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John Wesley and A. B. Simpson on Sanctification

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts (Theology)

Approved By



Richard L. Shell

August, 1991

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Why is a person from the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church¹ interested in doing a comparative study on the doctrine of sanctification as taught by John Wesley and A. B. Simpson? The answer--I want to understand more fully what sanctification means to the Church.

This doctrine was new to me when I entered Toccoa Falls Bible College. I was not aware of the C&MA's teaching on the doctrine until I took an Alliance distinctives class which was recommended for those going into the denomination as licensed workers.

I knew from some of my theology classes that sanctification had to do with Christ's lordship in the Christian's life. Coming from a Southern Baptist background, I understood this to be part of regeneration. When a person becomes a Christian, Jesus is both his Lord and Savior. What I was to learn in the Alliance distinctives class was that sanctification was a second work of grace experienced after a Christian's conversion. This happens when the person realizes that Christ needs to

be not only their Savior but Sanctifier. The person fully surrenders himself or herself to Christ, and He becomes the Lord of his or her life.

What bothered me was the teaching I had received from the Southern Baptist churches I had attended as a child. I was led to understand that you could not be a Christian unless Jesus was both your Lord and Savior. Now, I found out, for the first time since I had joined the C&MA denomination, that justification and sanctification are two separate, but related experiences in God's plan of salvation. A person can not be sanctified until he has been justified. Sanctification proceeds from justification. I questioned whether this was biblical. How can you be a Christian and Christ not be your Lord? What was so significant about this doctrine? Why was it important for the Church to understand this distinction between justification and sanctification?

One of our required texts for this course was Dr. Simpon's book Wholly Sanctified. In this book, Dr. A. B. Simpson explains the necessity for the believer to surrender his or her whole being--spirit, soul, and body--to God. It is only the sanctified believer who will be an effective servant for Christ.

I agreed that Christ must be Lord of a Christian's life. What I disagreed with was that sanctification came subsequent to one's conversion. This disagreement was mostly due to my own conversion experience. When I was 26

years old, I gave my life to Christ. I had made a profession of faith when I was ten, but it did not seem to have a real impact on my life. I still wanted to live my life my way. At the age of 26, I realized that my life was a mess. How could I be a Christian and live the life I had lived? I was reading a book that pointed out that one's will had to be surrendered to Christ if he or she was to become a Christian. A voice spoke to me declaring that I had never been willing to do this. This voice encouraged me to do this now, which I did. I was at this point that my life was completely turned around. I had an assurance that I was a Christian. I had a desire to serve God with all my heart. I was even willing to go into the ministry. I considered this my regeneration. God had so miraculously changed my life. How could their be more?

I shared this with my professor, and he responded by saying that he did not want to take away my salvation experience, but he said I had used language associated with sanctification to explain this conversion experience. He also explained that sanctification was an issue in the early Church. He pointed out that the Epistles had been addressed to church and not to the unregenerated.

His comments and Simpson's book caused me to search the Scriptures, and see if this were biblical. The more I read and prayed, the more light was given to me. I was still uneasy with sanctification occuring subsequent to regeneration instead of concurrently with it, but I was

willing to compromise on this point by saying that this might be the norm. Still I felt that some people could experience both regeneration and sanctification at the same time.

I seemed to have the doctrine of sanctification worked out until I came to Asbury Theological seminary. I was taking the class "Characteristics of a Methodist." In this class, we were assigned to read John Wesley's A Plain Account of Christian Perfection. Now I was to find out that a sanctified Christian was "perfect" and free from sin. This was contrary to my reformed background. How could a sanctified Christian not commit sin? This statement was only true of Christ. No Christian could have this victory.

It was at this point that I started wondering who was right about sanctification. What was Wesley teaching? What was Simpson declaring? How different were their teachings? What could I learn from these two men on the nature of sanctification? This is what drew me to doing a comparison of Wesley's and Simpson's teaching on sanctification.

Statement of the Problem

The controversy that I experienced over the issue of sanctification led me to think there may be others in the same position I found myself. Therefore, it is the purpose of this thesis to (1) trace historical events that led up

to John Wesley's and A. B. Simpson's experience of regeneration and sanctification; (2) to explain their teachings on sanctification; (3) to compare their teachings to each other; (4) and then determine the implications of this study for the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church.

Both men saw sanctification as a necessary doctrine and lifestyle. Only sanctified Christians could live out effective lives as God's servants. Is it possible that the problems our denomination faces today are the results of not emphasising this doctrine more by proper teaching and preaching from both the headquarters and local church level?

The General Method of Procedure

The general method of procedure has been to examine those primary sources of Wesley and Simpson which deal with their understanding and teaching of sanctification. The two major primary sources used were John Wesley's A Plain Account of Christian Perfection and A. B. Simpson's Wholly Sanctified. These were also supplemented with other books, articles, letters, and sermons that dealt with the subject of sanctification.

Besides the use of primary sources, several good secondary sources were consulted. The works of W. E. Sangster, George A. Turner, Frank Whaling, John G. Merrit, D. Marselle Moore, John Lawson, William Cannon, Carl F.

Eltzholtz, Albert C. Outler, John Leland Peters, Timothy L. Smith, and Harald Lindstrom were examined with regard to Wesley and his teaching on sanctification. With regard to Simpson's teaching on sanctification, the works of Gerald McGraw, A. E. Thompson, A. W. Tozer, Ernest Gerald Wilson, Robert L. Niklaus, John S. Sawin, and Samuel J. Stoesz were consulted.

Definitions

The following definitions of sanctification and other related terms will assist us in understanding the subject.

Sanctification- "To make holy. The Hebrew (qds) and Greek (hagias-) roots represented in the AV (Authorized Version) by 'sanctify, holy, hallow,' and varied in RSV (Revised Standard Version) by 'consecrate, dedicate,' are applied to any person place, occasion, or object 'set apart' from common, secular use as devoted to some divine power."²

Perfection- "It is the habitual disposition of soul, which in the sacred writings is termed holiness, and which directly implies the being cleansed from sin, from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and by consequence, the being endued with those virtues which were in Christ."³

Simpson's definition of sanctification- "It is the deeper work which follows justification, and deals directly

with the inherent state of the heart with a view to its complete deliverance from the domination and power of sin."4

Order of Treatment

This thesis will begin by examining John Wesley's conversion and sanctification experiences, and studying his teaching on sanctification in light of these experiences. We will then proceed to do the same with A. B. Simpson. A comparison of their teachings will **then** be conducted with the implications of this comparison **being** directed to the C&MA.

NOTES

¹ The Christian and Missionary Alliance will be abbreviated C&MA.

² Walter A. Elwell, ed., The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 969.

³ Frank Whaling, ed., John and Charles Wesley: Selected Prayers, Hymns, Journal Notes, Sermons, Letters and Treatises (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 300.

⁴ Gerald E. McGraw, The Doctrine of Sanctification in the Published Writings of Albert Benjamin Simpson, Ph.D. Diss., New York Univ., 1986 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1987), p. 278. Dr. McGraw quotes this from Simpson's book, The Fullness of Jesus, p. 132.

CHAPTER 2

JOHN WESLEY AND CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

In order to better understand John Wesley's teaching on Christian perfection, we need to be aware of some basic biographical facts regarding his life and his experience of Christian perfection before looking at his teachings on the doctrine. John and Charles Wesley were the founders of the Methodist movement. In the Forward to John and Charles Wesley: Selected Prayers, Hymns, Journal Notes, Sermons, Letters and Treatises, Frank Whaling, the editor, declares that the Wesley brothers "were two of the greatest Christians of the modern (or any other) age of the church."¹ Both of these men had a profound impact on the Christian community, especially in the area of the "life in the spirit." Their impact is still felt today due to the large number of extant publications (sermons, hymns, letters, journals, etc.).

John Wesley was born into the home of Samuel and Susanna Wesley at Epworth on June 17, 1703. John was the fifteenth child and the second surviving son of Samuel and Susanna.² John's mother had a significant impact upon his

educational and spiritual life. Both Samuel and Susanna Wesley were strong-willed members of the Church of England even though John's maternal grandparents were dissenters.³

When Wesley was a young boy of either six or seven years of age, he was saved from a fire in the rectory at Epworth in such a miraculous way that his mother believed that God's hand was on John in a special way. Whaling, in his introduction, declares that Susanna

spared no effort to aid his spiritual development. By her weekly private conferences, by her letters, by her advocacy of spiritual masters such as Pascal, by her religious instruction in the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments, by her own personal example, she fueled the mind and imagination of her son.⁴

George A. Turner states, "The methodical precision and industry of Susannah [sic] with her many children helps explain the diligence with which the two brothers (John and Charles) later pushed their quest for perfection."⁵ Most Wesleyan scholars acknowledge the profound impact Susanna had on John.

Not desiring to ignore Samuel Wesley's influence on his son's spiritual development, Whaling interjects that Wesley learned from his father

the value of the sacraments, to take seriously the Protestant and Roman Catholic mystics, to distrust Calvinistic particularism, to be assiduous in the work of the ministry, to value the fellowship to be found through the church of England Societies, and, not least, to cherish inward religion.⁶

Samuel's dying words to his son were "the inward witness,

son, the inward witness, . . . that is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity."⁷

Wesley attended Charterhouse school from 1713-1719. While he was there, he became known as "a scholar and learning Hebrew."⁸ Dr. Harper points out that while this stage of his life is of "lesser significance" in comparison to other periods in his life, he continued to read his Bible and pray daily.⁹

From Charterhouse school Wesley enrolled at Christ Church College, Oxford. During this time the college was the largest and most "conspicuous" of the schools at Oxford with a library that was the envy of the other colleges.¹⁰ Wesley received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1724. The next year he was ordained as a "priest in Christ Church Cathedral."¹¹ In 1726 Wesley was awarded a Fellowship to Lincoln College which he filled until 1735. It was during this time that John (and Charles) Wesley became involved with the Holy Club.

The Oxford years began the development of what was to become Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection. In 1725 Wesley determined to dedicate his life to God. This came after his reading of Jeremy Taylor's Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying and Thomas a Kempis's Imitation of Christ.¹² In his book A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Wesley writes:

In the year 1725, being in the twenty-third year of my age, I met with Bishop Taylor's Rule and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying. In reading

several parts of this book, I was exceedingly affected, that part in particular which relates to purity of intention. Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts, and words, and actions, being thoroughly convinced, there was no medium; but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself, that is, in effect, to the devil.¹³

Wesley "was certain of his goal (personal holiness) but uncertain of the path."¹⁴

Near the end of 1725, Wesley started putting Taylor's theory into practice. His daily rules were condensed from Taylor. He began and ended each day with prayer. In each action, he reflected on his end. Every action taken was to begin in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Plus every important work was to be started in prayer.¹⁵ Added to this were his rules "for weekly self-examination."¹⁶ This gives further proof to Wesley's inverted order of justification and sanctification. A person had to live a holy life in order that he or she may be justified. The Catholic idea of faith and works had a stronger impact on Wesley than that of the Reformation belief in faith alone.¹⁷

Part of Wesley's uncertainty was to due to the teachings he received from his family and the Church of England with regard to justification. In Wesley's day the Church of England had once again switched the order of justification and sanctification. A person gained his or her justification through works of righteousness. Cannon

contends:

Here . . . within the teachings of Samuel and Susannah Wesley, we find reproduced the doctrine of justification which was predominant in the Church of England on the eve of the eighteenth century. Faith is no longer represented as the free gift of God implanted in the human soul. Rather, it is itself a human act and takes its place among works of moral endeavor. If man is said to be justified by faith and works, it must be understood that the two terms are essentially the same.¹⁴

Turner also supports this view that Wesley had sought sanctification before justification. He comes to this conclusion on the basis of Wesley journal entry for May 24, 1738. The entry has to do with Wesley's father pressing him into "holy orders" when he was twenty-two. He had just read a Kempis' book which caused him to see that "religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words or action." He goes on to write that he "began to aim at, pray for, inward holiness. So that now, 'doing so much, and living so good a life,' I doubted not but that I was a good Christian."¹⁵

This historical understanding of the Church's stance on justification in Wesley's day aids us in seeing the difficulty that faced Wesley in choosing his path of complete dedication to the Lord. It would take Wesley almost thirteen years to locate the proper route. His spiritual journey, with the aid of the "Holy Club", would take him through the writings of Richard Lucas--An Inquiry After Happiness, William Law--Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, Henry Scougal--The Life of God In The Soul

of Man, Lorenzo Scupoli--Spiritual Combat, Michael de Molinos and Madame Guyon, and those of the "Eastern fathers of the early church--Macarius the Egyptian, Clement of Alexandria, Ephraem Syrus,¹⁶ as well as Gregory of Nyssa.¹⁷ But this pilgrimage would not be confined to a literary ascent. Wesley would be involved in a physical journey that would include his public ministry at Oxford, as well as his missionary quest to America to save not only the souls of the Indians, but his own soul as well.

In a letter written to Rev. **John Burton** on October 10, 1735, Wesley admits that up to this point he has been silent to declare the reasons for his "embarking to Georgia." He goes on to write that he will now acknowledge his motives for this missionary adventure, and thus announces:

My chief motive, to which all the rest are subordinate, is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathens. They have no comments to construe away the text, no vain philosophy to corrupt it, no **luxurious, sensual, covetous, ambitious expounders** to soften its unpleasing truths, to reconcile earthly-mindedness and faith, the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world. . . . They are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God. **And consequently they shall know of every doctrine I preach, whether it be of God. From these, therefore, I hope to learn the purity of that faith which was once delivered to the saints, the genuine sense and full extent of those laws which none can understand who mind earthly things.**²¹

Wesley continues his letter by claiming that by going to ministry among the Indians he will be delivered from the

temptations in England that have prevented him from having a "right faith" that will open the door for a "right practice." This environment in which the Indians live will also enable Wesley to mortify the "lust of the flesh", as well as his desire "of sensual pleasures." Under these "sensual pleasures" he groups foods and drink that one seeks for the sake of pleasure along with the passions that are inflamed by one's attraction to the opposite sex. These Indian women will not tempt him since they are "almost of a different species from" him. Being delivered from this temptation his thoughts will be so purified as to enable him to be a candidate "for that state wherein they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."²² Wesley also believes that by going to America and working among the "heathen" he will become faithful to God "in the use of his speech," his money, and loving his neighbors as himself. But he acknowledges that he will not be that messenger to the Indians until God has converted him. Therefore he must go to America if he desires to save his soul. And he firmly believes that it is God's choice for him to go to America if he is to "attain any degree of Christian perfection."²³

This letter rings of asceticism. He is hoping to achieve a state of "inward holiness" by going to a country and people which promised to be free of the obstacles that plagued his spiritual pilgrimage. Turner aptly writes, "Thus in the New World this Anglican monk sought a place

removed from the 'lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life' where he might be perfected in holiness.²⁴

Wesley was to learn that neither America nor the Indians were the key to his attainment of Christian perfection. His missionary work in America would last less than two years before he was forced to return to England. But his trip to America was not a complete failure, because it was on this trip to America that he came in contact with German passengers that exceeded even his disciplined life. When faced with the same crisis as Wesley, a severe storm and possible death, these Moravian men and women had what Wesley had been seeking for over ten years, an assurance of their faith and the possession of "perfect love" which "casts out fear," even the fear of death. It was through his contact with these Moravians that Wesley began to learn the German language which opened the door for him to read and translate thirty-three German pietest hymns.²⁵

In Wesley's journal, we find a record of his meeting with August Spangenberg, a Moravian pastor who was to later replace Nikolaus Zinzendorf as leader of the Moravians, on February 7, 1736. Wesley reports:

I soon found what spirit he was of, and asked his advice with regard to my own conduct. He said, 'My brother, I must first ask you one of two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?' I was surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and asked, 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' I paused, and said, 'I know he is the

Saviour [sic] of the world.' 'True', replied he, 'but do you know he has saved you?' I answered, 'I hope he has died to save me.' He only added, 'Do you know yourself?' I said, 'I do.' But I fear they were vain words.²⁶

Upon Wesley's return to England, he came in contact with Peter Bohler. It was through Bohler that he learned more about "saving faith." It was under Bohler's influence that Wesley was persuaded that the scriptural way of salvation was by faith alone in Jesus Christ. Wesley had had a "sort of faith," but he did not have the "faith of a son." This is usually referred to as his "intellectual conversion," which involved a conversion of his thinking on the subject of justification. This intellectual conversion was later followed by his "spiritual conversion" at Aldersgate on May 24, 1738.²⁷

The question that now arises is what happened to Wesley on May 24, 1738? Was this the date of his conversion? If so what happened to Wesley in 1725 when he "instantly resolved to dedicate all his life to God?" Most scholars of Wesley declare that his Aldersgate experience was a conversion experience. John Lawson declares that justification by faith was not a new doctrine for Wesley—but rather "faith alone." Lawson explains "the element which was revolutionary was the notion that one could venture outside the decent and disciplined confines of the Church with this gospel."²⁸ When Bohler challenged Wesley to "Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it you will preach faith," he did so by offering

this "new doctrine" to a prisoner sentenced to death. Offering salvation to this prisoner went against Wesley's theological nature, because up until this occasion he had been "'a zealous asserter of the impossibility of death bed confessions.' What was coming new to Wesley was an engagement of the heart, more than a conviction of the theological mind."²⁹

Merritt asserts that between 1725 and 1738 Wesley reversed the order of salvation by placing sanctification before justification. Albert C. Outler is Merritt's source for this statement. Outler declares that Wesley was constantly misplacing "holiness" before justification, and in 1738 Wesley shifted this order. Merritt views 1738 as Wesley's "evangelical conversion."³⁰

Merritt credits the Moravians with this "profound influence." He maintains:

Their emphasis on faith as a personal embracing of the provisions of Christ for justification rather simply being mental assent to the truths of redemption eventually brought Wesley to the inward assurance of his personal salvation, if not the reception of salvation itself, at the meeting on Aldersgate Street. . . . Apparently, the great reversal in Wesley's structuring of his Ordo Salutis is rooted in his assurance of a present, personal salvation based on faith and trust in "Christ alone."³¹

Dr. Cannon views May 24, 1734 as the date of Wesley's conversion. To justify this he sets out to define what he means by "conversion." He writes:

"If conversion be defined in the sense in which Wesley understood and defined it--God's own act

in which a man is turned away from his former self, made to pass from darkness into light, delivered from the power of Satan unto God, made over in mind and and spirit--then the experience at Aldersgate on May 24, 1738, must stand without dispute as the date of Wesley's conversion.³²

It was at Aldersgate that Wesley learned the true meaning of justification by faith alone.³³ Cannon earlier wrote that from June 24, 1720, to May 24, 1738, Wesley's religious motives were based entirely on his own self-interests. "Self-love was at the very center of his life." His acts of charity were important only to the point that they "contributed to his own salvation."³⁴

Cannon goes on to claim that prior to Aldersgate Wesley had no real conception of the "free gift of God's grace through faith." For Wesley faith was an act of man in response to God's revelation. Faith and good works stood together with faith itself being a work, since man believes something he is commanded to do.³⁵

Carl F. Eltzholtz considers May 24, 1738 as Wesley's experience of entire sanctification, or Christian perfection. He believes that 1725 was the year that Wesley was converted and his desire to live a life "wholly devoted" to God took him thirteen years to achieve. He can not believe anyone could have done the works Wesley did if he had not been a Christian. Eltzholtz thinks that Wesley's claims of not being a Christian were due to his stringent judgment of his own spiritual life. Based on entries made in Wesley's journal, he holds that "it is safe

to say that he (Wesley), from the time of his ordination in 1725, was aiming at 'inward holiness,' 'the image of God,' 'purity of intention," and a full dedication of all his life to God."³⁶ When Wesley returned from America, he was "hungering and thirsting after a pure heart filled with pure love alone."³⁷ Eltzholtz cites as further proof Wesley's meeting with Arvid Gradin in August of 1738 while he was visiting in Germany. It was during this meeting with Gradin that Wesley asked for a definition of "the full assurance of faith." When Gradin gave Wesley the definition, Wesley claimed this was what he had been "praying for. . . and expecting for several years." And what was it that Wesley and been praying and waiting for during these "several years?" Eltzholtz declares that it was Christian perfection. Even though Gradin called this experience the "full assurance of faith," Wesley called it Christian perfection.³⁸

Eltzholtz goes on to write that since 1725, Wesley had been specifically "praying and groaning" for (1) the Holy Spirit's witness and (2) "'inward holiness,' 'the image of God,' a heart cleansed from inward sin and 'Christian perfection.'"³⁹ Therefore on May 24, 1738 what Wesley really received at Aldersgate, according to Eltzholtz, was the Spirit's witness to his adoption as a son of God, cleansing from inward sin, and being made perfect in love.⁴⁰

Eltzholtz goes on to defend his theory of Wesley's

Aldersgate experience by asking why Wesley still appeared to have an unsettled mind with regard to the witness of the Holy Spirit and his personal salvation. Mr. Eltzholtz blames this state of Wesley on "many conflicting influences" which were bombarding Wesley during this time of his life. And it was the Moravian's "unscriptural" doctrine on justification and sanctification that was partly to blame for Wesley's "unsettled mind." The chief problem Wesley had with the Moravians was their teaching that if anyone had any doubt or **fear**, then this person did not have any faith. When Wesley disagreed with this teaching and divorced himself from the Moravian society in London at Fetterlane in 1740, Eltzholtz contends that Wesley had learned to distinguish between justification and sanctification. A person could be justified and his or her sins forgiven, and yet not be wholly sanctified.⁴¹ He goes on to say that Wesley's career proves that he enjoyed as well as preached entire sanctification from 1739 till his death.⁴²

Even though Eltzholtz represents a good case for his theory of May 24, 1738, I have to come down upon the side of those who hold that Aldersgate ~~was~~ Wesley's conversion experience. I am aware of those ~~who~~ would take his sermon "On Faith"⁴³ in which Wesley distinguishes between the "faith of a servant" and the "faith of a son," and say that in 1725 Wesley had the "faith of a servant," but in 1738 he received the "faith of a son." So that Aldersgate ~~becomes~~

Wesley's second blessing or experience of Christian perfection. By declaring this, one is able to point to Wesley's own experience of Christian perfection which is of great importance since Wesley never explicitly refers to it in his writings. This sermon was dated April 9, 1788 and shows Wesley's more mature thinking on faith as opposed to his harsher judgments against "lower degrees of faith."⁴⁴ And I think it reflects the conclusions Wesley came to when he, as Eltzholtz points out, distinguished justification from sanctification, and thus came to the conclusion that he could not accept the Moravians teaching on faith which declared any doubt or fear constituted no faith. However, it was through Wesley's encounter with the Moravians on HMS Simmonds and Mr. Spangenberg in America that he came to see that he had no real assurance of his salvation. And this I feel is key. Remember that it was indicated above by Cannon, Merrit, Oulter and Lawson, that Wesley had inverted the order of salvation by placing sanctification before justification. This caused Wesley to strive to be holy so that he would be accepted by God. This inversion of his Ordo Salutis was due to his family's teachings and the teachings of the Church of England. Even the writings of Taylor, a Kempis, and Law, as well as other mythical writers had caused him to maintain this inverted order. It was not until his encounter with the Moravians in America and London that he was able to understand that salvation comes by faith alone "in Christ."

I think it is true that the Moravian's imbalanced teaching and preaching on faith had aided in confusing and depressing Wesley after Aldersgate, but as Merrit contends it was the Moravians that hepled Wesley make this change which led him to an "inward assurance of his personal salvation, if not the reception of salvation itself."⁴⁵

Wesley attests to this personally in his journal entry for May 24, 1738. Here Wesley writes a brief history of his spiritual life up to experience at Aldersgate. He desires to explain what happened to him in the context of his own life pilgrimage. Here Wesley declares that he was depending on his own righteousness and good works for assurance. He writes, "In this refined way of trusting to my own works and my own righteousness (so zealously inculcated by the mystic writers), I dragged on heavily, finding no comfort or help therein."⁴⁶ This continued till Wesley met the Moravians who attempted "to show me a more excellent way." But he declares he would not listen, because he was "too learned and too wise." He continued "preaching, and following after, and trusting in that righteousness whereby no flesh can be justified." His time in Georgia was fruitless because of his ignorance "of the righteousness of Christ, which by a living faith in him bringeth salvation 'to every one that believeth,' I sought to establish my own righteousness, and so laboured [sic] in the fire all my days."⁴⁷ When Wesley returned to England in 1738, he was still depending on his own righteousness.

Wesley had a feeling of impending death which made him extremely uneasy. He attributes this uneasiness to "unbelief." He confides, "But still I fixed not this faith on its right object: I meant only faith in God, not faith in or through Christ. Again, I knew not that I was wholly void of this faith, but only thought I had not enough of it."⁴⁸ When one reads all of Wesley's entry for May 24, 1738, the oft quoted words from this entry, "About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangley warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation,"⁴⁹ indicates a conversion experience for Wesley. His faith was rightly placed in Christ, "without which no man shall see the Father." Justification was based on the righteousness of Christ, not on Wesley's good works or his own personal righteousness.

Since Aldersgate is observed as Wesley's conversion experience, the next question that naturally arises is when did he personally experience Christian perfection or entire sanctification? W. E. Sangster writes, "Whatever Wesley gained on the that memorable day (May 24, 1738), it has never been argued--that he then received his first impetus to Christian Perfection." He goes on to proclaim, based on Wesley's Plain Account, "Clearly, therefore, his longings after holiness and his resolute aim to attain it antedate his evangelical conversion by at least thirteen

years."⁵⁰ As was already mentioned above Wesley never explicitly details when he himself experienced this "second blessing." John Leland Peters deals with this avoidance of Wesley to give public testimony to his experience of Christian perfection in the appendix of his book Christian Perfection and American Methodism.⁵⁰ He acknowledges that it may be argued that the reason Wesley is silent is because he had not experienced it himself.⁵¹ But Peters argues:

"It is well-nigh impossible to read the public and private record of Wesley's life and thoughts without concluding that he had some inward knowledge of the doctrine he strenuously espoused during his mature ministerial career. . . . Surely this sort of counsel comes not from mere hearsay evidence. Wesley undoubtedly knew experientially what in some measure was this perfect love the preaching of which he so earnestly urged."⁵³

But why does he remain silent on the subject? It is possible that Peters' hypothesis is correct. He believes that Wesley knew he was the "cynosure of every critical eye." Wesley's domestic problems were exaggerated and made public knowledge. His unique teachings had been distorted and ridiculed. Any kind of public profession on Wesley's part would be elucidated in the most extreme manner, while every personal deficiency would be overstated in rebuttal. Thus Wesley remained silent. "The portrait he had painted lay, he felt, still beyond him. He would neither change it nor claim it."⁵⁴

Although Wesley does not specifically declare that he

experienced Christian perfection, I think that we must assume, as Peters, that he did. Timothy L. Smith in his paper, "John Wesley and the Second Blessing,"⁵⁵ states that Wesley began teaching on a "second and instantaneous experience that was essential to that process (gradual sanctification)." It was during this experience that a Christian was "filled with the Holy Spirit," cleansed of all "inbred sin," and then perfected in love.⁵⁶

Why was Wesley disappointed with "his small measure of joy" he received at Aldersgate, so much so that he questioned whether the Spirit had really given witness to his spirit of regeneration? Smith believes Wesley's disappointment and doubt of his regeneration was due to his own understanding of Scripture teaching only one "instantaneous experience of saving grace." Therefore, everything that the Bible promised concerning "righteousness, peace, and joy which were to flow from the presence and work of the Holy Spirit" should have come at Aldersgate.⁵⁷ Wesley was to later learn from the Moravians that the Spirit's witness to a believer's regeneration would not occur until sometime after a person was forgiven and enabled to have victory over sin. Based on John's letter to his brother Samuel dated October 30, 1738, Smith points out that Wesley compared "that witness" with the "seal of the Spirit," "the love of God shed abroad in the my heart," and "joy in the Holy Ghost." Couple this discovery in 1738 with Wesley's study of the Scriptures, in the spring and

summer of 1739 and his investigating the declarations of those who claimed to have been "instantaneously transformed" by the Spirit from those with "faith of a servant" to those with "the faith of a child of God," and we see Wesley's mind being opened to the the possibility of a second "instanteous experience" which involved more "hallowing grace." Smith adds that Wesley also began to see that he been discouraged by his own Aldersgate experience because he expected too much. This revelation came as he worked with those converts who had claimed to have experienced this second work of grace, but were still "unsteady and unestablished."⁵⁸ Smith goes on to declare that Wesley, in the fall of 1739, became convinced that Scripture taught that this fullness of joy and peace would come during a second work of grace. And this second experience would bring "purity of heart" and "perfect love." as well.⁵⁹ Based on this reasons, I think it is safe to assume that Wesley may have experienced this "second blessing" sometime between the fall of 1739 and 1740 when he published his second volume of Hymns and Scared Poems.⁶⁰

WESLEY'S TEACHING ON CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

The remainder of this chapter will focus on John Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection or Entire Sanctification. What did Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection advocate that made it so controversial in his

era as well as our own age? I think most of it has to do with misunderstanding, or, in some cases, complete ignorance of what he taught on Christian Perfection. In the beginning of his book, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection⁶¹, Wesley pens, "What I purpose in the following papers is to give a plain and distinct account of the steps by which I was led, during a course of many years, to embrace the doctrine of Christian Perfection."⁶² This work is polemical in nature. Wesley sets out to show that what he has believed and taught, with regard to Christian perfection, has not changed in over forty years (1725-1765). Wesley believes his doctrine to be scriptural, and verified by Christian experience. This book is a compilation of his sermons, tracts, treatises, and the records of the annual conference meetings which deal with Christian perfection. It is for this reason, as stated in the Introduction, that I shall use this book as a primary source to promulgate Wesley's teaching on his doctrine of Christian Perfection.

Wesley writes that in 1729 he began to read the Bible as "the one, and only standard of truth, and the only model of pure religion."⁶³ Wesley realized the necessity of having the "mind the mind which was in Christ," and "walking as Christ walked."

On January 1, 1733, Wesley preached his sermon "The Circumcision of the Heart" at St. Mary's Church. Although he did not use the term Christian Perfection, he declares

what he means by perfection. He sets forth,

"It is that habitual disposition of soul, which in the sacred writings is termed holiness, and which directly implies the being cleansed from sin, from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and by consequence, the being endued with those virtues which were in Christ Jesus; the being so renewed in the image of our mind as to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect."⁶⁴

He continues by professing, "Love is the fulfill-
ing of the law, the end of the command-
ment. It is not only the first and great command, but all the commandments in one."⁶⁵ Wesley points out that he concluded this sermon by proclaiming, "Here is the sum of the perfect law, the circumcision of the Heart. Let the spirit return to God that gave it, with the whole train of its affections."⁶⁶ This sermon begins Wesley's first published teaching on sanctification. We should also observe his implication that love is the essence of Christian perfection.

After Wesley's conversation with Dr. Gibson, then bishop of London, he decides to take Gibson's advice, and explain what he means when he uses the term Perfection.⁶⁷ He begins by declaring what he does not mean when he states that Christians are perfect. First, perfected Christians, are not perfect in knowledge. Neither is this person free from ignorance, nor from mistakes. God is the only one who falls into this category. He does not teach that a Christian who is "perfect" is infallible. He will and does make errors in judgment. Nor is this Christian free from

"infirmities" or illnesses. A perfected Christian will still have "a thousand nameless defects, either in conversation or in behavior." A Christian who has become perfect will not be freed from temptation. Just as Satan tried to tempt Christ, he will try to tempt the mature Christian. And finally he declares that there is no perfection of degrees--it is always in continual increase.⁶⁸

If this is the sense in which Christians are not perfected, then in what sense are they perfected. Adult, or mature Christians are perfected in the sense that they do not commit sin (Wesley states this is true even of "babes in Christ"). It is at this point that one must understand Wesley's definition of sin. Wesley defines sin in its "proper sense" and its "improper sense." In its proper sense, sin is a "voluntary transgression of a known law," while in its improper sense, it is "an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown."⁶⁹ Therefore, when Wesley contends that a Christian will not commit sin, he is referring to sin in the "proper sense." A perfected Christian "is still liable to these involuntary transgressions" due to ignorance and mistakes."⁷⁰

Not only is a perfected Christian one who does not commit sin, but this person is freed from self-will, desiring only God's will, from evil thoughts and tempers, from wanderings in prayer, and from fear and doubt of his or her present state.^{70a}

With regard to when one receives this "second blessing," Wesley insists that entire sanctification is subsequent to a person's justification. From the experience of Christian living, Wesley knew of no one who experienced justification and entire sanctification at the same time. It is an instantaneous (as well as gradual) work of God in the Christian's life.⁷¹ "It is supposed that instant may be now, that we need not stay another moment; that now, the very now, is the accepted time! Now is the day of this full salva-
tion?"⁷² What enables a person to receive this work of God? Faith. Mere Faith. And it is only hindered by unbelief.

After the annual conference of 1759, Wesley discerned that it was necessary to review this doctrine again. This reflection gave birth to the tract Thoughts on Christian Perfection. He again reiterated what he did and did not mean by the use of the term Christian Perfection. He poses the question, "What is Christian Perfection?" His answer, "The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love."⁷³ He goes on to reaffirm that "this perfection excludes all infirmities, ignorance and mistake." He declares that there is no contradiction between a person being perfect and yet not freed from mistakes or errors. A person can be

filled "with pure love" and still capable of mistakes. The perfected Christian will not be freed from mistakes until he or she puts on immortality. The sanctified Christian will still be liable to wrong thinking based on ignorance. Thus Wesley's statement, "A mistake in judgment may possibly occasion a mistake in practice." But when love motivates every word or deed, such a mistake is not properly a sin. Yet, this mistake cannot withstand the austerity of God's justice, and therefore, requires the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wesley is more explicit in declaring that proper and improper sins require the atonement of Christ.⁷⁴

This tract continues by asking whether those who live without sin still need Christ as their mediator. Wesley insists that these perfected Christians, above all others, feel their need for Christ to enable them to live and walk in the Spirit. "For Christ does not give life to the soul separate from, but in and with himself." The branch must abide in the vine, or become fruitless. The grace each Christian receives comes from Christ. He paid the price. And this grace comes not only from Christ, but in Him. All of the blessing he gives to us, whether they are temporal, spiritual or eternal come from Christ's intercessory work for the believer even if he or she is perfected in love. The best Christian is still in need of Christ's atoning blood to cover his or her omissions, shortcomings, mistakes in judgment and practice, as well as

his or her various kinds of defects.⁷⁵

In this tract, Wesley goes on to announce that the best way to avoid placing too much or too little emphasis on emphasis on perfection is by adhering to the Bible's instruction on it. We should set perfection just as high as it does. And Wesley contends that the Bible teaches that Christian Perfection is nothing higher or lower than: "The pure love of God and man, the loving God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbor as ourselves. It is love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers, words, and actions."⁷⁶ Again Wesley points to love being the essence of Christian Perfection, or entire sanctification.

Wesley warns against there being any infallible proof by which to judge an individual who claims to have been perfected. But his or her life should should reflect the claim. Wesley continues by warning that outward judgments made on our part are not always true. In fact we may have an idea of what a perfect Christian is which no one can attain. This idea may go beyond Scripture's teaching on Christian Perfection. Again Wesley decrees that "Scripture perfection is pure love filling the heart and governing all the words and actions." If a person's idea of Christian Perfection includes more or less it is unbiblical, and you will never have a biblically-perfect Christian measure up to it.⁷⁷

The next question is how can a person judge for

himself that he has achieved this? Wesley writes:

When after having been fully convinced of inbred sin, by a far deeper and clearer conviction than he experienced before justification, and after having experienced a gradual mortification of it, he experiences a total death to sin, and an entire renewal in the love, and image of God, so as to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks. Not that "to feel all love and no sin" is a sufficient proof. Several have experienced this for a time, before their souls were fully renewed. None therefore ought to believe that the work is done, till there is added the testimony of the spirit, witnessing his entire sanctification, as clearly as his justification.⁷⁹

For those who have not experienced this change, Wesley instructs the Christian to wait

in vigorous, universal obedience, in a zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness, in denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily, as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God.⁷⁹

This is not only the way of attaining it, but it is also the way of retaining it. True the Christian receives it by simple faith. But the only way to acquire this faith is from God. And He only gives it to those who diligently seek it as He has ordained. It is for this reason, contends Wesley, that so few Christians had received this second blessing.⁸⁰

Christian Perfection is not a static lifestyle, but rather it is dynamic. Wesley's statement regarding the retainment of Christian Perfection indicates that it can be lost. This warning that one may lose this state of perfection becomes more explicit as Wesley continues to

teach on Christian Perfection. This fall from perfection results when the Christian grieves the Spirit. This happens when one lives opposite the manner of love described in I Corinthians 13. The perfected Christian's conversation becomes unprofitable in the sense that it is not edifying to the body. Grace is not being administered to those he speaks. This Christian can grieve the Spirit by becoming bitter, wrathful, angry, speaking evil of others, brawling with others, and gossiping. The fruit of the Spirit therefore becomes lacking in the person's life, as well as His witness. Wesley writes, "There is no such height or strength of holiness as it is impossible to fall from."^{e1} Yet, those who fall from this state can recover it. Wesley states, "It is an exceeding common thing for persons to lose it more than once, before they are established."^{e2} And it is **because** of the possibility of stumbling that Wesley gives the following advice to those who are in this state of perfection. Wesley's first recommendation is to watch and **pray unceasingly** against pride. This state of life is the result of God's grace, not our own.^{e4}

His second recommendation is **"beware of enthusiasm"** Wesley considers this the "daughter of pride." Do not hastily ascribe anything to God without first testing the spirits and seeing if it truly comes from God. Anyone is in danger of enthusiasm if she departs even minutely from Scripture according to Wesley. He also teaches that when

one has achieved this state of perfection he should only seek more of the love described in I Corinthians 13 which will thus prevent this enthusiasm.⁸⁴

His third suggestion for the perfected Christian is to avoid Antinomianism. This is the natural result of enthusiasm. Christ has taken the law (moral law) and "grafted into it the law of love."

Next, this mature Christian is to "beware of sins of omission." This one is followed by his exhortation to "beware of desiring anything but God." Make your one desire to experience the Presence of God. What we desire the most, shows what we love the most.⁸⁵

His next instruction or recommendation is to avoid "schism." This is in reference to destroying the "reciprocal love" that the body of Christ has for one another. Avoid not the assembling of yourselves together so that you can encourage and love one another.⁸⁶

Wesley's final instruction is "be exemplary in all things, in the laying out of your money (avoiding every needless expense), in deep, steady seriousness, and in the solidity and usefulness of all your conversation."⁸⁷

The essence of Wesley's teaching on Christian Perfection all boils down to this--perfect love.⁸⁸ As perfect love fills the Christian sin is displaced.⁸⁹ "In souls filled with love, the desire to please God is a continual prayer."⁹⁰ This perfect love is the fulfillment God's law. "It is the point aimed at by the whole, and every part of

the Christian institution. The foundation is faith, purifying the heart, the end love, preserving a good conscience."⁹¹

In summary, Wesley announces that Christian perfection is scriptural. It is subsequent to justification. It should be expected any moment. It is not absolute, nor is it infallible. It is improveable (yes it is instantaneous, but gradual as well). Even though it is capable of being lost, it can be regained. And finally it is perfect love--"This is the essence of it.; its properties, or inseparable fruits, are rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks" (I Thess. 5:16ff.).⁹²

NOTES

- ¹ Frank Whaling, ed., John and Charles Wesley: Selected Prayers, Hymns, Journal Notes, Sermons, Letters and Treatises (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), xix.
- ² Steve Harper, John Wesley's Message for Today (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1983), 16.
- ³ Dissenters were Protestants who refused to accept the doctrines and forms of the Church of England.
- ⁴ Whaling, 5.
- ⁵ George A. Turner, The More Excellent Way: The Scriptural Basis of the Wesleyan Message (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1952), 150.
- ⁶ Whaling, 5.
- ⁷ Frank Baker, ed., The Works of John Wesley, vol. 26 of Letters II 1740-1755 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 289.
- ⁸ Turner, 150.
- ⁹ Harper, 16.
- ¹⁰ Turner, 150.
- ¹¹ Ibid., 151.
- ¹² There seems to be some disagreement on which came

first, the reading of a Kempis's book or Taylor's book. Dr. Turner states that Wesley claims to have read Taylor first in his Plain Account of Christian Perfection, and that he read a Kempis's book the following year. But Wesley's Letters show that he read Taylor's book after a Kempis's book in 1725 --The More Excellent Way, 153-154.

¹³ Whaling, 299.

¹⁴ Turner, 154.

¹⁵ Ibid., 155, 177 n. 33.

¹⁶ Ibid., 155.

¹⁷ Ibid., 156.

¹⁸ Ibid., 151-152.

¹⁹ D. Marselle Moore, "Development In Wesley's Thought On Sanctification and Perfection." Wesleyan Theological Journal 20, no. 2 (1985): 29-32.

²⁰ John G. Merrit, "'Dialogue' Within A Tradition: John Wesley and Gregory of Nyssa Discuss Christian Perfection." Wesleyan Theological Journal 22 no. 2 (1987): 92-116. In this article Merrit declares that there are positive links between the writings of Marcarius and those of Gregory of Nyssa. It is suggested that those interested in seeing how this argument is developed read this article.

²¹ Frank Baker, ed., The Works of John Wesley, vol. 25 of Letters I 1721-1739 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). 439.

²² Ibid., 439-440.

23 Ibid., 440-441.

24 Turner, 161.

25 Whalen, 17.

26 W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds.,
The Works of John Wesley, vol. 18 of Journal and Diaries
I (1735-38) (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 145-146.

27 Turner, 163.

28 John Lawson, "The Conversion of the Wesleys--1738
Reconsidered," The Asbury Theological Journal 43 no. 2
(1988): 11.

29 Ibid.

30 Merritt, 95.

31 Ibid., 96.

32 William Ragsdale Cannon, The Theology of John
Wesley: With Special Reference to the Doctrine of
Justification (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946).
68.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., 63.

35 Ibid., 64.

36 Carl F. Eltzholtz, John Wesley's Conversion and
Sanctification (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1908).
21.

37 Ibid., 23.

38 Ibid., 23-24.

39 Ibid., 25.

40 Ibid., 26.

⁴¹ Ibid., 27-37. These pages should be read to see the full development of Eltzholtz argument.

⁴² Ibid., 36.

⁴³ Albert C. Outler, ed., The Works of John Wesley, vol. 3 of Sermons III 71-114 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 491-501. Wesley points out that those who have "faith of a son" have "the witness within" themselves, but those persons having the "faith of a servant" do not have this inward witness. But those who have the "faith of a servant" are encouraged by Wesley to expect the "faith of a son" every moment.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 491.

⁴⁵ Merrit, 96.

⁴⁶ Ward, 246.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 247.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 249-250.

⁵⁰ W. E. Sangster, The Path to Perfection: An Examination and Restatement of John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection (1943; reprint, London: Epworth Press, 1984), 95.

⁵¹ John Leland Peters, Christian Perfection and American Methodism (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 201-215.

⁵² Ibid., 204.

⁵³ Ibid., 213-214.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 214-215.

- 73 Ibid., 327.
- 74 Ibid., 327-328.
- 75 Ibid., 328-329.
- 76 Ibid., 330.
- 77 Ibid., 331-334.
- 78 Ibid., 334-335.
- 79 Ibid., 335-336.
- 80 Ibid., 336
- 81 Ibid., 359.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 Ibid., 360
- 84 Ibid., 361-362.
- 85 Ibid., 364-365.
- 86 Ibid., 365-366.
- 87 Ibid., 367.
- 88 Ibid., 374.
- 89 Ibid., 357.
- 90 Ibid., 370.
- 91 Ibid., 348-349.
- 92 Ibid., 374.

CHAPTER 3

A. B. Simpson and Sanctification

As was the case with John Wesley, it is necessary to give a biographical sketch of A. B. Simpson and his experience of sanctification. This will enable us to better understand his teaching on sanctification.

Dr. Simpson was the founder of an interdenominational society which later became a denomination. The goal of this society was to spread the gospel message to the unreached people of the world. His goal, as Wesley's, was not to start another denomination, but rather to bring people together, of like mind, who believed in the importance of sending men and women overseas as missionaries to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to those unreached with its powerful message of salvation.

Not only was he the founder of an interdenominational society, but he was the founder of America's oldest existing Bible college--Nyack College (Missionary Training College) established in 1882.¹ He created the first illustrated missionary magazine in North America, The Gospel in All Lands, which appeared in February 1880. In

an editorial, Simpson declared the publication's purpose as,

"Another voice of cheer to the scattered workers in the great Harvest Field; another standard raised in the great conflict; another channel opened for the diffusion of the living facts of Aggressive Christianity: another echo of the Great Commission; another plea for the one thousand million of our immortal fellowmen, 'those great billows of humanity surging every generation upon the dark shores of eternal death. This is the meaning of our proposed work. Surely there is no need of excuse for even the feeblest effort in such a cause."²

Due to poor health, Simpson was forced to turn the paper over to Eugene R. Smith, a Methodist publisher, in 1881.³

In 1882 Simpson started another illustrated missionary magazine titled The Word, Work and World. This magazine started out as a monthly magazine. Its focus was world missions. Simpson also included articles on the deeper life. Its name was later changed to The Christian Alliance in January, 1888. In 1889, it became a weekly publication called The Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly. In the August 4, 1889 edition, Simpson outlined the policy of the journal. Its emphasis was on the "Christ Movement." He writes,

The great movement of today, the greatest movement of the Church's history is a Christ Movement; a revealing in our day, with a definiteness never before so real, of the person of the living Christ as the center of our spiritual life, the source of our sanctification, the fountain of our physical life and healing, the Prince-Leader of our work, and the glorious coming King, already on His way to His millennial throne and sending on as the outriders of his host and the precursors of His coming the mighty forces and agencies which today are arousing the Church and convulsing the world.⁴

Its focal point, like that of its editor, was on Jesus Christ. The eternal watchword was "Jesus Only."⁶ This magazine was to undergo several name changes, and today it is known as The Alliance Life which is now published bi-weekly. A. B. Simpson is credited with having authored over one hundred books,⁶ more than 172 hymns,⁷ and numerous articles. In his biography of Simpson, A. W. Tozer writes, "Indeed I can think of none except Paul and Wesley who compare with him for quantity of work turned out."⁸

Albert Benjamin Simpson was born December 15, 1843 to James and Jane Simpson in Bayview, Prince Edward Island, Canada. He was the fourth of nine children. Simpson's family was of Scottish ancestry. His grandparents had immigrated to Prince Edward Island in 1774.

James Simpson, Albert's father, was a stern Presbyterian elder. In his autobiographical notes, contained in Thompson's biography, Simpson describes his father in the following manner:

"a good Presbyterian elder of the old school, and believed in the shorter catechism, the doctrine of foreordination, and all the conventional principles of a well ordered Puritan household. He was himself a devoted Christian and most regular in all his religious habits. He was an influential officer in the church and much respected for his knowledge of the Scriptures, his consistent life, his sound judgment, and his strong, practical common sense."⁹

Albert's father was also a shipbuilder, miller, merchant and exporter.¹⁰

Dr. Simpson's mother, Jane, was of Scottish ancestry

as well. She was a descendent of the Covenanters. She was described as an earnest Christian, "a woman of the highest ideals," who was very fond of poetry. She was a deeply religious person, who taught her children to take "everything to God in prayer."¹¹ Albert's earliest memory of his mother was hearing her cry during the middle of the night, which caused young Simpson to climb out of bed and pray for God to comfort her.¹² These tears, he later learned, were due to her life being spent in a lonely cabin on the family farm near Chatham, Ontario. The Simpson family was forced to move there in 1847 because of a financial depression in Canada and England which hurt James' business. A. B. Simpson was three years old when the family made the move to Ontario.

It needs to be noted that Albert was dedicated to the ministry of the Lord before he was born. Jane desired that he be used as either a minister or missionary. She and James kept this dedication a secret, so that Albert would not be unfairly persuaded into the ministry by his parents' personal wishes.¹³ John Geddie, the first Canadian missionary to the South Sea Islands, conducted Albert's baptismal, and in his prayer he committed the Simpson infant to missionary service.¹⁴

Thompson records Lousia Simpson's, Simpson's older sister, recollection of young Albert. "Albert was very timid and imaginative, and anything unusual left a deep impression on his memory. The thought of punishment would

fill him with terror."¹⁵ Dr. Simpson comments, "My good father believed in the efficacy of the rod, and I understood this so well that I succeeded in escaping most dispensations of that kind."¹⁶ One of those whippings that he received came as a result of his slipping out of the house on a Sunday afternoon to play in the yard. James caught sight of Albert's escapade, and pronounced his judgement for Albert's breaking of the Sabbath--a whipping the next morning after breakfast.¹⁷

Although Albert and his siblings were reared in a "stern mould" [sic], in later life he declared that it had taught him "a spirit of reverence and wholesome discipline" which caused him to often thank God.¹⁸

Just as John Wesley had been brought up in a stern Christian family, so too was A. B. Simpson. His parents, as did Wesley's, contributed much to his education. On Sundays, when the family was unable to attend church, Simpson's parents and older siblings would take turns reading "from some good book that was far beyond" his understanding. Some of these "good books" were Boston's Fourfold State, Richard Baxter's Saint's Rest, and Dodridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul. Sunday afternoons were spent drilling on the one hundred and fifty questions of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. These questions were divided over several Sundays, and the older children, standing in a straight row, would answer those questions which were directed to them. When all the

questions were thoroughly covered, this whole process would begin again. This continued throughout most of Simpson's childhood with his younger siblings being added to this religious battery as they grew older.¹⁹

In retrospect of this whole process, Dr. Simpson discerned that the religious knowledge that had been "cramped" into his mind without any real understanding later provided him with those doctrines and "statements of truth" which ultimately became the vessels for containing "the treasures of divine knowledge." This was accomplished with the aid of the Holy Spirit and personal life experiences.²⁰

Simpson reveals that his "childhood and youth were strangely sheltered and guarded by divine providence." Once he nearly fell to his death from the scaffolding of a new building under construction. He was saved by a worker from this fate. Another time he was thrown headlong over his horse and lost consciousness. Another incident involved his being kicked into unconsciousness by a "dangerous horse." And finally while he was a student in high school, he nearly drowned while trying to swim with some of his classmates. This time he was rescued by some men in a boat who pulled him out as he went down for the last time.²¹ It is through this personal account of his early days that we can see God's hand of protection on Simpson's life as it had been on Wesley--"a brand plucked out of the fire."

Due to Simpson's "rigorous religious training," he had "a secret yearning" to become a pastor when he was only ten years old. Dr. Simpson confesses, "I am afraid that this came to me in the first instance as a conviction of duty than a spontaneous Christian impulse."²² However, Simpson struggled over this "yearning," because of the price that would be required. Tozer writes, "The preachers he knew in those days must have been a dour and artificial lot, for the sum of his testimony is that he wrestled with himself over the question of whether to become a minister or flee the service of the church and remain a human being."²³ Thompson records Simpson's own words regarding this subject:

I rebelled against the ministry because of the restraints which it would put upon my pleasures. One irresistible desire was to have a gun and to shoot and hunt; and I reasoned that if I was a minister, it would never do for me to indulge in such pastimes.²⁴

This "one irresistible desire" caused young Simpson, at the age of fourteen, to save up his money and buy a shotgun without his parents consent or knowledge. When his mother later discovered the gun, she confronted him with it. She then punished him by not only having him return the gun to the man he had purchased it from, but he also forfeited the money he had saved to buy it. This experience was such that young Albert resigned himself to giving his life to the ministry.²⁵

It was not long after this episode that a family conference was called by James Simpson. It was during this

meeting that James announced that his eldest son, Howard, would be sent to school to prepare for the ministry while Albert remained on the farm and worked. He had only enough money to send one of his sons to school, and Howard, as the eldest, was the choice. It was during this family conference that Albert asked his father's permission to put himself through school, and prepare for the ministry without any additional financial burden to the family. This request appeared to pierce his father's heart as he replied to Albert, "God bless you, my boy."²⁶

It was after this blessing that Simpson's "struggle began." Albert had completed common school, and his father made arrangements to have his two sons privately tutored by a retired pastor and then their "kind pastor, who was a good scholar." These studies involved studies in Latin, Greek, and higher mathematics.²⁷

Later, Simpson went on to Chatham High School to further his education in preparation for the ministry. While a student at Chatham, Albert devoted himself whole heartily to his studies. Due to the strain of his studies at Chatham, Simpson became a "physical wreck." Simpson was informed by a physician that his nervous system had collapsed, and as a result of this condition he must not "look at a book for a whole year." Simpson goes on to declare:

"There followed a period of mental and physical agony which no language can describe. I was possessed with the idea that at a certain hour I

was to die: and every day as that hour drew near, I became prostrated with dreadful nervousness, watching in agonized suspense till the hour passed, and wondering that I was still alive.²⁸

In his dissertation, Dr. McGraw indicates that Simpson's "Calvinistic upbringing had apparently taught him more about the dilemma of depravity than about its cure."²⁹ Simpson admits that he was "terrified and sinking." He had no real assurance of his salvation, and he cried out for his father to pray for him. Simpson confesses:

My whole religious training had left me without any conception of the sweet and simple Gospel of Jesus Christ. The God I knew was a God of great severity, and my theology provided in some mysterious way for a wonderful change called the new birth or regeneration, which only God could give to the soul.²⁹

Simpson waited desperately for this change, but it did not come, not even through his prayers or the prayers of his father. This feeling of despair was lifted for a time, and he prayed, as well as urging others to pray, for his salvation. Still it did not come. As Simpson, in later life, looked back on this crisis event, he marveled that there was no one, not even his father, who was able to inform him of "the simple way of believing in the promise and accepting the salvation fully provided and freely offered."³⁰

As the days passed, Simpson still sought salvation, and it was during this time that he came across a book in his minister's library that was to show him the way to this salvation. The book was Walter Marshall's Gospel Mystery

of Sancitification. It was in this book that Simpson's "eyes fell upon a sentence which opened" for him "the gates of etenal life." Simpson states that the essence of the sentence was as follows:

The first good work you will ever perform is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Until you do this, all your works, prayers, tears, and good resolutions are vain. To believe on the Lord Jesus is just to believe that He saves you according to His Word, that He receives and saves you here and now, for He has said--'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' The moment you do this, you will pass into eternal life, you will be justified from all your sins, and receive a new heart and all the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit.³¹

It was this declaration of Marshall that led to Simpson's regeneration. He was given an assurance of his salvation. He believed the Word, and he had the witness of the Spirit that he was a child of God.³²

It was after his conversion, and the restoration of his health that Simpson become a certified school teacher at the age of sixteen. It was through teaching that he earned **money** to go to Knox College.

Knox College was the offical college of the Canada Presbyterian Church.³³ In October of 1861, Simpson earned the permission of Presbytery of London, Ontario to enter the college. This permission was not given until he had undergone a thorough examination by the presbytery of his "spiritual experience, soundness of faith, call to ministry and academic qualifications."³⁴

As his biographers noted, Simpson had been such a

diligent student prior to entering college that he was admitted to the third year or senior year of the literary course. This enabled him to enter the three year graduate program the next year, and finish his studies "with high honors" in April of 1865.³⁵

It was during Simpson's college days that he was to meet his future wife, Margaret Henry, the daughter of his landlord. After his call to Knox Church in Hamilton, Ontario in August 1865, and his ordination on September 12, 1865, Albert and Margaret were married on September 13, 1865 in Toronto.

Dr. Simpson's first pastorate was successful. He pastored the Knox Church for eight years. During this time membership had increased from 297 to 646. The Sunday school attendance increased from 180 to 459 attendees, and total contributions from 1865 to 1873 totaled \$50,000.³⁶

In December 1873, Simpson left his pastorate in Hamilton, Ontario to become the pastor of the Chestnut Street Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He began his ministerial duties there in January of 1874. Although the Civil War had ended in 1865, the churches were still involved in continuing the cause for both sides. Tozer writes:

Louisville was a northern city in a southern state, or a southern city in a northern state (depending upon which way you hold your map, and whom you are talking to) and the smouldering animosity between the churches was particularly marked there. The new pastor of Chestnut Street Church felt this the moment he arrived. At first

it lay like a heavy burden upon his soul, but gradually he began to sense that he had been called to Louisville for just such a time as this.³⁷

This was the environment into which Simpson entered his six year ministry to people of Chestnut Street Church. It was this ministry that was to lead A. B. Simpson into a closer walk with his Savior. On January 19, 1861 at the age of sixteen, Simpson had made a covenant with God³⁸ as the result of having read Philip Doddridge's book Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul. In this book, Doddridge suggested that young Christians should enter into a written covenant with God.³⁹ Simpson renewed this covenant on September 1, 1863 while a student at Knox college and again in Louisville, Kentucky on April 18, 1878.⁴⁰ It was at this Louisville pastorate that Simpson was to experience Christ as not only his Savior, but Jesus was to become his Sanctifier.

One of the reasons Simpson had come to Louisville was his poor health. He did not go there in search of a greater ministry. He needed a smaller church, and one which would not require as much pastoral activity, thus allowing him more time to rest. The Louisville church was aware of Dr. Simpson's physical condition. He was to be excused from most of the pastoral duties, as well as receive two months of vacation each year with an annual salary of \$5000.⁴¹

Simpson also felt inadequate as a pastor. He viewed

himself as "a blundering and ambitious young preacher." It was this view of his inadequacy which caused him to search for a deeper spiritual life.⁴² Thompson shows us that Simpson had some rather unusual views of sanctification. He records Simpson's early views on sanctification:

I use to think that we were sanctified at last in order to get to heaven--that the very last thing God did for the soul was to sanctify it, and that then He took it right home; and I will confess that at that time I was a good deal afraid of being sanctified for fear I should die very soon afterward.⁴³

Based on this view of sanctification, one can see Simpson's hesitancy for seeking this blessing. At the end of this quote, Simpson admits, "But the Lord Jesus Christ tells us that we are sanctified in order to serve Him here."⁴⁴

This raises the question, "What caused Simpson to see his need for Christ to become his Sanctifier?" In Jesus Only, the writers contend:

Between his inner struggles and the city's unresolved conflicts, Simpson found himself in the most discouraging situation yet in his ministry. Pressured by this double dilemma, he turned for greater resources to God, who promised to be found by those who sought Him with all their heart.⁴⁵

It was through this intense searching that Simpson was drawn to another "old, musty book" he had in his own library. This book was W. E. Boardman's The Higher Christian Life. "Simpson testified that his own sanctification was acquired because of illumination received from this book. The date of Simpson's crisis appears to have been a Saturday night early in 1874."⁴⁶

Through this book, Simpson saw Christ in a new light. All For Jesus, records this personal testimony of Simpson:

"He who had justified us was waiting to sanctify us, to enter into our spirit and substitute His strength, His holiness, His joy, His love, His faith, His power, for all our worthlessness, helplessness and nothingness, and make it an actual living fact."⁴⁷

Simpson came to experience the indwelling presence of Christ's Holy Spirit. He surrendered himself completely to Christ's Lordship. He no longer "owned the house," but rather he became a tenant in a house now owned by God.⁴⁸

This experience was not the end for Simpson, but just the beginning. It was to change his ministry at Louisville. This "new light" was to cause him to cry out to God for a revival to take place in Louisville. Doors opened for him to speak at different churches in Louisville. And what was the message that he proclaimed? "Pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit." Why? Because the pastors and congregations needed to be revived and reconciled if the unchurched were to be reached with the Gospel of Christ.⁴⁹

Simpson, along with other minister's in Louisville, gathered and prayed for revival. Groups were organized to pray for revival. Major D. W. Whittle and Philip P. Bliss were called upon to conduct revival services in Louisville, which began on February 7, 1875 and ended on March 12, 1875. Revival came to Louisville, and the "children of

God" in Louisville were united.⁵⁰ The crusade was not the end for Simpson. It fueled in him a hunger to reach the unchurched of Louisville. He was to hold evangelistic meetings in Lexington, Kentucky, and his church was later to build a interdenominational tabernacle for the purpose of reaching the masses with the Gospel. This infilling of Christ's Spirit stirred the evangelistic flames to life in Simpson. These flames were to later give birth to a world missionary sending society, and in the distant future a new denomination which emphasized the "deeper Christian life."

In November of 1879, Simpson left the Chesnut Street Church and Kentucky to become the pastor of the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian Church in New York City. Simpson was to pastor this church for two years. His first sermon to his new charge was from Acts 1:7-8. His focus was on the holiness of God. In this sermon he explained to his congregation that holiness is not outward conforminty, but rather it is "having the spirit of Jesus in one."⁵¹ One sees that Simpson's sanctification gave birth to his teaching the doctrine to his church, and it was the impetus of his evangelistic outreach. His church was to grow in number as his other pastorates, and Simpson also continued to grow spirituality while pastoring the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian Church. But Simpson's physical body broke due to his extremely heavy schuedule. He was informed by "a prominent physician in New York" that he did not have

"constitutional strength left to last more than a few months."⁵² The diagnosis was that Simpson had serious heart problems. Simpson had been plagued with physical ailments for over twenty years since his high school days. He carried ammonia with him wherever he went, and he could not climb steps without a suffocating feeling. Simpson was depressed by the news, and took a leave of absence from his church. It was during this time that Simpson was to experience more of God's sanctifying grace. While he was at Old Orchard, Maine, Dr. Simpson attended a healing service held by Dr. Charles Cullis, a Boston physician. After hearing over 200 people give testimony to their healing, Simpson went back to his room to study God's Word on the matter. After carefully studying the Bible, Simpson "became convinced that this was part of Christ's glorious Gospel for a sinful and suffering world, for all who would believe and receive His Word."⁵³ After this discovery, Simpson declared, "That was enough. I could not believe this and then refuse to take for myself, for I felt that I dare not hold any truth in God's Word as a mere theory or teach to others what I had not personally proved."⁵⁴

Therefore, on a Friday afternoon at three o'clock in the "silent pine woods," Simpson received Christ as not only his Savior and Sanctifier, but as his Healer. Simpson later tested his healing by climbing Mt. Kearsage, a 3000 foot mountain in New Hampshire. However, Simpson did not see a person who is healed as being immune to every kind of

illness, but rather the person must be "wholly dependent upon a vital and continuous connection with the Lord of his life."⁵⁵

Simpson's healing of his "physical condition" led him back into his ministry at the Thirteenth Street Church, and his evangelistic outreach to the unchurched. It was not long after his healing that Simpson was to change his views on infant baptism.⁵⁶ He came to believe that only those who declared their faith in Jesus Christ should be baptized. He himself went to an Italian Baptist pastor, and was baptized by immersion. The writers of All for Jesus state, "Stepping into the cold water [Simpson's baptism] was indeed an act of dying to all his religious heritage, life and work. . . . He was left with no alternative but to resign."⁵⁷ And this Simpson did on October 31, 1881. This closed the chapter on his life as a Presbyterian minister, and opened the door to his independent ministeries--ministries to a whole world both here and aboard.

Simpson's Teachings on Christian Perfection

We will now focus our attention on Simpson's teaching regarding sanctification. My key primary source, as noted in the above Introduction, for Simpson's teaching on sanctification is his book Wholly Sanctified. To this are added his books The Christ Life, The Larger Christian Life, The Fourfold Gospel, and some of his

individual sermons and articles that deal with this doctrine. Simpson opens his book, Wholly Sanctified, with this sentence, "The prominence given to the subject of Christian life and holiness is one of the signs of our times of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ."⁵⁸ For Simpson sanctification was preparation for Christ's return and millennial reign. He writes, "These two truths--holy living and Christ's second coming--are linked closely together in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24. The former is the preparation for the latter, and the latter the complement of the former."⁵⁹

Next, Simpson declares that only those people who know God, the God of peace, can seek for sanctification. The person must be justified. "A justification so thoroughly accepted as to banish all doubt and fear and make God to us **the very God of peace** is indispensable to any real or abiding experience of sanctification."⁶⁰ Therefore, for the justified Christian, sanctification is the "pathway to deeper peace." Simpson contended that justification brought the believer into peace **with** God, and then through sanctification the Christian had the peace **of** God. It is through sanctification that the child of God has in his or her spirit "the abiding presence of the very God of peace Himself."⁶¹ Therefore, for Simpson, this led to the logical conclusion that God was the author of sanctification. Simpson reveals:

It is not the work of man nor means, nor of our

own strugglings, but His fruit of the Spirit, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the prepared inheritance of all who will enter in, the great obtainment of faith, not the attainment of works. It is divine holiness, not human self-improvement or perfection. It is the inflow into man's being of the life and purity of the infinite, eternal, and Holy One, bringing His own perfection and working out in us His own will.⁶²

This "heavenly way of holiness" was not perceived as being difficult by Simpson. One way he described it was as "God's great elevator, carrying us up to the higher chambers of His palace without our laborious efforts, while others struggle up the winding stairs and faint by the way." It is to be had by all Christians. It is "easy," "mighty," "simple," and "divine."⁶³

But when can the Christian expect to receive this blessing that comes from God, Himself? In an article titled "Sanctification Through Death and Resurrection," Simpson deals with how a Christian is delivered from sin. It is in this article that Simpson declares:

in the divine plan, sanctification is closely connected with justification, and assumed as immediately following it. The fact is, that in the Christian life of many persons, it comes at a later period. But this is not God's intention, and, therefore, the New Testament assumes that sanctification is to accompany, or immediately follow the first action of faith. This is what really did occur . . . at Pentecost. . . . But with many persons this is not their experience. They are baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, and at a later period they come to receive the Holy Ghost as their Deliverer from indwelling sin. ⁶⁴

What is the nature of this sanctification that Simpson

preached? For Simpson, sanctification involved "three distinct and most impressive senses." These he took from the Old Testament's usage of the word.

First of all sanctification means to separate. Simpson points out that this idea of separation is evident throughout the Old Testament. In creation God brought order into the world through separation--the night from day and heavens from earth. He separated Seth's family from Cain's race. He separated Noah and his family from the rest of the ungodly world. Abraham was "called out" and separated from his family. And God separated Israel from the rest of the nations of the world. This idea of separation is carried over into the New Testament. Simpson points out the Greek word translated church--ekklasia--means "called out" or "separated." Therefore, Simpson taught that sanctification meant first of all "our voluntary separation from evil." However, this separation does not mean that evil is extinguished. But rather, it is removed and placed aside, just as I would remove a jacket and put it away. I remove it, and detach myself from it. Then, there is "an impassible gulf placed between it and me."

This separation entails a departure from my past sins, as well as from "sin as a principle." Along with this departure goes my refusal of every manifestation of evil, whether it comes from within or without myself. This separation also includes a detachment from the world. For

Simpson, this meant a separation the from the "natural and human." But the most important fact to be grasped about this separation is that even though the Christians are required to separate themselves, God is the person who makes this separation valid. The Holy Spirit is the agent by which the Christian is led into this deeper separation from the evil and earthly. It all boils down to this simple but difficult task; A Christian must surrender himself or herself to God. Simpson declares, "God will not put his hand on the evil until **you** authorize Him with your glad content."⁶⁵

Second of all, sanctification denotes "dedication." This sheds more light on the idea of separation. A Christian is not only to separate herself "from" sin and the world, but she is to separate herself "to" God. As Christians we are to offer **ourselves** completely to God's ownership. We fully surrender ourselves, so that He can take possession of us, and **prepare us** to carryout His perfect will. We are to be "**living sacrifices**" for God. Simpson again emphasizes that this gift of ourselves to God must be completely voluntary. Therefore, Simpson defined true consecration as "the **voluntary** surrender or self-offering of the heart, by the constraint of love to be the Lord's." This self-offering must have faith as its source.⁶⁶

Finally sanctification means "to fill." Here Simpson stresses that the literal translation of the Hebrew word

consecrate is "to fill the hand." Simpson contended that this was the "deepest truth in connection with sanctification, viz., that Christ himself must be the substance and supply of our new spiritual life and fills us with His own Spirit and holiness."⁶⁷

Without Christ's indwelling presence in us we are "an empty possibility. We look to Christ for His grace to make our separation faultless and acceptable." Simpson goes on to proclaim, "Our purity must be the imparting of His life; our peace, His peace within us; our love, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. Our very faith, which receives all His grace, must be continually supplied from His own Spirit."⁶⁸ Through the "habit of full surrender" Jesus Christ assumes the responsibility of making us all that He requires, and He will keep us and lead us into His perfect will. Simpson exclaims:

What God wants of us is simply that we give Him the possibilities of our lives and let Him build upon them a temple of holiness which He will make His own abode and which He will let us dwell in with Him as His happy guests in the house of the Lord forever. From the very foundations, the work must all be new and divine. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith, and the true attitude of the consecrated heart is that of a constant yielding and constant receiving.⁶⁹

Therefore, this last meaning of sanctification indicates that sanctification involves a gradual spiritual growth on our part. We begin by separating ourselves from evil and "dedicating" ourselves to God. We grow by advancing "into all the fullness of Christ." We become

perfect men and women in Him. It is through Him living in us, and filling every area of our lives that we not only receive His glory and grace, but we go on to reflect His glory and grace.⁷⁰

Now that we understand what Simpson means when he uses the word "sanctification," we must ask ourselves what he means when he uses the term "wholly sanctified." Simpson takes this term from 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24. It is part of Paul's prayer for the Thessalonian believers. He was petitioning God to sanctify and preserve these believers' wholly until Christ's return. This sanctification and preservation included the spirit, soul, and body. Simpson held to the trichotomy of the human nature. These three parts made up the whole of human nature. For Simpson, this tripartite division of the human nature was the counterpart of the Trinity.⁷¹ Therefore, the term "wholly sanctified" dealt with the sanctification of the entire human nature--spirit, soul, and body--of the Christian. The spirit, soul and body of the Christian had to be separated from sin and self, dedicated to God, and filled with the presence and Spirit of God.

Simpson viewed the spirit as that divine part of human nature which is aware of God. It was not the "intellectual or mental or aesthetic or sensational part" of human nature.⁷² Rather the human spirit represents the "higher divine element that knows, trusts, loves, resembles, and

glorifies God."⁷³ It is essential that this part of human nature be sanctified.

The human soul on the other hand is that which houses the mental endowments of the human nature. Simpson listed the following as mental endowments of the soul--understanding, tastes, affections, passions and appetites.⁷⁴ Thus the soul needs sanctification, so that the mental endowments can be separated, dedicated and filled by God.

Finally, it is the human body which houses the spirit and soul of human beings. Simpson points out that the human body has been referred to as the microcosm of the universe. He goes on to declare that the human frame's design gives evidence to God's existence. It was designed to be "the ultimate climax" of all of God's creation. And it was later to be the "eternal form of the incarnate God himself." In order for the body to be free of impurity and physical sin, it too must be sanctified by being separated, dedicated and filled by God's Holy Spirit.⁷⁵ We see that a Christian who is wholly sanctified, is one whose entire nature--spiritual, mental, and physical being--is separated, dedicated and filled or inhabited by Christ.

In the his book Fourfold Gospel, Simpson, himself, gives us a concise summary of what sanctification is and is not. First of all it is not regeneration; regeneration precedes sanctification.⁷⁶ Second, it is not morality or any character attainment.⁷⁷ Third, it is not achieved by our own work, nor a gradual attainment through our own

efforts.⁷⁸ "It is very evident, therefore, that we do not grow into sanctification, but grow from sanctification into maturity."⁷⁹ Neither is sanctification a work of death; sin would still reside in the soul even if the body were dead.⁸⁰ Nor is sanctification "self-perfection;" we must always abide in Christ. It is His perfection imparted to the believer.⁸¹ And last of all, Sanctification is not to be confused as some emotional state. Sanctification resides in a person's will and goal of life.⁸²

Since this is what Simpson considered sanctification not to be, what were his positive declarations about it? First, Sanctification is separation from sin; the "sanctified Christian is detached from sin, the "evil world," and from his or her own self.⁸² Second, sanctification means that the Christian is totally dedicated to God with his first thought always being on doing God's will.⁸³ Next, Sanctification is conforming to God's likeness; this Christian is stamped with Christ's likeness.⁸⁴ Sanctification also involves conforming to God's will; this person is submissive and obedient to God's will.⁸⁵ Finally, Sanctification means love; this person loves God and others. Simpson contends that this love is that which fulfills the law.

It is the spring of all obedience, the fountain from which all things flow. We cannot be conformed to the image of God without love, for God is love. This is, perhaps, the strongest feature in a truly sanctified life. . . . If we are so filled with love to God, it will flow out

to others, and we shall love our neighbors as we love ourselves.⁸⁶

Who is the author of Sanctification? Simpson unequivocally proclaims that Jesus Christ is our sanctification. For Simpson, Jesus himself becomes our sanctification. Simpson observes that maybe Jesus was afraid that his disciples "would begin to look for sanctification apart from Himself, and knowing it could never reach them except through Him," declares, "'I sanctify myself'" (John 17:19).⁸⁷ Therefore, Christ has purchased our sanctification for us at Calvary. Thus, it does not come as the result of our own efforts, but it is made accessible "to us as the purchase of His death on the cross." It is just as much a part of our inheritance as our pardon for sin. We are to claim it, and receive it as a free gift from God. And it is made real by Christ's coming in to dwell personally in the believer.⁸⁸ On this subject Simpson writes;

When we are dedicated to God, He comes to live in us and transfuses His life through our being. . . . It is the living God come to live in the new heart. It is the Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart of flesh that God has given, so that every movement, every thought, every intention, every desire of our whole being will be prompted by the springing life of God within. It is God manifest in the flesh again.⁸⁹

Simpson teaches that a believer receives sanctification by first perceiving his or her need for it through divine revelation. Second, the believer must see Christ as his or her Sanctifier. Third, he or she must surrender

everything to Christ. And finally, the believer must believe that Christ receives the "consecration" he or she makes.⁹⁰

Our final concern with regard to Simpson's teaching on being "wholly sanctified" is, "How shall we (wholly sanctified Christians) be preserved blameless? Simpson's answer is that we are kept blameless by God's power. He delineates God's provision for the Sanctified believer's preservation. Christ's death on Calvary has purchased our complete and final salvation if we remain wholly yielded to Christ, and do not remove ourselves from His protection renouncing "His grace and faithfulness." We are also preserved by Christ's continuous intercession for us.⁹¹ Our preservation is also secured by Christ's atoning blood which continues to cleanse us from sin's defilement.⁹² And finally the chief source of God's preservation is Christ's abiding presence and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer.⁹³

But it must be remembered that these promises of God are linked to certain "attitudes" on the believer's part. Simpson teaches, "It is the willing mind and the surrendered heart that are assured of God's protection and grace."⁹⁴ In his book The Christ Life, Simpson reasserts this warning. He quotes the first part of 1 John 3:6, "He that abideth in Him sinneth not." Simpson expounds this verse, "Here is the secret of holiness, not our holiness, but His. There is no account made here for our perfection,

but it is only as we cling to Him and draw our life each moment from Him that we are kept from sin."⁹⁵

I end this chapter with a final quote from Simpson's book A Larger Christian life:

These two facts constitute the whole of sanctification. It is that experience by which we become united to Christ in so divine and personal a sense that we become united partakers of His nature, and the very person of Christ, through the Holy Ghost, comes to dwell in our hearts, and by His indwelling becomes to us the substance and support of our spiritual life. The converted soul is a human spirit born from above by the power of the Holy Spirit. The sanctified soul is that human spirit wholly yielded to and wholly possessed and occupied by God's indwelling presence, so as to be able to say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me."⁹⁶

NOTES

¹ Gerald E. McGraw, The Doctrine of Sanctification in the Published Writings of Albert Benjamin Simpson, Ph.D. Diss., New York Univ., 1986 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1987), p. 87. To be noted as The Doctrine of Sanctification.

² Robert L. Niklaus, John S. Sawin, and Samuel J. Stoesz, All For Jesus: God at Work in The Christian and Missionary Alliance Over One Hundred Years (Camp Hill: Christian Publications, Inc., 1986), 37.

³ Niklaus, Sawin and Stoesz, 38.

⁴ A. E. Thompson, A. B. Simpson: His Life and Work (1920; reprint, Harrisburg: Christian Publications, Inc., 1960), 154.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ McGraw, The Doctrine of Sanctification, 97.

⁷ Ernest G. Wilson, The Christian and Missionary Alliance: Developments and Modifications of Its Original Objectives Ph.D. Diss., New York Univ., 1984 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1987), p. 53.

⁸ A. W. Tozer, Wingspread: Albert B. Simpson--A Study in Spiritual Altitude (Harrisburg: Christian Publication,

Inc., 1943), 81.

⁹ Thompson, 8.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

¹¹ Ibid., 5.

¹² Ibid., 7.

¹³ Ibid., 5.

¹⁴ Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, 20.

¹⁵ Thompson, 5.

¹⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷ Ibid., 9-10.

¹⁸ Ibid., 10.

¹⁹ Ibid., 9.

²⁰ Ibid., 11.

²¹ Ibid., 11-12.

²² Ibid., 13.

²³ Tozer, 18.

²⁴ Thompson, 13.

²⁵ Ibid., 13-14.

²⁶ Ibid., 14.

²⁷ Ibid., 15.

²⁸ McGraw, The Doctrine of Sanctification, 56.

²⁹ Thompson, 15-16.

³⁰ Ibid., 16.

³¹ Ibid., 16-17.

³² Ibid., 17.

³³ McGraw, The Doctrine of Sanctification, 58-59.

³⁴ Niklaus, Sawin, Stoesz, 25.

35 McGraw, The Doctrine of Sanctification, 60. For a greater focus on Dr. Simpson's education, I suggest you read pages 57-63 of Dr. McGraw's dissertation.

36 Niklaus, Sawin, Stoesz, 30.

37 Tozer, 45-46.

38 Thompson, 19-23. This covenant was titled "A Solemn Covenant: The Dedication of Myself to God." In it Simpson expresses his desire to dedicate himself to God entirely for all eternity. In this covenant he asks God to sanctify him completely and to make him fit for heaven. Near the close of this covenant he declares, "I am now a soldier of the cross and a follower of the Lamb, and my motto from henceforth is 'I have one King, even Jesus.'"

39 Ibid., 19.

40 Ibid., 22-23.

41 Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, 5-6.

42 Ibid., 6.

43 Thompson, 66.

44 Ibid.

45 Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, 7.

46 McGraw, The Doctrine of Sanctification, 161.

Niklaus, Sawin and Stoesz, also agree that it was through Boardman's book that Simpson came to his sanctification experience, All For Jesus, p. 7. However Tozer holds that it was near the close of the Whittle-Bliss Crusade of 1875 that Simpson experienced this, Wingspread, 46-50. Thompson also contributes this awakening of Simpson's need

of sanctification to the Whittle-Bliss meetings in Louisville, A. B. Simpson: His Life and Work, 65.

47 Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, 7. This quote was taken from A. B. Simpson's "A Personal Testimony," The Alliance Weekly (October, 1915) 11.

48 Ibid., 8.

49 Ibid., 9.

50 Ibid., 9-11.

51 McGraw, The Doctrine of Sanctification, 72.

52 Thompson, 74.

53 Ibid., 75.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., 78-79.

56 Thompson, 34. While a student at Knox College, Simpson had received the John Knox Bursary prize for his essay on "Infant Baptism." In it he had defended the Presbyterian view of infant baptism.

57 Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, 43-44.

58 A. B. Simpson, Wholly Sanctified: A Classic Appeal for True Holiness (Harrisburg: Christian Publications, Inc., 1982), 11.

59 Ibid., 12.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid., 13.

62 Ibid., 14.

63 Ibid., 14-15.

64 A. B. Simpson, "Sanctification Through Death and

Resurrection," The Christian Alliance and Foreign
Missionary Weekly, 27 Apr. 1894: 446.

65 Simpson, Wholly Sanctified, 15-19.

66 Ibid., 19-20.

67 Ibid., 21.

68 Ibid., 22.

69 Ibid., 23.

70 Ibid., 23-24.

71 Ibid., 25.

72 Ibid., 27.

73 Ibid., 44.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid., 63-82.

76 A. B. Simpson, The Fourfold Gospel (Camp Hill:
Christian Publications, Inc., 1984), 24-25.

77 Ibid., 26.

78 Ibid.

79 A. B. Simpson, A Larger Christian Life
(Harrisburg: Christian Publications, Inc., n.d.), 139.

80 Simpson, Fourfold Gospel, 26-27.

81 Ibid., 27-28.

82 Ibid., 28-29.

83 Ibid., 29-30.

84 Ibid., 30.

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid., 30-31.

87 Ibid., 31.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 31-32.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 33.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 34-35.

⁹¹ Simpson, Wholly Sanctified, 85-86.

⁹² Ibid., 87. Simpson explained what he meant by this blood. It had a two fold meaning for him. First, this "blood of Christ" is the "fresh application of His atoning sacrifice by faith," and second, "it is an appropriation of His life to our beings."

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 88. Following this quote, Simpson gives fourteen conditons upon which God's perservation depends. They are: (1) let us expect to be preserved, (2) let us also expected to be tempted, (3) temptation is not sin unless it be accompanied with the consent of your will, (4) let us continually reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, (5) let us reckon Christ to be in us and recognize Him as the indwelling life and keeper of our spirit, soul, and body, (6) let us abide in the love of Christ, (7) let us remember that God's will for us is not a hard and impos- sible task, but a reasonable, practicable and gentle standard, (8) impilicit obedience to every voice of God and every conviction of duty is essential to a blameless life, (9) we must preserve ceaseless communion with God, and abide in the spirit of prayer and fellowship through the Holy Spirit, (10) we must maintain a quiet spirit, (11) we must jealously guard our hearts and thoughts, (12) we must

not live by long intervals, but by the breath and by the moment, (13) we must learn to recover instantly from failure by frank confession and prompt faith and recommittal (1 John 1:9), (14) let us remember that the whole spirit, soul, and body must be trained to abide in Christ. 88-97.

⁹⁵ A. B. Simpson, The Christ Life (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing Company, 1925), 21.

⁹⁶ Simpson, A Larger Christian Life, 138.

CHAPTER 4

Wesley and Simpson in Tandem

In this chapter, we will largely concern ourselves with a comparison of Wesley's and Simpson's teaching on the doctrine of sanctification. We will go on to show what the implications of this study are with regard to the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church.

We can begin by noting that both of these men founded their teachings on sanctification upon their interpretation of Scripture. Wesley and Simpson were well read in the Bible's original languages. And both men, founded their doctrines on Old and New Testaments texts. The whole Bible was their authority or standard by which they measured not only their theological concepts, but life as a whole. However, neither man divorced his teachings from the experiences of the Christian life. As was mentioned above, Wesley declared the best way to avoid placing too much or too little emphasis on the doctrine of Entire Sanctification was to adhere to the Word's instruction on it. Both men attempted to teach only what Scripture proclaimed, and not their own personal opinions.

Both Wesley and Simpson could be described as being "Spirit filled" or "full of Perfect Love." Their desire was to be totally used by God to further His kingdom. It had been the experience of both of these men to strive for their salvation through a works-righteousness mentality. They had tried to make themselves worthy enough of God's acceptance. It was not until each man came to understand that regeneration comes through faith in Christ alone that they were given an assurance of their regeneration. It was also subsequent to their conversion experience that both realized the need of Christ in a deeper way--to give them the freedom over sin's power for holy living.

It should also be observed that both of their ministries were drastically changed after their sanctification experiences. Wesley was to crisscross England proclaiming the Gospel to the people of the land. His ministry changed the lives of many. Through his disciples, his teachings spread across the continents. The denomination which emerged was to have as its "grand depositum" the doctrine of Christian Perfection. This is not to say that Wesley was not busy doing God's work prior to his personal experience of "Christian Perfection," but it is after this experience that one sees his ministry supernaturally empowered.

This same observation is true of Simpson. After that Saturday night in 1874, his ministry was empowered and expanded beyond the confines of his Presbyterian Church.

He too caught a vision for the unreached people of this country and the world. By human standards, his ministry in Hamilton, Ontario had been a great success, and he was a most gifted speaker, but it was not until he perceived the need for Christ to be his Sanctifier that his ministry was to be given "power from on high." He was burdened for the lost people of the world. This passion for reaching the lost was such that he eventually left his denomination to begin an interdenominational society, start a Bible college for preparing missionaries and preachers, and create the first illustrated missionary magazine in North America. He was to describe the society he established as "an organization to promote a deeper spiritual life among Christians of all denominations, and a more aggressive missionary work in neglected fields at home and abroad."¹ And this society did carry this message of "the deeper life" to the neglected and unreached both here and abroad.

God used these two men to spread the "good news of the Gospel" to a needy world. No one can review the accomplishments of these men of God, and not declare that they had been "clothed with power from on high." Christ resided in both of them; working out His will through their yielded lives. Their words, thoughts and ideas were transformed by the "living Christ."

Another area to focus our attention on is the practicality of their doctrines of sanctification. Wesley did not perceive sanctification as some static lifestyle,

rather it was dynamic in nature. It was possible for a Christian to have victory over the power of sin in this life. The entirely sanctified person was to love God and neighbor. This love was a perfect love given to the believer from God. One's faith was to give birth to righteous acts, just as the apostle James declared in his epistle. This person was to have "the mind of Christ," and walk as He walked.² The sanctified Christian reaches out to those around her, just as Christ did while living on this earth. Fruit was to be born by the sanctified believer. The same statements can be attributed to Dr. Simpson's teaching on this doctrine. It was not just a doctrine of proper theory, but it centered itself in lifestyle. This doctrine was to lead to action.³ Simpson saw sanctification as a necessary aspect for empowering one's service to God. This "power from on high" enables believers to be effective witnesses to the lost souls of the world.⁴ To be a successful pastor, missionary, or layperson requires them to "be filled with Christ's Spirit." The "Christ life" is dynamic not static. It reaches out to God and others.

We have observed that both men were biblical and practical in their teaching on sanctification. Let us now focus on the specifics of their teaching on this subject. As noted in his book, A Plain Account, Wesley began by declaring what he did not mean when he spoke of Christian perfection. First, a perfected Christian is not a person

who is perfect in knowledge. She does not have a perfect knowledge of everything. Only God is omniscient, not a perfected Christian. Neither is this person free of making mistakes in judgment, nor free from ignorance. And this person is not infallible. Again these are attributes of God alone. This person will still be affected by infirmities, plus Satan will still continue to tempt the perfected saint, just as he tried in vain to tempt Christ. It was necessary for Wesley to define Christian perfection in these negative terms, since the word "perfect" usually carries the connotation of being "complete," "flawless," "faultless," or free of any defects. Wesley attempted to narrow this connotation by joining it with the word "Christian."

One does not find these specific negative statements in Simpson's teaching on sanctification, but "perfection" was not what Simpson emphasized. McGraw writes, "Simpson believed professing perfectionism far less valuable than inward appropriation of Jesus' divine perfection. He neither evaded the term perfection nor urged, in a Wesleyan manner, the seeking of perfection."⁵ Simpson's emphasis was on Christ's indwelling the sanctified believer. It was His life being lived out in the Christian. The Christian's holiness is in essence Christ's holiness. Therefore, the focus is not placed on the negative statements of a "perfected Christian," but rather it is placed on Christ's life or nature being reflected in the believer. Simpson

would agree that a sanctified Christian is not perfect in knowledge, neither free from mistakes or ignorance, nor infallible. And Simpson does explicitly declare that sanctified Christians should expect to be tempted.⁶ But his emphasis is on the premise that the Christian's holiness resides in Christ's holiness.

Simpson does make some negative statements with regard to sanctification. Let us look at these negative assertions and compare Wesley's teaching to them. First, Simpson's contends that sanctification is not regeneration, but rather proceeds from it. The divine plan has sanctification closely linked with justification, and assumes that it will immediately follow justification. However, this is usually not the case in Christian experience. Ususally it comes at a later period in the Christian's life. This statement coincides with Wesley. He taught that sanctification was subsequent to justification. However, it should be expected at anytime. Wesley attests that he knew of no one who experienced justification and entire sanctification at the same time.

Simpson goes on to teach that sanctification is not "morality or any character attainment." Again his emphasis is on Christ's work in the believer. Christ comes into the believer, and He rebuilds the person's life. This is where I notice a change in teaching by Wesley. Wesley appears to teach that one's character must be changed prior to a Christian being entirely sanctified. This becomes even

more apparent when we compare Simpson's next statement with regard to what sanctification is not to Wesley's profession of what one must do to experience it. Simpson asserts that sanctification is not the believer's work, nor is it a gradual attainment which one grows into by his or her own work. He declares that it is an obtainment, not an attainment in order to stress this work as being Christ's accomplishment.

Wesley explicitly teaches that one attains this through "vigorous, universal **obedience**," by "zealous keeping of all the commandments," by "watchfulness and painfulness," by self-denial **and cross-bearing**, by prayer and fasting, and by "a close attendance on all the ordinances." Wesley admits that Christians receive it by "simple faith," but this faith is acquired from God. And God only gives this faith **to those who diligently seek it.**⁷ It is at this point that I believe that Wesley was once again confusing works with bringing righteousness. It was at Aldersgate that Wesley had **understood that** one's justification was based on his faith in Christ alone. But it appears that Wesley did **to sanctification** what he had done to justification. He **stipulated certain works or character attainments** that had to **be accomplished** before one could be sanctified. A person **must clean up the house**, and remodel it before Christ can **come in to possess it**. Simpson states that Christ must do the **work of cleansing and filling**. He proclaims:

You will grow after you are in sanctification into a fuller, riper, and more mature development of life in Christ, but you must take it at its commencement as a gift, not as growth. It is obtainment, not an attainment. You can not sanctify yourself. The only thing to do is to give yourself wholly to God, a voluntary sacrifice.⁸

It must be pointed out that these two men lived in different times, cultures and countries. Therefore the historical setting would change the emphasis of their teaching.⁹ Wesley was especially concerned lest Quietism result. Hence, his concern for activity on the part of the believer. Simpson was not contending with this problem. Hence, his preference was for obtainment language. Nevertheless, the difference in approach is noteworthy.

Simpson's next negative statement regarding sanctification is that it is not the work of death. Sin is not in the body, but rather in the heart, soul, and will. Dying will not rid one's life of sin.¹⁰ But he does acknowledge that some unsanctified Christians may obtain sanctification near death, however, this is not God's divine intention.¹¹ Simpson viewed death a poor time for justification, and an even poorer time for sanctification.¹²

Wesley also taught that a person did not have to wait till death to receive sanctification. He believed that a Christian should expect it at any moment. "The very now, is the accepted time! Now is the day of this full salvation?"¹³

Simpson ends his negative statements on sanctification

by asserting that it is neither "self-perfection" or "emotion." The emphasis is again on Christ's life being lived out in the Christian. Wesley would agree with these declarations. He taught that it was Christ living in the believer that made him or her holy. Therefore both Simpson and Wesley would agree that a person does not make himself or herself perfect, but Jesus Christ is the author of sanctifying work. What the believer must do is yield his or her heart to Christ, so that this person can love God, and obey His will in his or her life.

What are the positive affirmations that Wesley and Simpson make about sanctification in their teachings? We will start by looking at Wesley's statements and then comparing Simpson's declarations to them. Wesley maintained that the perfected Christian does not commit sin. As was mentioned in chapter two, one needs to be aware of Wesley's definition of sin. It deals with voluntary transgressions of known laws. This was what he called sin in its "proper sense." This perfected Christian is still liable to commit "involuntary transgressions," or "improper" sins.¹⁴

Simpson declares that sanctification is separation from sin. He writes, "The sanctified Christian is separated from sin, from an evil world, even from his own self and from anything that would be a separating cause between him and Christ in the new life." This did not mean that sin or Satan were destroyed. The believer is to

repudiate sin and leave it alone.¹⁵ McGraw noticed that Simpson, in some of his writings, appears to favor a "more Arminian view of sin as willful disobedience and to show that believers need not live in sin."¹⁶ Although the Christian is to separate herself from sin, it must be remembered that God makes this separation valid.

Wesley and Simpson acknowledge Christ as the one who enables the sanctified Christian to have the victory over sin. The believer's responsibility is to willingly surrender himself to God.

Wesley's next positive declaration has to do with a perfected saint's freedom from the self-will, evil thoughts and tempers, from wanderings in prayer, and from fear and doubt of his or her present state. This is achieved through Christ living in the Christian. It is Christ who purifies these perfected believers, and frees them from their self-wills, evil thoughts and tempers, wanderings in prayer, and all fears and doubts regarding their present state.¹⁷

Simpson's declaration about sanctification being separation from sin would acknowledge Wesley's teaching that one is freed from his or her self-will. But the idea is picked up and further explained when he states that sanctification also means dedication to God. The sanctified believer desires to do God's will and to please Him. But it must also be recalled that Simpson taught that sanctification meant to be filled or inhabited by Christ

through His Holy Spirit. This enables the Christian us to live a life fully surrendered to God. This sanctified believer has victory because it is Christ who lives in him or her, doing the will of God.¹⁸ Wesley and Simpson declare that it is "Christ in you" that gives those who are sanctified freedom from evil thoughts and tempers, freedom from wandering thoughts in prayer, and assurance of their present state with God.

Before we look at John Wesley's and A. B. Simpson's final statement about the nature of sanctification, I would like to emphasize the fact that each of these men taught explicitly that Christ was the author of our sanctification. Christ purchased it for everyone at Calvary. Therefore, it is to be received as a gift from Christ. This gift of grace is part of God's redemptive plan for humanity. Christ's blood cleanses the believer from sin. Our sanctification comes from Christ living in us. He is holy, and therefore, we are holy if He dwells within us by His Holy Spirit.

The last statement we shall look at on the nature of sanctification has to do with its essence. Near the end of his book titled A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Wesley makes this statement, "It (perfection) is perfect love (1 John 4:18). This is the **essence** of it: its properties, or inseparable fruits, are rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks (1 Thes. 5:16ff.)."¹⁹ Wesley makes this statement early in

this book. He declares, "Scripture perfection is pure love filling the heart and governing all the words and actions."²⁰ This is what enables a person's mind from wandering from God, from sinning, or being tempted with evil thoughts and tempers; this person is filled with God's perfect love. It is the proper motivation for the Christian's actions. He also writes, "Pure love reigning alone in the heart and life, this is the whole of scriptural perfection."²¹ Wesley declared that love is the fulfilling of the law. He bases this statement on Romans 13:9,10, and goes on to assert, "Faith working or animated by love is all that God now requires of man. He has substituted not sincerity, but love, in the room of angelic perfection."²²

But what is this love? Wesley's answer, "The loving the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength: and the loving our neighbor, every man as ourselves, as our own souls."²³ Wesley immediately follows this remark, by commenting on love's "fruits," or "properties" as found in 1 Corinthians 13.²⁴ But even though the perfected Christian has this love in him or her, this does not mean that the individual is free of errors in judgment, or mistakes.²⁵ Wesley earlier states, "I believe a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions."²⁶ This person is not made infallible by perfect love, or the Holy Spirit's anointing. Therefore, the Christian who has this perfect love still

needs Christ as his or her Prophet, King and Priest. He writes, "For God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain."²⁷ Perfect love appears to be the real theme of Wesley's book in explaining what he means by his use of the term "Christian perfection."²⁸

In his book The Fourfold Gospel, Simpson informs his readers that

Sanctification means love, supreme love to God and all mankind. This is the fulfilling of the law. It is the spring of all obedience, the fountain from which all right things flow. We cannot be conformed to the image of God without love, for God is love. This is, perhaps, the strongest feature in a truly sanctified life.²⁹

In Wholly Sanctified, he asserts, "It is full realization of our oneness with Jesus that gives us perfect love." It is a love which neither doubts or fears, but it always trusts in Christ. He declared that this love was the fruit of faith. The believer obtains this love through his or her absolute union with "the person of the Lord Jesus Christ." It is His love shed abroad in the sanctified believer's heart, thus it is this love that makes the believer accepted by God the Father. This love that "casts out fear" comes as a result of Christ's Spirit residing in the sanctified believer.³⁰

In another book, Simpson proclaims, "Love is the greatest thing in God. It is the only thing which is said in the Scriptures to be the nature or essence of God. . . . Could you behold perfect love embodied, you would have God

in all His fullness."³¹ He affirms, "Love is the greatest thing in the holy life and character: it is the sum of all duty and the summary of all law." All of Christ's commands could be summed up in His command "love one another." But this command of Christ had a new dimension to the Old Testament teaching. His disciples were to love others "as He, Himself, had loved them."³¹ Simpson contends that "every grace is but a form of love."³³ For Simpson, the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 expounds the meaning of this "perfect love."³⁴ Simpson suggested that 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 was a divine portrait of Christ. All one has to do is replace every occurrence of the word "love" with "Jesus."³⁵ Only a sanctified Christian could have this love of Christ. It is this divine love in the believer which reaches out to others. It is only through the believer's unity with God, which is achieved by establishing a personal relationship with Christ, that we can love others as Christ loves them.

It is evident that Wesley and Simpson perceived this "perfect love" as the crowning effect of sanctification. Love is the gradual process of sanctification. It reveals those areas in one's life that still need to be given over to God.

We will end our comparative study on Wesley's and Simpson's teaching of sanctification by noting that each felt that a person could fall from this state of grace. Wesley listed six specific warnings to help Christians

avoid this pitfall from becoming a reality, while Simpson listed fourteen conditions on which a sanctified Christian's perservation rested.³⁶ If a person did fall from this sanctified state, it could be reestablished by the individual's confession and repentance of sin.

Implications of this Study to The C&MA Church

This thesis has focused on Wesley's and Simpson's personal experience of regeneration and sanctification, as well as investigating their teaching on the doctrine. We have noted similarities and contrasts in their teaching by doing a comparative study. Although their terminology differed in some aspects, as well as their emphasis on what they taught, we see that both men saw sanctification as a necessary doctrine and experience of the Church. Sanctification was a gift of grace given by God. Although Wesley acknowledges that it is Christ in the believer that accomplishes this work of grace, Simpson's language appears to be much more Christocentric. He continually reiterates that it is Christ in the believer which makes him or her sanctified, and he frequently uses the "death and resurrection" motif to describe the obtainment of sanctification.

What does the doctrine of sanctification, as taught by Wesley and Simpson, mean to our denomination today? Is it possible that some of the troubles that face Christian and Missionary Alliance today could be resolved by a proper understanding and teaching of sanctification?

It sadly appears, over the course of our history, that we have neglected this doctrine which teaches Christ as the one who enables us to be effective servants for Him. In his dissertation, Dr. Ernest G. Wilson observes that there has been a decline in emphasis on the "Spirit-filled" life by the C&MA.³⁷ Dr. Wilson surveyed the treatment the "Fourfold Gospel" had received by The Alliance Witness (now called The Alliance Life) over three periods in the C&MA's history. The first period covered 1887-1892, the second period covered 1931-1936 and the third period 1975-1980. These three periods indicated a noticeable decline in the number of articles which dealt with sanctification. In the first period, there were 115 articles dealing with sanctification. The second period had 102 articles on the subject of sanctification. And in the third period, there were only 19 articles focusing on sanctification. Although there was a decline in articles dealing with sanctification during these three historical periods, Wilson observed an increase in articles dealing with salvation. However, the magazine's emphasis on "The Fourfold Gospel" as a whole had declined.³⁸ This is a sad occurrence when the magazine's founder had stated that this was its focal point.³⁹ Dr. Wilson does encourage his readers by pointing out that the C&MA leadership has recently made a significant effort to reemphasize this doctrine which was an important objective of its founder, Dr. Simpson.⁴⁰

Although our leadership is reemphasizing the doctrine of sanctification, this reemphasis needs to filter down to the local church level. Our laypeople need to know and understand this doctrine. They need to know that it is Christ's holiness that makes the us holy, and it is Christ's Spirit in us that empowers us to effectively proclaim His Gospel both here and abroad.

We can begin instruction on this doctrine by explaining to our people what sanctification is. First they need to know that it is a biblical doctrine. Simpson came up with his doctrine based on his interpretation of the Scriptures--Both the Old Testament and New Testament. It was not some personal bias that he held.

Next, we need to emphasis that this is a practical doctrine, and not one of theory only. It can, and is to be experienced. Just as Wesley and Simpson taught, one does not have to wait till death to experience victory over sin.

This is not some static lifestyle, but rather it is one that is dynamic. It involves loving God and our neighbors as Christ loves us. There is to be a social aspect to this doctrine. In other words, a sanctified Christian can not be selfish, but rather he or she is reaching out to others reflecting Christ's love to them.

It is very important that those in our denomination understand what sancitification is not. For one thing it does not mean that if we are sanctified we are absolutely perfect. We will not have a perfect knowledge of people,

places or things. Only God is all knowing. We rely on Him to help us know and discern the world and people around us. We need to be aware that we will make mistakes in judgment as sanctified believers, and ignorance will still plague us. Sanctification does not mean we are infallible. This attribute applies only to God. And even those who are sanctified still face temptation, but temptation does not mean we must sin, because Christ will provide our way of escape.

Our next step should be to make the distinction that exists between regeneration and sanctification. We need to show that they are two separate but related acts. Sanctification proceeds from justification. One must have Christ as Savior before he or she can have Him as Lord. By more explicit teaching of this doctrine, we can narrow the time between these two events in the believer's life. A person does not have to wait one, two, three, five, ten or twenty years after his or her justification to be sanctified. We should be expecting it at anytime as Wesley taught.

It is very important that the Christian understands that he or she does not acquire sanctification by "morality or any character attainment." The emphasis is to be place on Christ's indwelling the believer. It is Christ in us that enable us to be holy. We are holy because His holiness is in us. The Christian does not have to straighten out his or her life before it can be surrendered to God. Christ comes in to the Christian's life, and reorders it.

Christ cleanses the believer and fills him or her with His Holy Spirit. Sanctification has nothing to do with "self-perfection." The emphasis is on Christ in the believer.

Those in the Christian and Missionary Alliance need to know sanctification brings victory over sin in the believer's life. As Christians, we are to repudiate sin and leave it alone. We are to separate ourselves from it, but it is God who makes this separation good.

Since we are to separate ourselves from sin, we must dedicate or consecrate ourselves to God. It is the sanctified believer who desires to do God's will, and follow Him. This is accomplished by Christ infilling the believer with His Spirit. By this habitation of Christ we are enabled to fully surrender ourselves to God. We have died, yet we now live because Christ lives within us.

Simpson's Christocentric language needs to be emphasized. Yes, Christ in us is the hope of glory, but the Christian must make a voluntary surrender of his or her life to God. Christ does not force us to surrender ourselves to Him. He reveals our need for sanctification, but it is up to the us to see Christ as our Sanctifier, and surrender ourselves and everything we own to Him believing that He will receive our offering. We are responsible for reckoning Christ at work in us and maintaining our personal relationship with Christ through prayer and the study of God's Word. As Christians we are obliged to implicitly

obey every voice of God and conviction of duty. As Christians we need to guard our hearts and thoughts.

I think that it is most important that we emphasis "perfect love" as the crowning effect of sanctification. Simpson and Wesley saw this as the fulfillment of the law. Simpson stated that it was "the spring of all obedience. and perceived it as perhaps the "strongest feature" of sanctification. This perfect love is loving God "with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength," and loving others as Christ has loved us. This love is divine. It comes from Christ who resides fully in the sanctified believer. It is this "perfect love" that motivates our actions. This is the standard by which we can judge our ministries for God.

If we have this perfect love in our lives, we will see the Christian and Missionary Alliance's Great Commission Fund being met and exceeded. If a Christian has died to self, and allowed Christ to fully reign in her life, then this person will not only give her money, but she will give herself to the Lord as the Macedonian believers did.

If we have this "perfect love" in our lives, we will see our churches grow here and abroad. When you love your neighbor as Christ loves you, then you will see lives changed. Personal evangelism will take on a hold different out look. We will see the people around us the way Jesus does--lost and in need of a Savior. The natural outgrowth of this will be an increase in our churches. Instead of a thousand more churches in 1964, we may see ten thousand or

more churches.

If we have this "perfect love" in our lives, our righteousness will exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, because it will be one that is both inward, as well as outward. It springs from the love of Christ that indwells us if we are fully surrendered to Him.

If we have this "perfect love," we can not be selfish. We will reach out to our brothers and sisters in the faith. We want have to plead for people to volunteer as Sunday school teachers, Vacation Bible school workers, deacons, elders, pastors and missionaries. This love will so move us as a denomination that people will be responsive to filling these positions in order that the Great Commission may be carried out. We would see not only a denomination changed, but a whole world.

Simpson knew that Christian workers had to be filled with Christ's Spirit if they were to be effective in proclaiming the Gospel to the world. Simpson saw sanctification as preparation for Christ's return and millennial reign. Do we in the Christian and Missionary Alliance understand sanctification in that sense? Do we want to see Christ return in "our generation," or are we happy with the status quo in which we find ourselves? Christ as Sanctifier needs to be proclaimed from Alliance headquarters, and from the pulpits of our churches. Jesus not only saves us from hell, but He enables us to live victoriously in this life. "Christ in us is the hope of glory."

NOTES

¹ Samuel J. Stoesz, "The Doctrine of Sanctification in the Thought of A. B. Simpson," The Birth Of A Vision: Essays on the Ministry and Thought of Albert B. Simpson Founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, ed. David F. Hartzfeld and Charles Nienkirchen (Alberta: His Dominion, 1986), 107.

² Whaling, 299-300.

³ McGraw, The Doctrine of Sanctification, 225.

⁴ Ibid., 262.

⁵ Ibid., 325.

⁶ See endnote 94 in chapter three.

⁷ Whaling, 335-336.

⁸ Simpson, Wholly Sanctified, 26.

⁹ Wesley gives explicit instructions on losing this state of Christian perfection. Two of those warnings deal with the avoidance of "enthusiasm" and Antinomianism, the natural result of "enthusiasm." This may count for his emphasis of entire sanctification being an attainment on the part of the Christian.

¹⁰ Simpson, The Fourfold Gospel, 26-27.

¹¹ McGraw, The Doctrine of Sanctification, 476.

¹² Simpson, The Fourfold Gospel, 27.

¹³ Whaling, 314. See also 309.

¹⁴ Ibid., 329.

¹⁵ Simpson, The Fourfold Gospel, 28-30.

¹⁶ McGraw, The Doctrine of Sanctification, 328.

¹⁷ Whaling, 309-311.

¹⁸ Simpson, The Fourfold Gospel, 29-30, and Wholly Sanctified, 15-24.

¹⁹ Whaling, 374.

²⁰ Ibid., 334.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 348. This is not the first time Wesley makes this statement about love fulfilling the law. Near the beginning of this book he makes this quote from his sermon "The Circumsion of the Heart," preached January 1, 1733, "Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment. It is not only the first and great commandment, but all the commandments in one." 300.

²³ Ibid., 349.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 329.

²⁷ Ibid., 350.

²⁸ W. E. Sangster believes that "perfect love" would have been the better term for Wesley to use than Christian perfection. It makes the word "perfect" an adjective

instead of a noun thus making it less aggressive. It also helps narrow the English word "love." Sangster sees the use of "perfect love" as being more positive and social.

The Path to Perfection, 147.

29 Simpson, The Fourfold Gospel, 30.

30 Simpson, Wholly Sanctified, 101-117.

31 A. B. Simpson, Walking In Love (reprint, Harrisburg: Christian Publications, Inc., 1974), 8-9.

32 Ibid., 9-10, 67-70.

33 Ibid., 10.

34 Ibid., 18-19.

35 Ibid., 96-113.

36 Wesley's instructions are covered in detail in chapter two of this paper. Go to endnote 94 of chapter 3 for Simpson's conditions of perservation.

37 Wilson, 157. It should also be noted that **Christ-ian and Missionary Alliance** will be abbreviated **C&MA**.

38 Ibid., 318-319

39 Thompson, 154.

40 Ibid., 157-158.

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