (Outler, Works 1: 442).

### The Fruits of the Spirit in the Life of the Believer

The workings of the Holy Spirit in the life a believer produces fruits of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, patience.

Wesley prefers to think that the gift of the fruits of the Spirit far outweigh, in importance, the "extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit", that is to say, the gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

These latter gifts were given sparingly to the Christian believers in the Early Church. The more excellent purpose for the infilling of the Holy Spirit was to bear the fruits of Galatians 5:22-24. Specifically, Wesley believes,

It was to give them (what none can deny to be essential to all Christians in all ages) "the mind which was in Christ" (Philippians 2:5), those holy "fruits of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22,23) which whosoever hath not "is none of his" (Romans 8:9); to fill them with "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness"; to endue them with "faith" (perhaps it might be rendered "fidelity"), with "meekness and temperance"; to enable them to "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:22-24), its passions and desires; and, in consequence of that inward change, to fulfil all outward righteousness, "to walk as Christ also walked" (I John 2:6), in "the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love" (I Thessalonians 1:3) (Outler, Works 1: 160-1).

### The Holy Spirit's Assistance in Spiritual Discipline

The spiritual disciplines of prayer, searching of the Scriptures, and the receiving of the Lord's Supper, is not profitable to a believer unless the Holy Spirit is active in the participation of these disciplines. Wesley asserts,

We allow likewise that all outward means whatever, if separate from the Spirit of God, cannot profit at all, cannot conduce in any degree either to the knowledge or love of God. Without controversy, the help that is done upon earth, he doeth it himself (Psalms 74:13). It is he alone who, by his own almighty power, worketh in us what is pleasing in his sight (I John 3:22). And all outward things, unless he works in them and by them, are mere weak and beggarly elements (Galatians 4:9). Whosoever therefore imagines there is any intrinsic power in any means whatsoever does greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God (Matthew 22:29). We know that there is no inherent power in the words that are spoken in prayer, in the letter of Scripture read, the sound thereof heard, or the bread and wine received in the Lord's Supper; but that it is God alone who is the giver of every good gift (James 1:17), the author of all grace; that the whole power is of him, whereby through any of these there is any blessing conveyed to our soul... (Outler, Works 1: 382).

## CHAPTER 8

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXTERIOR LIFE

Wesleyan spirituality places the Christian life in balance by insisting on the need for a believer in Jesus Christ to first come to terms with the interior condition of one's spirituality, i.e., their relationship with God through his Son, Jesus Christ. Second, to put into motion the development of one's spiritual growth through the exercise of the basic spiritual disciplines. And third, to put into action by the outward life such works of mercy that is appropriate and enabling to another person of God's family.

Holiness of Heart and Life

In Wesleyan spirituality the theme which historically held it so tightly together as an effectual means of spiritual development was Wesley's insistence upon the doctrine of "Holiness of heart and life" (Gill, Letters 124-5). By "holiness of heart", Wesley means that concept or command given by our Lord in Mark 12:30 (cf. Matthew 22:37; Luke 10:27), that a Christian (esp. "a Methodist"), is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Davies, Works 9: 31-42). Such a person, Wesley insist, is "happy in God" and "pure in heart" (Davies, Works 9: 31-42). The development of this part of the spiritual life, i.e., the interior life, is by the means of "Works of Piety" discussed in the preceding chapter.

By "holiness of life", Wesley means the practical aspects of living out of the Christian life in the world environment. That is, the interior relationship of the Christian finds its true identity and expression in the exterior environment. To his concept of "holiness of life", Wesley now applies the second great commandment from Mark 12:31, "...Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." The two texts joined together, Mark 12:30, 31, is termed by Wesley as the

"royal law", a term which in and of itself summarizes the whole of this part of the spiritual life, i.e., the exterior life, translated as the means of "Works of Mercy".

Between these two elements of doctrine, Wesleyan spirituality is kept in precise balance and has tightly held together the effectual means of spiritual development for the "people called Methodist"

### Fruits Meet for Repentance

Wesley sees as necessity a complete and full union of the "works of piety" with the "works of mercy" toward one's full growth in Christ, (i.e., sanctification). In the following sermon he elaborates,

"But what good works are those, the practice of which you affirm to be necessary to sanctification?" First, all works of piety, such as public prayer, family prayer, and praying in our closet; receiving the Supper of the Lord; searching the Scriptures by hearing, reading, meditating; and using such a measure of fasting or abstinence as our bodily health allows.

Secondly, all works of mercy, whether they relate to the bodies or souls of men; such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or variously afflicted; such as the endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the stupid sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering, to comfort the feebleminded (I Thessalonians 5:14), to succour the tempted (Hebrews 2:18), or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death. This is the repentance, and these the fruits meet for repentance, which are necessary to full sanctification. This is the way wherein God hath appointed his children to wait for complete salvation (Outler, Works 2: 166; cf. 1: 342-3).

But Wesley is not content to simply form the union between these two "works" toward one's spiritual maturity. He thus goes further. "Purity of Intention", he says, plays an important part in the carrying out of these works, especially "works of mercy", in which the Sermon on the Mount particularly addresses.

And, first, with regard to works of mercy. "Take heed", saith he, "that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them. Otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." "That ye do not your alms"---although this only is named, yet is every work of charity included, everything which we give, or speak, or do, whereby our neighbour may be profited,

whereby another man may receive any advantage, either in his body or soul. The feeding the hungry, the clothing the naked, the entertaining or assisting the stranger, the visiting those that are sick or in prison (Matthew 25:35-38), the comforting the afflicted, the instructing the ignorant, the reproofing the wicked, the exhorting and encouraging the well-doer; and if there by any other work of mercy, it is equally included in this direction (Outler, Works 1: 573).

### Holiness of Life

#### Definition of Term

Wesley's definition for the term, "holiness of life" points to a life lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ towards full maturity. Combined with this is a clear vision or view of practical service as the outcome or expression of mercy. This definition is formed by Wesley over several sermons addressing the concept of love, first for God, and then for one's neighbor.

#### Source or Basis for Service

Wesley points the Christian disciple to St. Paul's concept found in the First Book of Corinthians, chapter thirteen. Clearly, the Apostle's subject is regarding "divine love", the love which originates from God himself and directs itself towards one's neighbor through the Christian disciple. It is, in Wesley's words, "a love of benevolence, of tender goodwill to all the souls that God has made" (Outler, Works 3: 295). Our benevolence to all humankind increases in the same proportion with our faith and love of God (Outler, Works 3: 292-5; cf. 2: 428).

Our love for our neighbor begins, therefore, first with our love for God, for thus saith his Word: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30)... "Such a love of God as this," Wesley asserts, "as engrosses the whole heart, as takes up all the affections, as fills the entire capacity of the soul, and employs the utmost extent of all its faculties"

(Outler, Works 1: 137; cf. 1: 662-3).

### Love Expressed as "Mercy"

Love for one's neighbor is defined by Wesley after the pattern and the words of our Blessed Lord in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew, chapter 5-7). Wesley directs the Christian disciple to follow in Christ's footsteps of mercy. Mercy is more clearly defined as compassion and tenderheartedness.

Jesus words from his Sermon are, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). Mercy is the "eminent part of brotherly love" The underlying meaning of mercy is, "They who love their neighbor as themselves" (Outler, Works 1: 499). Here the divine element of love is most clearly expressed in terms of loving our neighbor even "as Christ loved us" (cf. Ephesians 5:2). Therefore, brotherly love takes us full circle: First, God loves us. Then we love him because he first loved us. The source and the expression of this love is shown forth towards our neighbor, "not in word only, but in deed and in truth" (cf. I John 3:18) (Outler, Works 1: 163). We love our neighbor in the same manner in which Christ loved us. That is to say, "mercy which endureth forever". And the final turn of this circle is this, it is the "merciful that shall ultimately obtained mercy" (Matthew 5:7) (Outler, Works 1: 499). The Christian disciple is ultimately saved by the act of saving his or her's neighbor.

### Chief Properties of Love

Wesley's best term for love is found in his Sermon, "On Zeal" (Outler, Works 3: 312-5). Here he associates the "properties of love" under the concept of the flame of love. Included in the list of properties is humility, meekness, unwearied patience, in that which is good, and proportioned goodness. The choicest seal is love itself.

The understanding Wesley had of divine love places the Christian disciple along



side the work of God in human life.

In a Christian believer love sits upon the throne, which is erected in the inmost soul; namely, love of God and man, which fills the whole heart, and reigns without a rival. In a circle near the throne are all holy tempers: long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, goodness, fidelity, temperance (Galatians 5:22-23) --and if any other is comprised in "the mind which was in Christ Jesus" (cf. Philippians 2:5). In an exterior circle are all the works of mercy, whether to the souls or bodies of men. By these we exercise all holy tempers; by these we continually improve them, so that all these are real means of grace, although this is not commonly adverted to. Next to these are those that are usually termed works of piety: reading and hearing the Word, public, family, private prayer, receiving the Lord's Supper, fasting or abstinence. Lastly, that his followers may the more effectually provoke one another to love, holy tempers, and good works (Hebrews 10:24), our blessed Lord has united them together in one--the church, dispersed all over the earth; a little emblem of which, of the church universal, we have in every particular Christian congregation (Outler, Works 3: 313-4).

For Wesley, all the properties of love originates and springs forth from divine love.

The love or mercy shown towards our neighbor is balanced by this divine love. Wesley asserts,

The necessary fruit of this love of God is the love of our neighbour, of every soul which God hath made; not excepting our enemies, not excepting those who are now "despitefully using and persecuting us" (cf. Matthew 5:44); 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" (cf. John 13:34). Accordingly the commandment written in the hearts of all those that love God is no other than this, "As I have loved you, so love ye one another" (cf. John 15:12). Now "herein perceive we the love of God, in that he laid down his life for us. We ought", then, as the Apostle justly infers, "to lay down our lives for our brethren" (I John 3:16). If we feel ourselves ready to do this, then do we truly love our neighbour. Then "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we" thus "love our brethren" (I John 3:14). "Hereby know we" that we are born of God, "that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his loving Spirit" (I John 4:13). "For love is of God, and everyone that" thus "loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4:7) (Outler, Works 1: 426; cf. 2: 42).

### Concerned Welfare and Goodwill

The expressions of social welfare and goodwill, Wesley believed, profits nothing if not fully accompanied with the same divine love described by St. Paul (I Corinthians 13:1-

3; Philippians 2:5-11). It is of the same nature, property, and quality wherein "Christ hath loved us" (cf. Ephesians 5:1, 25; John 3:16). It suffereth long. It is patient towards all people. It suffers the weakness, ignorance, errors, infirmities, all the forwardness and littleness of faith of the children of God. Not only the children of God, but likewise it suffers all the malice and wickedness of the children of the world. The duration of the suffering is not for a short period of time, but to the very end, the Christian disciple suffers for the welfare and goodwill of the neighbor. Even then, the Christian disciple continues to feed their enemies when they are hungry. If their enemy thirsts, the Christian disciple gives him a drink (Outler, Works 1: 499). Therefore Wesley believed that the Christian disciple:

...As a citizen of the world he claims a share in the happiness of all the inhabitants of it. Because he is a man he is not unconcerned in the welfare of any man; but enjoys whatsoever brings glory to God and promotes peace and goodwill among men (cf. Romans 12:20) (Outler, Works 1: 504-5).

### Our Neighbor, the Ultimate Concern

Wesley's definition of "who is my neighbor?" is quite inclusive. He asserts,

...--"thy neighbor"; that is, not only thy friend, thy kinsman, or thy acquaintance; not only the virtuous, the friendly, him that loves thee, that prevents or returns thy kindness; but every child of man, every human creature, every soul which God hath made: not excepting him whom thou never hast seen in the flesh, whom thou knowest not either by face or name; not excepting him whom thou knowest to be evil and unthankful, him that still despitefully uses and persecutes thee (Matthew 5:44). Him thou shalt "love as thyself"; 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 (Outler, Works 1: 221-2).

Outler says, "Just as the love of God is the substance of inward holiness, so also the love of neighbor is the substance of outward holiness" (Outler, Works 1: 426).

### Social Holiness

In the enlarging upon the social or practical holiness, Wesley was concerned that

the Christian disciple be aware of these areas of responsibility.

### Abstain from Doing Evil

Wesley points out that the Christian disciple would not knowingly and intentionally do any evil or harm to his neighbor. The Christian disciple is as far as possible from cruelty and wrong, from any unjust or unkind action. Further still, Wesley says,

...With the same care did he "set a watch before his mouth, and keep the door of his lips" (cf. Psalms 141:3), lest he should offend in tongue either against justice, or against mercy or truth. He "put away all lying" (cf. Ephesians 4:25), falsehood, and fraud; "neither was guile found in his mouth" (I Peter 2:22). He "spake evil of no man" (Titus 3:2); nor did an unkind word ever come out of his lips (Outler, Works 1: 164).

### Intentionally Do Good

Following in the footsteps of the Master, carrying out his example of loving service was a primary concern of Wesley. He asserts,

...Now you know his (Christ's) whole life was one labour of love. You know how he "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38), and that without intermission, declaring to all, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). Is not that then the language of your heart:

"Thy mind throughout my life be shown,  
While listening to the wretch's cry,  
The widow's and the orphan's groan,  
On mercy's wings I swiftly fly,  
The poor and helpless to relieve;  
My life, my all, for them to give" (Outler, Works 3: 412-3).

To you I need add but one word more. Remember...the solemn declaration of him whose ye are, and whom ye serve, coming in the clouds of heaven (Matthew 24:30)! While you are promoting this comprehensive charity, which contains feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, lodging the stranger, indeed all good works in one, let those animating words be written on your hearts, and sounding in your ears, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me" (cf. Matthew 25:40) (Outler, Works 3: 413-4).

The rewards for faithful service in Jesus' name is reviewed by Wesley from the text, Matthew 25:34-36:

"Then the king will say to them upon his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my

Father. For I was hungry and ye gave me meat; thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me." In like manner, all the good they did upon earth will be recited before men and angels: whatsoever they had done either "in word or deed, in the name", or for the sake "of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). All their good desires, intentions, thoughts, all their holy dispositions, will also be then remembered; and it will appear that though they were unknown or forgotten among men, yet God "noted" them "in his book" (cf. Isaiah 30:8). All their sufferings likewise for the name of Jesus and for the testimony of a good conscience will be displayed, unto their praise from the righteous judge (II Timothy 4:8), their honour before saints and angels, and the increase of that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17) (Outler, Works 1: 363-4).

...And upon his (God's) authority we must continue to declare that whenever you do good to any for his sake--when you feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty; when you assist the stranger, or clothe the naked; when you visit them that are sick, or in prison--these are not "splendid sins", as one marvelously calls them, but "sacrifices wherewith God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:16) (Outler, Works 3: 403-4).

Wesley viewed "good works" and "ultimate salvation" as in harmony with the overall divine plan of redemption. He asserts thus,

...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 (Philippians 2:5): nay, he cannot retain the grace he has received, he cannot continue in faith, or in the favour of God (Outler, Works 2: 164).

Wesley did not claim that we are saved or justified by good works, but rather we are "justified by faith". However, he did view the validation or the affirmation of justification as good works. He so states his convictions in the Sermon, "The Law Established through Faith, I"

...We are, doubtless, "justified by faith" This is the corner-stone of the whole Christian building. "We are justified without the works of the law" as any previous condition of justification. But they are an immediate fruit of that faith whereby we are justified. So that if good works do not follow our faith, even all inward and outward holiness, it is plain our faith is nothing worth; we are yet in our sins (I Corinthians 15:17). Therefore that we are "justified by faith", even by "faith without works", is no ground for "making void the law through faith"; or for imagining that faith is a dispensation from

any kind or degree of holiness (Outler, Works 2: 27-8).

Wesley again enlarges upon his views regarding "justification by faith" and the necessity of "good works" springing forth out of "justification"

...All truly "good works"... "follow after justification", and they are therefore "good and acceptable to God in Christ", because they "spring out of a true and living faith". By a parity of reason all "works done before justification are not good", in the Christian sense, "forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ" (though from some kind of faith in God they may spring), "yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not"... "but they have the nature of sin" (Outler, Works 1: 192-3).

Wesley did not see that a Christian's good works were a hindrance to his salvation, but rather as a significant enhancement of his salvation. He asserts,

But may I not add one thing more (only he that heareth, let him understand) (Mark 13:14): good works are so far from being hindrances of our salvation, they are so far from being insignificant, from being of no account in Christianity, that, supposing them to spring from a right principle, they are the perfection of religion. They are the highest part of that spiritual building whereof Jesus Christ is the foundation. To those who attentively consider the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians it will be undeniably plain that what St. Paul there describes as the highest of all Christian graces is properly and directly the love of our neighbour. And to him who attentively considers the whole tenor both of the Old and New Testament it will be equally plain that works springing from this love are the highest part of the religion therein revealed. Of these our Lord himself says, "Hereby is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit" (cf. John 15:8). Much fruit! Does not the very expression imply the excellency of what is so termed? Is not the tree itself for the sake of the fruit? By bearing fruit, and by this alone, it attains the highest perfection it is capable of, and answers the end for which it was planted. Who, what is he, then, that is called a Christian, and can speak lightly of good works (Outler, Works 3: 405)?

Wesley connected the concept of social holiness, with the idea of "peacemaking".

A peacemaker, he says, is:

...one that as he hath opportunity "doth good unto all men" (cf. Galatians 6:10); one that being filled with the love of God and of all mankind cannot confine the expressions of it to his own family, or friends, or acquaintance, or party; or to those of his own opinions; no, nor those who are partakers of like precious faith (II Peter 1:1); but steps over all these narrow bounds that

he may do good to every man; that he may some way or other manifest his love to neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies. He doth good to them all as he hath opportunity, that is, on every possible occasion; "redeeming the time" (Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5) in order thereto, "buying up every opportunity" (cf. Galatians 6:10), improving every hour, losing no moment wherein he may profit another. He does good, not of one particular kind, but good in general: in every possible way, employing herein all his talents of every kind, all his powers and faculties of body and soul, all his fortune, his interest, his reputation; desiring only that when his Lord cometh he may say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23)!

He doth good, to the uttermost of his power, even to the bodies of all men. He rejoices to "deal his bread to the hungry", and to "cover the naked with a garment" (cf. Isaiah 58:7; Ezekiel 18:7,16). Is any a stranger? He takes him in, and relieves him according to his necessities. Are any sick or in prison? He visits them, and administers such help as they stand most in need of. And all this he does, not as unto man, but remembering him that hath said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40) (Outler, Works 1: 518-9).

### Share the Good News

In the sermon regarding "peacemakers", Wesley expresses the duties of the peacemaker to include both the care of the body and the care of the soul.

He doth good, to the uttermost of his power, even to the bodies of all men....How much more does he rejoice if he can do any good to the soul of any man! This power indeed belongeth unto God. It is he only that changes the heart, without which every other change is lighter than vanity (Psalms 62:9). Nevertheless it pleases him who worketh all in all (I Corinthians 12:6) to help man chiefly by man; to convey his own power and blessing and love through one man to another... (Outler, Works 1: 519).

True Christianity then, must spread and grow, says Wesley. It cannot be hid or concealed.

And, first, it is impossible for any that have it to conceal the religion of Jesus Christ. This our Lord makes plain beyond all contradiction by a twofold comparison: "Ye are the light of the world. A city set upon a hill cannot be hid."

"Ye" Christians "are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14), with regard both to your tempers and actions. Your holiness makes you as conspicuous as the sun in the midst of heaven. As ye cannot go out of the world, so neither can ye stay in it without appearing to all mankind. Ye may not flee from men, and while ye are among them it is impossible to hide your

lowliness and meekness and those other dispositions whereby ye aspire to be perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48). Love cannot be hid any more than light; and least of all when it shines forth in action, when ye exercise yourselves in the labour of love, in beneficence of every kind. As well may men think to hide a city as to hide a Christian: yea, as well may they conceal a city set upon a hill (Matthew 5:14) as a holy, zealous, active lover of God and man (Outler, Works 1: 539-40).

## CHAPTER 9

### SUMMARY CHAPTER

The preceding curriculum in spiritual formation has been designed to enable Christians, both lay and clergy, to obtain a clearer understanding of Wesleyan theology towards a more genuine and effective spirituality. The curriculum has systematized John Wesley's Sermons in an order that flows from the earliest primitive beginnings of humankind in his state of perfection, i.e., in the image of God, through the life of spiritual development, by the use of various disciplines, and a life of Christian service. Ultimate perfection is described by Wesley as "glorification" which is not dealt with in this curriculum, but simply means the full return to the image of God which follows physical death. In the meantime, however, Wesley is sure to emphasize the life of a Christian as toward humankind's earliest beginning, viz, happiness and holiness.

#### The Problem Restated

The primary concern among some contemporary theologians has centered, in at least some measure, around Wesley's doctrinal standards and the importance others have conferred on those doctrines towards the development of the spiritual life. For example, Richard P. Heitzenrater, a Professor of Wesley Studies at Perkins School of Theology, has written a comprehensive review on the history and the development of the American Methodist's doctrinal standards. In his article (21-4) he concludes from the historical evidence available that the doctrinal standards found in Wesley's Sermons and Notes were never included in the standards adopted by the early American Methodist. His article is not clear whether he concludes that the doctrinal material used by Wesley with his British preachers, viz., his Sermons and Notes, is or is not relevant for contemporary Wesleyan theology. Neither is it clear whether he is or is not arguing for or against Wesley's



Sermons and Notes to be included, along with the Articles of Religion, as value and valid doctrinal materials for Wesleyan theology. The general concern does not appear, at least, to be directed toward the validity or the correctness of Wesley's doctrinal standards as discovered in his Sermons and Notes, but rather on the ever changing character of theology for each passing generation. The primary question is, does not contemporary theology have more to say that is effective and precise than did the theology of the eighteenth century? a thought well understood and appreciated. Again, does eighteenth century Wesleyan theology keep pace and progress with the contemporary mind and twentieth century social and justice needs? Is Wesleyan theology sufficient for long-term use, or should it ever be undergoing change and adjustments to meet the present needs of the moment? This is the problem as viewed by this writer, the confusion of which is disruptive to the average lay person who seeks to walk with God in close fellowship and successful endurance of the contemporary age.

#### The Results of Project Presentation

The primary results of this project presentation indicates an effective level of success and accomplishments. First, regarding the level of interest in Wesleyan spirituality, the congregation, especially those persons participating in the Wesley Study Group, have, and are still demonstrating an intense desire to be led into a thorough understanding of the key doctrines of Wesley especially those doctrines leading toward spiritual development. Secondly, this writer, after several months following the presentation, is still witnessing a deepening of the membership's spiritual life. It is being demonstrated in continual numerical and monetary growth of the congregation. Thirdly, the writer is still using the systematic presentation of the curriculum in his sermons and mid-week lessons. The congregational feedback is very positive.

### Conclusion

The writer makes two concluding observations:

First, without the inclusion of Wesley's Sermons and Notes, Wesleyan theology will suffer at the hands of non-Wesleyan theologians. This is to say, theology without Wesley's Sermons and Notes cannot be said to be "Wesleyan" theology at all, but only another branch of contemporary Christian thought.

Second, based on the traditions and historical evidences of Wesleyan spirituality, as well as the personal observation of this writer, the use of this curriculum will enable would-be Christian disciples, especially those loyal to the Wesleyan heritage, to develop and maintain a genuine and effective spirituality which ultimately will rejuvenate the contemporary Wesleyan scene and by God's grace, thus lead us to a renewal in the United Methodist Church.

## APPENDIX A

## CONGREGATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE/SURVEY

The writer used a questionnaire/survey of the general membership of the Pegram United Methodist Church to determine their understanding of the basic key doctrines and beliefs of Wesleyan spirituality.

The same questionnaire/survey ("Congregational Questionnaire/Survey") was used at two different times as written during the course of the project. It was used first as a "pre-questionnaire/survey" before the writer preached several sermons on basic Wesleyan theology, and before the ten-weeks Wesley Study Group which met to specifically review and study several of John Wesley's Sermons.

The second time it was used was following the sermons preached, and prior to the ten-weeks Wesley Study Group. The following information is a grouping of the results of the participants in the Congregational Questionnaire/Survey.

Wesleyan Doctrine of Sin

Comparatively, the following results demonstrates that the congregation made some significant changes in their doctrinal beliefs regarding sin in the Wesleyan tradition.

Definition

The final results, or the concluding definition of the majority of the congregation regarding their understanding of "sin" is clearly and decisively from a Wesleyan perspective. Eighty-seven percent agreed with Wesley's definition of sin, as a "willful transgression of the known law of God" Between the pre- and the post-questionnaires, twenty percent of the membership adjusted their definition upward toward Wesley's view of sin.

### Original Sin

Between the pre- and post- questionnaire on the doctrine of Original Sin, seventeen percent changed their belief from having disagreed with Wesley on his doctrine in the pre-questionnaire, to agreeing with him without reservation.

### Wesleyan Doctrine of Salvation

The participants in the pre- and post- questionnaire seems to produce a mixed-bag of beliefs in the general area of salvation.

### True Religion

For Wesley, the critical question is, "What constitutes true religion?" The membership demonstrated a mixed-bag of beliefs and not a clear understanding regarding the meaning and purpose of Christianity.

On the one hand, they concluded that a good moral life is an essential quality of the spiritual life. On the other hand, there was a split (fifty-seven percent for, to forty-three percent against), in the membership regarding the central mission of the Church, viz, showing more concern for social and political issues of the secular life, over against the Church being more concerned with spiritual matters in general. This is not to say that the membership does not take it's religion seriously. Eighty-seven percent of the membership believe that spiritual matters are very important in their relationship with God.

One-hundred percent of the membership participating concluded, (over against ninety-three percent in the "pre-" questionnaire), that what one believes is very important to their lives. Even though the majority believes that church membership in a local church is vital and important, yet seventy-five percent of the membership did not accept church membership as salvation, in and of itself.

### Repentance

For Wesley, repentance included knowledge of one's self, and a recognition of one's sinful state or condition. Comparatively, between the pre- and post- questionnaire, those members participating changed their belief by thirty-seven percent from disagreeing with Wesley in the initial questions to agreeing with him regarding his doctrine on repentance.

### Justification and the New Birth

The participating membership gave strong evidence of a clear understanding of the Wesleyan doctrine of Justification and the New Birth. Between the two responses there was very little change.

The membership does not consider baptism equal to conversion. They see baptism as a means of grace that enables persons to come to Christ, but does not of itself save them. There was a slight change in their position from a strong ninety-three percent to one-hundred percent.

### Guilt of Sin

One-third of the membership participants changed their view, thus agreeing with Wesley on his understanding of the guilt of sin and the power of sin. Justification, or pardon, delivers one from the guilt of sin, and sanctification from the power of sin.

### The Grace of God

One-hundred percent of the membership participating in the questionnaire/survey concluded with a clear understanding and acceptance of Wesley's doctrine of the power of God's grace to forgive the sins of humankind, and to restore to favor with God the persons receiving this forgiveness. Grace is understood to be the free, unmerited, love of God demonstrated at the Cross of Calvary.

## Faith

In the post- responses of the doctrine of faith, the majority of participating membership believes faith to be a complete trust in God's grace. The remainder split between faith being a commitment toward doing that which is right, and one's decision to accept Jesus Christ as one's Savior.

## Assurance of Salvation

Within the membership there is a mixed-bag of beliefs regarding one's assurance of salvation. Four questions were scattered throughout the questionnaire. The results were as follows:

1. "I know without a doubt I am saved!"

The pre- questionnaire responses were seventy-seven percent in favor of the statement. The post- questionnaire responses were eighty-seven percent in favor of the statement. This represents a significant upgrading of the memberships' feelings about their relationship with God.

2. "If I should die tonight, I know that I would go to heaven!"

The pre- questionnaire responses were eighty-five percent, while the post- questionnaire responses fell to seventy-five percent. This represents a significant decline in the memberships' feelings about their relationship with God.

3. "Because I have placed my faith in Jesus Christ, I know that I am saved, that is:

I am now a 'born again' Christian.

The pre- questionnaire responses were seventy-seven percent. The post- questionnaire responses were eighty-seven. Here again, this represents a significant upgrading and improvement in their assurance of salvation.

4. "I wish I knew for sure that I am saved, and will go to heaven when I die!"

The pre- and post- questionnaire responses were about the same: fifty-eight and fifty-seven percent. It is not certain whether this represents a high level of apathy or a comfortable level of assurance among the membership participating in the questionnaire/survey.

#### Atonement of Jesus Christ

There was an excellent response by the participating membership to the Wesleyan doctrine of the Atonement. The comparison between the pre- and post- questionnaire responses were about equal.

#### Wesleyan Doctrine of Sanctification

The Congregational Questionnaire/Survey did not give itself in depth to the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian Perfection.

#### Wesleyan Spirituality and the Interior Life

The participating membership expressed considerable interest and desire toward development of the interior life, a life lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

#### The Spiritual Life

A large percentage of the participating membership expressed a desire for a closer walk with God. They expressed the need for growth and spiritual development in their knowledge of the Bible, prayer, and even a deeper desire to become Christlike in their daily lives and conduct. Comparatively, the differences between the pre- and post- questionnaires were slight.

#### Prayer

The participating membership has a very strong sense of the presence of God in their lives. The view of God is quite traditional and Wesleyan: He is a caring Friend, a Companion in lonely times, and He ministers to them through the corporate fellowship of

other Christian friends. They sense God in prayer and His guiding hand in all the affairs of life. The association between "prayer" and "presence of God" is closely knitted together. For example, seventy-eight percent of the pre-responses said that they feel God's presence at anytime and anywhere. That percentage improve to one-hundred percent in the post- responses.

### Scripture

For the membership participating in the questionnaire/survey there is a strong commitment to the use of Scripture as one's guiding principle. Both the pre- and post-responses scored very high, usually around one-hundred percent. The only visible exception that surfaced was the question regarding the Scriptures as being the inspired Word of God. Approximately thirteen percent of the responses said, "no", both to the question of inspiration and the question of the Bible to be taken literal.

### Fellowship

The participating membership listed two ways by which they find help in their daily Christian walk. The first is finding help in the general fellowship with other Christian believers. Comparatively, the scores ranked about the same between the pre- and post-questionnaires.

The second way in which they find help in their spiritual development is by small prayer and Bible study groups. Here the comparative data demonstrated a significant improvement: seventy-eight to one-hundred percent. The conclusion, then, is this: the more contact and involvement of a member in the church's social and spiritual functions, the more likely there is to be permanent and long-lasting spiritual bonding to both Christ and to His Church.



### The Holy Spirit in Spiritual Formation

There is a strong feeling among the participating membership of the work of the Holy Spirit in both the individual and corporate life of the Church. In both the pre- and post- responses, the scores were near one-hundred percent.

### Wesleyan Spirituality and the Exterior Life

Among the participating membership, there seems to be a clear understanding of the practical and social role individual members have in expressing their spirituality in the Wesleyan tradition.

### Holy Life and Good Works

The membership concluded (one-hundred percent) that a holy life and good works go hand-in-hand. But the responses gave every indication that the membership in no way was ready to replace good works with the New Birth experience. The New Birth experience seems to be primary in their lives and essential to salvation. The pre- and post- scores were, ninety-three percent and one-hundred percent, respectfully.

### Primary Mission of the Church

The second important matter affirmed by the membership was that there also seems to be a clear understanding on their part (one-hundred percent) of the primary mission of the church. Their conclusion was the necessity and the manner in which they could learn how to share Jesus Christ with their friends and family members. Their concern is composed of three critical questions:

1. How Christianity is to work out in one's daily life.
2. How one is to demonstrate that one's relationship with Jesus Christ is of primary importance during the duration of one's life.
3. How sharing one's faith and the winning of people to Jesus Christ can become the primary mission of the church.

In these three critical areas, the participating membership was in full agreement with Wesley's concept of good works and the sharing of their love both from and of God to their friends and neighbors.

### Summary

In summary, the responses, as interpreted by the writer, concluded that the participating membership was eager to demonstrate their faith in Jesus Christ. Additionally, they have an intense desire to develop their spiritual life to its "full maturity". Theology derived and preached from Wesley's sermons during the period of the project demonstrated the effectiveness of his theology as discovered and uncovered from his sermons.

PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
CONGREGATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE/SURVEY

The following questions are important to us and will help us in evaluating the spiritual and social needs and makeup of our congregation. There are no right or wrong answers, so you are at liberty to answer the questions or express your opinion in whatever way you feel is in the best interest of all concerned.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Please circle the number immediately in front of the appropriate answer.

A. I am      1. Male    2. Female

B: My approximate age is:

- |                  |             |                |
|------------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1. 15 or younger | 4. 25 to 34 | 7. 55 to 64    |
| 2. 16 to 18      | 5. 35 to 44 | 8. 65 to 74    |
| 3. 19 to 24      | 6. 45 to 54 | 9. 75 or older |

C: How long have you been a member of a Methodist church anywhere?

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Less than a year    | 5. Eleven to fifteen years |
| 2. One to two years    | 6. Sixteen to twenty years |
| 3. Three to five years | 7. Twenty to thirty years  |
| 4. Six to ten years    | 8. More than thirty years  |

D. On the average, how often do you attend worship service at the Pegram United Methodist Church?

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Every week          | 4. About once a month    |
| 2. Nearly every week   | 5. About every six weeks |
| 3. About twice a month | 6. Once or twice a year  |

E. In this section, we are interested in your views and opinions regarding God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Salvation, Sin, Grace and Church. **THIS IS NOT A TEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE**, but will help us to determine

where the ministry of the church and its educational program has or has not been effective to participants within our congregation.

In the left-hand column, please assign a number that comes nearest to indicating your feelings about the statement. Use the following scale to assign your numbers.

A. Strongly Agree  
D. Disagree

B. Agree  
E. Strongly disagree

C. Don't know

- \_\_\_1. I have concluded that it doesn't really matter so much what I believe about God and Christ so long as I live a good moral life.
- \_\_\_2. Spiritual matters, and not social or political affairs, should be the concern of the church.
- \_\_\_3. I know without a doubt that I am saved.
- \_\_\_4. My religious beliefs are really the basis of my whole approach to life.
- \_\_\_5. If I should die tonight, I know that I would go to Heaven.
- \_\_\_6. I experience the presence of God in my life on a daily basis.
- \_\_\_7. I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins, as the Scripture says.
- \_\_\_8. I believe that Jesus Christ is coming back to earth again, some day.
- \_\_\_9. I believe that there is life after death.
- \_\_\_10. Reading the Bible and prayer is very important in my life.
- \_\_\_11. Bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ is the first step toward creating a better society for humankind.
- \_\_\_12. Jesus Christ is Lord of my life.
- \_\_\_13. The Holy Spirit lives in my life. He guides and teaches me things I need to know about the spiritual life.
- \_\_\_14. To be a spiritual Christian means that I am becoming more and more like Christ in my spirit, attitude, and conduct.
- \_\_\_15. Sin is a wilful transgression of the known law of God.
- \_\_\_16. I believe that Scripture is the inspired Word of God without error both in matters of spiritual and the secular.
- \_\_\_17. Grace to me means that God forgives me for my sins in spite of my unworthiness.

- \_\_\_18. I believe that water baptism is the only way to become a Christian.
- \_\_\_19. I have decided that being a member of the church will someday get me to Heaven.
- \_\_\_20. I live a good life and do some good works, therefore I am a Christian.
- \_\_\_21. Winning people to Jesus Christ is the primary mission of the church.
- \_\_\_22. To be "born again" means that a person has been saved by Jesus Christ from all of their sins, both past and present.
- \_\_\_23. I believe that before a person can go to Heaven they must first be saved, that is, they must first be "born again".
- \_\_\_24. The primary purpose of people in this life is to prepare for the next life.
- \_\_\_25. Because I have placed my faith in Jesus Christ, I know that I am now saved, that is: I am now a "born again" Christian.
- \_\_\_26. Although I believe in my religion, I feel that there are other things more important in my life.
- \_\_\_27. I sense God's presence in my life.
- \_\_\_28. I am likely to sense God's presence mainly when I am in fellowship with other Christians.
- \_\_\_29. I believe that my relationship with God has primary importance for my life after death.
- \_\_\_30. The idea of death frightens me.
- \_\_\_31. I believe that my relationship with God has primary importance for my life here on earth.
- \_\_\_32. I think of God as being a caring friend, one who always understands me.
- \_\_\_33. Much of my daily life with my family or work is different because of my faith in God.
- \_\_\_34. I wish I knew for sure that I am saved and will go to Heaven when I die!

F. Please answer the following by circling only one of the answers that seem most appropriate for you.

1. "Faith" has meant many different things to people. Which one of the following statements comes closest to describing your own view of faith?

- a. a life of commitment to God that I demonstrate by trying to do what is right.
- b. My decision to accept Christ instead of going on in my own sinful ways.
- c. My trust in God's grace.
- d. My belief in all that the Bible says.
- e. In my view, as long as people are truly sincere in their beliefs, they show faith.
- f. I am not sure what "faith" means, although I am convinced that it is important.
- g. To be honest about it, the idea of faith doesn't seem very meaningful to me.
- h. None of these; what faith means to me is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. People often wonder how a merciful God can allow terrible things to happen, such as a baby dying in a tragic accident. Which statement comes closest to your view of why God lets these things happen?

- a. God allows terrible things to happen in order to punish people for their sins.
- b. We don't know why these things happen, but we know that God is able to use them for good.
- c. God doesn't have anything to do with these things, the devil causes them.
- d. People cause these things to happen, not God.
- e. Frankly, I don't know how God can allow these things to happen; it doesn't seem right to me.
- f. I don't have a view on this topic.
- g. None of the above; my view is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which one of the following statements comes closest to expressing your view of life after death?

- a. I don't believe that there is life after death.
- b. I am unsure whether or not there is life after death.
- c. I believe that there must be something beyond death, but I have no idea what it may be like.
- d. There is life after death, but no punishment.
- e. There is life after death, with rewards for some people and punishment for others.
- f. The notion of reincarnation expresses my view of what happens to people when they die.
- g. None of these express my view. What I think about life after death is \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?

- a. The Bible is the actual Word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.
- b. The Bible is the inspired Word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally.
- c. The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by men.
- d. None of these; my view is \_\_\_\_\_

G. How much help in living the Christian life and a life of service to others do you now receive? (Please circle only one response for each.)

|                              | <u>Very</u><br><u>Much</u> | <u>Quite</u><br><u>A Lot</u> | <u>Some</u> | <u>Little</u> | <u>None</u> | <u>Not</u><br><u>Sure</u> |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| from Sunday worship services | 1                          | 2                            | 3           | 4             | 5           | 6                         |
| from the Sunday sermons      | 1                          | 2                            | 3           | 4             | 5           | 6                         |
| from fellowship with other   | 1                          | 2                            | 3           | 4             | 5           | 6                         |







- |  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 17. Teaching children & youth about Bible, the church & the Christian tradition.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Providing education for children & youth that encourages an open search for a faith that makes sense of their lives. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. Providing fellowship opportunities for youth to be together in a Christian context.                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Providing adult education that teaches about the Bible, the church, & Christian tradition.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Your Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_.

## APPENDIX B

## WESLEY STUDY GROUP

The Wesley Study Group met one hour per week for ten weeks. Not all of the participating membership of the Questionnaire/Survey attended the weekly studies, but those that participated received a double portion of Wesleyan theology and thus benefited by it to a larger extent than those who did not attend the studies. The results are reflected in the general conclusion found in this Appendix.

The prescribed method with the Wesley Study Group generally followed a systematic approach to Wesley's sermons and studies. An orientation class was conducted as indicated or described in chapter one of this dissertation. It was agreed by the group that the one hour sessions should be divided into three segments. (1) A review by the writer of the sermon being discussed that class period. (Note: the sermons were always distributed to the participants one week in advance for personal study and research.) (2) The Wesley Study Group was then divided into three cluster groups. Each group was asked to address the sermon from a different perspective. (3) The Study Group reconvened as a plenary group to report their findings and conclusions.

Upon arrival to each session the participants submitted copies of their answers to the brief questionnaire (ten altogether) found in this Appendix. This was labeled as "pre-" questionnaire. When they came together again for the next session the participants submitted their answers to the same questionnaire, which was labeled "post-" questionnaire. At the same time, they submitted their "pre-" questionnaire for the session at hand. The two questionnaires, "pre-" and "post-" have been manually correlated and compared to determine what impact and difference the study had on the group. The results are summarized below.

### Wesleyan Doctrine of Sin

Generally, the impact on the participants in the Wesley Study Group was more intense compared to the overall conclusion addressed in Appendix A, regarding the participating membership.

#### Definition

The concluding definition of "sin" was decisively in favor of Wesley's understanding of sin, as "a wilful transgression of the known law of God." One hundred percent of the Study Group participants concurred with this definition.

#### Original Sin

On the doctrine of original sin, the group concluded that the Wesleyan perspective of "total depravity" was true to Scripture, and that Wesley himself had a clear, biblical understanding of the origin of sin. The group accepted without reservation Wesley's conclusion that our first parents, Adam and Eve, were created in the image of God., as well as in righteousness and holiness.

#### Moral Law of God

The moral law of God was not made an issue to be addressed by the membership questionnaire/survey, but in the Wesley Study Group one question opened the discussion to indepth study and reflection. However, not all participants in the study group concluded that Wesley had a clear understanding of the intent of the moral law of God. Eleven percent concluded that the Law was not given by God as a means to salvation. This conclusion was quite evident and clear in both the pre- and post- study group questionnaire.

### Wesleyan Doctrine of Salvation

The Wesleyan doctrine of Salvation was a mixed-bag of beliefs in participants pre-

and post- questionnaire/survey. However, among the Wesley Study Group participants there seems to be somewhat a better understanding of Wesley's doctrine of Salvation. In both cases, however, there appears to be some weakness in understanding of the doctrine.

### True Religion

Between the pre- and post- questionnaires, the Wesley Study Group showed strong evidence of their understanding that true Christianity, i.e., the religion of Jesus Christ, does not consist in religious ceremonies and creeds, as important as they are considered to be in public worship. There was a strong thirty-seven percent shift upwards to understanding that salvation comes by and through Jesus Christ alone, and not in outward performance.

### Baptism

Baptism, they concluded, is not a mark of discipleship. As Wesley taught, they see baptism as important and as a means of grace. There was an upward shift in the groups understanding, from a negative perspective to a positive perspective (thirty-three percent).

### Royal Law

The question of the "royal law", as Wesley referred to it, was not addressed in the membership questionnaire/survey. It was, however, addressed in the Wesley Study Group. Here the group demonstrated a clear understanding and commitment to the intent of the law as both basic and primary to Christian faith and practice. One-half of the Study Group participants changed their overall opinion regarding the purpose of the royal law from a "general" agreement with Wesley, to a "full" agreement. This can be interpreted as a significant change in the participants understanding toward Spiritual Formation.

### Repentance

From a Wesleyan perspective, repentance, i.e., knowledge of one's self and a

recognition of one's sinful condition, is necessary and essential in order for a person to be saved. The participants in the Wesley Study Group accepted Wesley's views on repentance without reservation, over against the membership's significant change of thirty-seven percent from totally disagreeing with Wesley to full agreement.

### Justification

On the Wesleyan doctrine of Justification, the Study Group's initial understanding was in name only. There was some confusion on the part of the participants regarding the distinctive differences between justification and the new birth. The term, "Justification by Faith", was familiar to them as basic church doctrine, but beyond that it really did not have a decisive meaning for them. The conclusion of the group came into a full understanding of Wesley's doctrine of Justification as pardon and forgiveness.

### New Birth or Regeneration

Eighty-seven percent of the participants concluded that the New Birth experience is necessary and essential to salvation. The intense study on this important doctrine assisted the participants toward a more informed understanding of "heart-religion", i.e., a real, inward change of the heart and life of a saved person.

### Guilt of Sin

One-hundred percent of the Wesley Study Group participants concluded that at the moment of justification, i.e., pardon and forgiveness of one's sins, that the guilt of one's sins, both past and present, are also taken away.

### The Grace of God

The study group participants accepted without reservation Wesley's doctrine of Grace, as the free, unmerited, love of God toward humankind. They concluded that the power of God's grace is at work in a person's life to both forgive them of their sin and to

restore them to full favor with God.

### Faith

Faith, generally, seemed to be a misunderstood doctrine for the study group.

Faith, in Wesleyan theology, has multiple meanings, at times, considering that we say that faith is the only necessary condition to salvation, and then we say, a Christian lives the life of victory by faith. The final results for the Wesley Study Group participants was that faith, i.e., saving faith, is complete trust in God's grace to forgive one of his or her's sins. Faith, i.e., sustaining faith, is complete trust in God's grace to keep a saved person from sin and spiritual failure.

### Assurance of Salvation

One-hundred percent of the participants in the Wesley Study Group concluded that they knew without doubt that they were saved, i.e., that they are now children of God. They formed this conclusion on the basis of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit giving them that constant assurance that they have been saved from all their sins, past and present.

### Atonement of Jesus Christ

One-hundred percent of the participants in the study group acknowledged that salvation is obtained by a sinner only because of the atoning death of Jesus Christ at Calvary. The group rejected as a means of forgiveness such outward performances as, creeds and knowledge of the Bible.

### Wesleyan Doctrine of Sanctification

The doctrine of Christian Perfection was one of the major themes on which the Wesley Study Group spent a great deal of time. In general, there was a good understanding among the participants on the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian Perfection, or

Perfect Love.

### Absolute Perfection

The study group participants were in full agreement with Wesley that perfection is not absolute in this life. They fully accepted Wesley's views and understanding that a Christian is not exempted from ignorance, nor mistakes, nor temptations, nor from infirmities. The group viewed the doctrine as a means toward spiritual development and spiritual maturity.

### Perfect Love

Perfect love, the group acknowledged, is the same as Christian Perfection. Agreeing without reservation with Wesley's "royal law" concept, the group participants acknowledged that we are to "love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourself" This is the greatest of the commandments. There was very little change in their responses between the pre- and post- questionnaire.

### Sin in Believers

Regarding sin in believers, the study group participants rejected Wesley's idea that believers could not commit sin at all. The primary difficulty was in their understanding in Wesley's distinction between voluntary and involuntary sin.

### Wesleyan Spirituality and the Interior Life

As was with the membership, the participants in the Wesley Study Group expressed intense interest in learning how to develop their interior life, and how to "go on to perfection".

### The Spiritual Life

One-hundred percent of the Wesley Study Group participants concluded that the spiritual life begins at the point of repentance and salvation. They also agreed with



Wesley that the development of the interior life is a life-long process. There was a slight change upward in the group's position between the pre- and post- questionnaire: from eighty-eight percent to one-hundred percent.

### Means of Grace

The group participants made their most significant changes in their acceptance of Wesley's use of the various means of grace toward spiritual development of the interior life. Seventeen percent made a full and complete turnaround in their acceptance of Wesley's means of grace concept. One-third made a general change in their acceptance.

### Prayer

The study group participants registered their greatest interest in the doctrine of Prayer. As the various Wesleyan doctrines unfolded the participants acknowledged their greatest needs were in the area of prayer, of feeling intensely in the presence of God. The responses were significant, a change in their desire for more understanding in the area of prayer from forty-eight percent to one-hundred percent.

### Scripture

Unlike the membership questionnaire/survey participants, the Wesley Study Group participants fully agreed that the Bible is, in fact, the inspired Word of God. The primary reason they saw for the use of the Scripture was for spiritual knowledge and growth. But after having concluded that the Bible is a Christian's rule of right and wrong, seventeen percent of the participants did not accept the Scriptures a valid means to God. Overall, the difference between the pre- and post- questionnaire response was thirty-three points (from fifty percent to eighty-three percent).

### The Lord's Supper

One-hundred percent of the Wesley Study Group participants concluded that

participation in the Lord's Supper is a vital and important part of their spiritual life and development. The Lord's Supper is a visible sign of the grace of God. One-third upgraded their response to this Wesleyan doctrine.

### Religious Fasting

For Wesley, religious fasting and self-denial were related in the overall development of the spiritual life. This was a part of Wesley's discipline toward spiritual growth.

In this understanding, Wesley deals with this part of the interior life in two ways: First, because our nature itself is corrupted and our will is naturally bent toward evil (cf. the doctrine of Original Sin), we are to deny ourselves, which for Wesley, meant refusing to follow our own will and nature and follow the will of God, instead.

Second, Wesley described the Christian's duty as "taking up our cross", and "bearing our cross". The first meant that we willingly embrace the will of God instead of embracing our own. The second meant that we endure what is laid upon us and we endure it with meekness and resignation.

To the first, the Wesley Study Group participants fully agreed both in the pre- and post- response. To the second, only eighty percent finally concluded that they agreed with Wesley.

### Christian Fellowship

The participants in the study group fully agree with Wesley of the importance of Christian fellowship as a means to spiritual enabling of believers.

### The Holy Spirit in Spiritual Formation

The participants of the Wesley Study Group viewed the work of the Holy Spirit as important and vital in the life of both believers and the church. There was a significant change from "simply" accepting Wesley's view of the Holy Spirit in spiritual development

of Christian believers, to "full" agreement.

### Wesleyan Spirituality and the Exterior Life

#### Holiness of Life

Very important and significant among the participants of the Wesley Study Group is the idea of holy living, or living as Christ lived while in the flesh. Expression of this life-style was essential to the group.

#### Social Holiness

Significant to living a holy life, Wesley associated good works, or social holiness. One-hundred percent of the participants in the study group concluded that living a holy life and performing of good works went hand in hand, and, in fact, both are required of those who are saved by faith.

#### Love of One's Neighbor

"Loving one's neighbor as one's self", is the outcome of holiness of heart and life. The participants in the study group concluded that this is the only way to live out one's Christian experience and to demonstrate the doctrine of Perfect Love.

### Summary

The overall responses from the participants in the Wesley Study Group is conclusive that the use of the curriculum in this dissertation is effective and produces genuine faith in members of the local church. The working out of these results has been a significant growth in the Pegram United Methodist Church. Both attendance and membership has increased over the past few years since this project was undertaken. More importantly, the level of loving-care for both members and non-members has been greatly enhanced. It is the writers opinion that much of that has come about as a direct result of the church's growth in Wesleyan spirituality.

## PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WESLEYAN DOCTRINE OF SINLESSON ONE

Please use the following symbols as your answer to the questions below:

A= Fully Agree; B= Generally Agree; C= No Opinion;

D= Disagree; E= Total Disagree.

\_\_\_1. The doctrine of Sin from a Wesleyan perspective is important because it is biblically correct.

\_\_\_2. The doctrine of Sin in Wesleyan theology is important to our understanding of why Christ's death on the Cross is so important.

\_\_\_3. John Wesley defined "Sin", as a "wilful transgression of the known law of God". To what extent do you agree with Wesley?

\_\_\_4. From the Scripture, Wesley points out that both Adam and Eve were created in the image of God., i.e., humankind was created in love, purity, happiness, and holy.

\_\_\_5. Wesley believed, based on Scripture, that sin entered Adam and Eve, our first parents, because they disobeyed the command of God not to eat of the forbidden fruit in the midst of the garden.

\_\_\_6. Wesleyan theology declares that Adam is the representative of the whole human race, thus Adam is responsible for the sins of humankind.

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PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WESLEYAN DOCTRINE OF SIN

LESSON TWO

Please use the following symbols as your answer to the questions below:

A= Fully Agree; B= Generally Agree; C= No Opinion;

D= Disagree; E= Total Disagree.

\_\_\_7. On the doctrine of Original Sin, Wesley concluded from Scripture that Adam's sin of disobedience caused within the heart and life of humankind a condition of "total depravity"

\_\_\_8. The Bible suggests (Romans 3:10,23), and Wesley believed that because of the sin of our first parents, all humankind is born into the world in sin (see, Psalms 51:5).

\_\_\_9. The sin of Adam, Wesley believed, meant that the image of God in which he was created, was thus destroyed or lost.

\_\_\_10. Likewise, Wesley believed and taught that when sin entered Adam he also lost the happiness and holiness he had once enjoyed. Life became corrupted in every sense of the word.

\_\_\_11. Wesley preached that before the Flood (in Noah's day), God looked upon the whole human race and saw them as unrighteous, wicked, and evil in the imagination of his heart and thoughts. Humankind is really evil.

\_\_\_12. Wesley taught that the Moral Law of God was given by God and intended to lead us from our state or condition of sinfulness to the righteousness of God.

\_\_\_13. The Moral Law of God differs from the Ceremonial Law of Moses in this way: the ceremonial law was the external law intended to guide the Hebrew people in their outward conduct and relationships. The moral law is the law engraven on the hearts of people and enables them to choose between good and evil.

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PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
WESLEYAN DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

LESSON THREE

Please use the following symbols as your answer to the questions below:

A= Fully Agree; B= Generally Agree; C= No Opinion;

D= Disagree; E= Total Disagree.

\_\_\_14. Wesley believed that true religion, i.e., the religion of Jesus Christ, is the religion of Christianity. True religion is made up of persons who have been saved or born again.

\_\_\_15. In Wesley's Sermons, the idea of being saved means that a person has had a "real" change in their hearts. Their relationship with God has also been changed. Wesley said that such a religion does not come about by religious creeds and ceremonies, as important as they are in public worship.

\_\_\_16. On Baptism, Wesley taught this sacrament to be very important but not essential to salvation. Baptism is a means of grace, i.e., it is a way of getting to God. Baptism is not a mark of discipleship, but an outward testimony of an inward grace.

\_\_\_17. Throughout many of Wesley's sermons, he speaks and emphasizes his concept of the "royal law" taken from Mark 12:29-31. Wesley's primary doctrines and views centered around this law, i.e., a law of love to both God and to one's neighbor. He stressed this commandment as being essential and necessary to our continual Christian faith and relationships and practices.

\_\_\_18. A key doctrine of Wesley was the doctrine of Repentance. Wesley's definition of repentance was, "know thyself to be a sinner", i.e., know the state or condition in which sin places a person. Repentance, he said, is absolutely necessary to salvation.

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PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WESLEYAN DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

LESSON FOUR

Please use the following symbols as your answer to the questions below:

A= Fully Agree; B= Generally Agree; C= No Opinion;

D= Disagree; E= Total Disagree.

\_\_\_19. A very important doctrine of Wesley was the doctrine of Justification. Wesley taught that justification is an act on God's part, to pardon us and to forgive us of our sins. Justification is essential and necessary to one's salvation. Justification is what God does for us.

\_\_\_20. A person is justified by God only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Justifying faith, Wesley taught, is faith of "sure trust and confidence in Jesus Christ who died for our sins, who loved us, and gave Himself for us." Without this kind of faith or trust, no one will ever be saved. Faith is essential and necessary to salvation.

\_\_\_21. Wesley taught that when a person is justified or saved, that persons sins, both past and present, is casted into the depths of the sea, and God will never remember them against us anymore. Therefore, Wesley taught, there should not be any sense of guilt for sins committed in the past. Neither, he said, should one fear the wrath of God.

\_\_\_22. The reason why Wesley taught that we are justified by "faith alone", is that the Scripture teaches that a sinner cannot of himself do any good or good works toward obtaining his own salvation. Believing in the Apostle's Creed, or having full knowledge of the Scripture will not avail for our sins.

\_\_\_23. Here again Wesley taught that it is only by the grace of God, i.e., the free, unmerited, love of God that a person is forgiven of his or her sins.

\_\_\_24. Religion, Wesley believed, is God's method of "healing a soul" which is diseased with sin. It is God's way of restoring human nature. The end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness. This, Wesley taught, has been made possible only by and through the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the Cross at Calvary.

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PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WESLEYAN DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

LESSON FIVE

Please use the following symbols as your answer to the questions below:

A= Fully Agree; B= Generally Agree; C= No Opinion;

D= Disagree; E= Total Disagree.

\_\_\_25. For Wesley, the New Birth (or the doctrine of Regeneration), differs from the doctrine of justification in this manner: Justification is what God does for us; whereas, the New Birth is what God does in us. Justification represents a "relative" change, i.e., the legal relationship we have with God; and the New Birth represents a "real" change. The New Birth, as well as Justification, is essential and necessary to our salvation.

\_\_\_26. To be "born again" implies an inward change. Wesley points out that before a natural child is born, he or she feels nothing, hears little, sees nothing, and has no relationship with the visible world. But when that child is born into the world, he or she now feels, sees, hears, and every sense is employed. So it is with the spiritual person. When he or she is born of God, born from above, that person experiences spiritually everything the natural child experienced when he or she is born.

\_\_\_27. According to Jesus, every person must be born again (see John, chapter 3). Wesley points out that because Adam sinned all humankind lost the life of God through spiritual death, every person is now separated from God.

\_\_\_28. Wesley believed and taught that a person can know in this life that their sins have been forgiven (justified), and that they have been adopted into the family of God as children of God (New Birth). The primary Scripture he used as his text on this theme is Romans 8:16.

\_\_\_29. In the second place, we have both the Holy Spirit to assure us of our salvation, and we also have the witness within ourselves. If my life with God is one of loving Him, delighting in Him, and rejoicing in Him, then I am, obviously, a child of God.

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PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
WESLEYAN DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION

LESSON SIX

Please use the following symbols as your answer to the questions below:

A= Fully Agree; B= Generally Agree; C= No Opinion;

D= Disagree; E= Total Disagree.

\_\_\_30. The terms, Sanctification and Holiness are synonymous, both meaning the same thing. Likewise, the term, Christian Perfection is another word for holiness. Wesley preached that Christians should "go on to perfection" (see, Hebrews 6:1), that they should grow to full maturity. Wesley believed that every person should daily develop in likeness to Christ.

\_\_\_31. Wesley used the analogy of the natural life to describe what he meant by perfection. Christian perfection comes in stages, he said. For example, the Bible speaks of "little children", "young men", and "grown up" people. Christians are only perfect, Wesley said, at these various stages of spiritual growth.

\_\_\_32. Wesley acknowledged that no Christian is absolutely perfect. No Christian is ever exempted from ignorance, nor free from mistakes, nor free from infirmities, nor from temptations. The Christian is subject to these problems so long as he or she lives. He did not believe in "sinless perfection."

\_\_\_33. Perfect Love is another Wesleyan term for Christian Perfection. In fact, when Wesley preached that Christian Perfection is possible in this life, he was teaching the doctrine of Perfect Love, i.e., the love which Jesus taught in the "royal law", the love for God with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength, and one's neighbor as himself. This is the kind of perfection called for in the Bible, and the kind which Wesley taught.

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PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
WESLEYAN DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION

LESSON SEVEN

Please use the following symbols as your answer to the questions below:

A= Fully Agree; B= Generally Agree; C= No Opinion;

D= Disagree; E= Total Disagree.

\_\_\_34. Wesley was quick to point out that even though a person is saved by grace, that person should all the more steer clear of committing sin. Wesley taught that salvation is not only a deliverance from the consequences of sin, but also from the power of sin. Therefore, a person born of God, does not thereafter commit habitual sin, because sin cannot reign (or dwell) in any person that believes in Christ.

\_\_\_35. Pressing the above point further, Wesley emphasized the fact that a person born of God, (as described above), cannot commit outward, actual, voluntary sins. Wesley based his doctrine on the understanding that as long as a person believes in God through Jesus Christ, and so long as that person thus loves God, and is endeavoring to keep in close communion with God; so long as that "seed" remaineth in him or her, -that loving, praying, thankful faith compels the born again person to refrain from whatsoever he or she knows to be sin in the sight of God.

\_\_\_36. Wesley viewed the new birth experience as a life which is "hid with Christ in God" Thus Christ is formed in the believer's heart. The saved person is thus born again of the Holy Spirit unto a new life.

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PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
WESLEYAN SPIRITUALITY AND THE INTERIOR LIFE

LESSON EIGHT

Please use the following symbols as your answer to the questions below:

A= Fully Agree; B= Generally Agree; C= No Opinion;

D= Disagree; E= Total Disagree.

\_\_\_37. Wesley's sermons emphasizes the spiritual life as beginning at the moment of repentance and salvation. While it is true that our "spiritual being" becomes apart of our total being the moment of our birth, yet our active spiritual life does not come alive until we acknowledge our sins and accept Christ's atoning work in our hearts, (referred to earlier as justification and the new birth (or regeneration)).

\_\_\_38. Although our salvation is a gift from God, and is based solely on his free and un-merited grace, yet Wesley saw in Scripture the possibility of a Christian regressing or backsliding. He referred to this as the "wilderness state" In such a regression, the person has experienced a loss of faith, love, joy, peace, and of power over sin.

\_\_\_39. Wesley identified the usual cause of this regression or backsliding as "sin". For Wesley, this included both the sins of commission and omission, i.e., sins actually committed, and sins of neglect, e.g., the neglect of prayer.

\_\_\_40. Wesley's belief regarding the Holy Spirit and the work of the Holy Spirit was to enable Christians to be possessors of the "fruits of the Spirit", i.e., love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Wesley ranked these as "ordinary gifts" of the Holy Spirit, over against outward manifestations, i.e., speaking in tongues, prophesying, and the working of miracles, which he termed, "extraordinary gifts". The ordinary gifts are essential to the Christian in his or her daily life. The extraordinary gifts are not essential to the Christian life.

\_\_\_41. One of the most important things the Holy Spirit does in the life of the Christian is to provide assurance that the professing Christian is indeed a child of God.

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PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WESLEYAN SPIRITUALITY AND THE INTERIOR LIFE

LESSON NINE

Please use the following symbols as your answer to the questions below:

A= Fully Agree; B= Generally Agree; C= No Opinion;

D= Disagree; E= Total Disagree.

\_\_\_42. Wesley taught that the use of the "means of grace" are vital and important to the Christian life, when used in the manner in which God intended them to be used. By means of grace, he meant, certain outward sings, words, or actions which have been ordained by God whereby He might convey His grace to us. Though these means are not the only means to God, yet they are of primary importance to us because they are the "ordinary" means chosen by God, and we ought to give the more earnest heed to the use of these means.

\_\_\_43. Prayer is one of those ordinary means, Wesley pointed out. Wesley believed that a person seeking after God should begin with prayer by "asking", "seeking", and "knocking", according to Jesus' words in Matthew 7:7,8. In the use of this means, in the manner prescribed by Jesus above, the Christian will always find God answering his or her prayer or request, with His gift of grace.

\_\_\_44. Wesley believed that the Scriptures, another ordinary means of grace, is important to the Christian because it is the inspired word of God.

\_\_\_45. Scripture is also important because it provides spiritual knowledge and growth.

\_\_\_46. For Wesley, the Lord's Supper is a very important part of the Christian life. He believed that any person who desires an increase of the grace of God should seekfor it at the Lord's table.

\_\_\_47. Following the words of our Lord (Luke 9:23), Wesley recognized religious fasting in the form of "self-denial" as vital and important. Because our nature is itself corrupt, and our will bent toward natural corruption, we are to deny ourselves and follow in the footsteps of our Lord.

\_\_\_48. Christian Conference (or fellowship), Wesley taught, was necessary to one's spiritual growth. It is the corporate togetherness that enjoys the strength that comes in unity.

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## PEGRAM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WESLEYAN SPIRITUALITY AND THE EXTERIOR LIFELESSON TEN

Please use the following symbols as your answer to the questions below:

A= Fully Agree; B= Generally Agree; C= No Opinion;

D= Disagree; E= Total Disagree.

\_\_\_49. Wesley's emphasis upon the holy life is important to the spiritual development of the Christian believer. In an earlier section, the emphasis was upon a holy heart, meaning a heart that renewed in the image of God, and a mind renewed after the mind of Christ. But the living out of that experience of holiness is what Wesley means by the phrase, holy life, or living as Christ lived while in the flesh. Wesley would not accept the argument from his critics that a person who is saved is exempted from living a holy life and doing good works.

\_\_\_50. The idea of holy living, and doing good works was, for Wesley, paramount. Wesley did not accept an isolated form of holiness. His was a social holiness, a holiness that gave evidence of a Christian loving his "neighbor as himself." Holy living provides both for the spiritual and physical well-being of one's neighbor. It is critical to Wesley's doctrine of Holiness of Heart and Life.

\_\_\_51. Regarding "good works", Wesley believed that even though all works are "good" of themselves, yet those works which are done by a person before he or she is saved, is not "completely, or fully good" The reason: because they were not done from a motivation of the love of God.

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