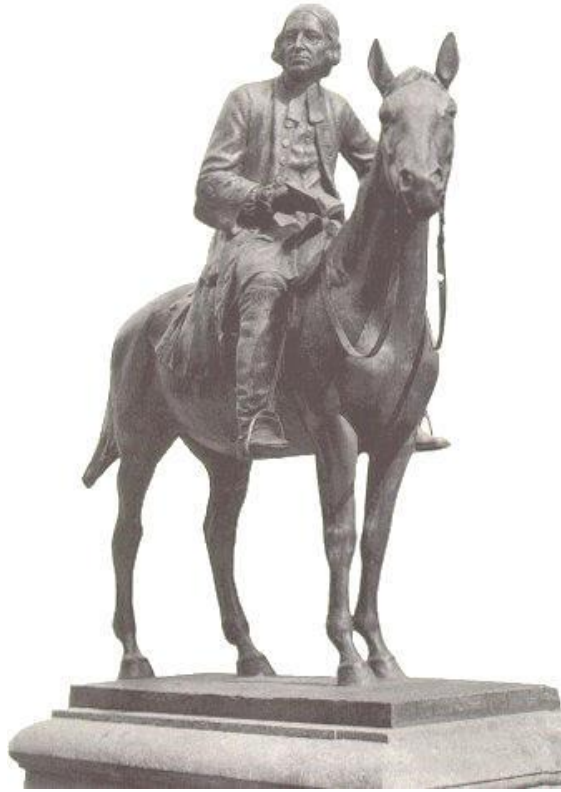


Wesleyan Theology

Syllabus



“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through.
May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our
Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it”
(1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, NIV).

Free Methodist Church of North America
Ministerial Credentialing Services
Indianapolis, Indiana
JT/XL Ministerial Training Program (Revised ©2009)

An Approved Course in Wesleyan Theology

This uniform course in Wesleyan Theology has been approved by the Board of Bishops of the Free Methodist Church for the preparation of ministerial candidates and lay ministers, and for the validation of incoming ordained pastoral transfers, for ministry in the Free Methodist Church. The course may also be taught in the local church to instruct lay people in Wesleyan Theology.

Acknowledgements

The Ministerial Credentialing Services wishes to acknowledge and thank the special committee appointed to prepare this uniform course in Wesleyan Theology for their valuable contribution to the denomination and to the deeper spiritual and experiential understanding of all present and future pastors and lay people, with regard to our common Wesleyan doctrinal heritage.

The members of this committee are Dr. C. Wesley King, retired missionary teacher and current Director of the Faculdade de Teologia, New York and Florida extension seminaries, Dr. Wayne McCown, former Dean and Professor at Northeastern Seminary in Rochester, NY., now retired and Dr. Darold L. Hill, former Wabash Conference Superintendent and pastor of the Spring Arbor Free Methodist Church, now retired. This edition was revised and edited by Darold Hill in 2009.

The committee is grateful to Douglas R. Cullum, Professor of Wesleyan Theology at Northeastern Seminary, for the material on “Biblical Foundations of Wesleyan Theology,” which he taught at the Lakeland, FL Bible Conference in January 2001, parts of which are incorporated into this course.

Requirements for Instructors of Wesleyan Theology

Instructors: Instructors for teaching Wesleyan Theology shall be approved by the denominational Ministerial Credentialing Services and shall follow the course guidelines and expect the student(s) to fulfill all the requirements of the course.

Instructions to Conference Ministerial Education and Guidance Boards

Conference Ministerial and Educational Guidance boards should use the course as a guide to evaluate whether or not persons seeking ministry in the Free Methodist Church have a clear understanding of the major differences between Calvinism and Wesleyan-Arminianism as well as the major doctrinal emphases of Wesleyan Theology such as prevenient grace, justification and sanctification. This may be accomplished in the interview process with the candidate. (See *MEG Board Manual*)

This uniform course in Wesleyan Theology is meant to serve as a template for evaluating those who have previously studied Wesleyan Theology and are transferring into the Free Methodist Church.

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A Word to the Instructor
How to use this syllabus on Wesleyan Theology
and the Companion Volume containing sample Wesley texts

1. Read the opening part of the Syllabus (pages 4-13) very carefully and familiarize yourself with the **Course Purpose** and **Course Requirements**.
2. Do all of the readings required of the students, found on pages 4-5, and make sure you have a good working knowledge of their contents and of Wesley's theological thought.
3. Browse through the rest of the syllabus, lesson by lesson, giving careful attention to:
 - The background readings including the required Wesley sermons
 - The teaching outline
 - Accompanying Wesley hymns
 - Reflective Questions in each lesson.
4. Most of the Teaching Outlines are drawn from one or more of Wesley's sermons found under the heading "Background Sermon(s)" with the exception of the outlines for Lessons 1-5, which are based on Wynkoop's book.
5. Use the sample Wesley texts, found in the Companion Volume, to illustrate Wesley's teaching as you teach each lesson. For example, the sample Wesley texts, or quotations, in the companion volume for lesson 7 titled "In the Image of God", correspond to the same lesson 7 and title in the Syllabus.
6. Take time for discussion in each lesson. Stimulate discussion by using the reflective questions, or others of your choosing.
7. Read or sing a stanza of the hymn or hymns that accompany the theme of the lesson under study. (See the Daily Class Format on page 8 and Appendix C.)
8. Take time to emphasize the major differences between Calvinism and Wesleyan-Arminianism, Holiness of Heart and Life and Christian Perfection.
9. Include the appended material found in the back of the syllabus with the pertinent lessons.
10. Appendix A, "Introduction to John Wesley" is the full text of the first part of the Teaching Outline in Lesson 3.
11. Each student must have her/his project approved by you (see forms on pages 9-10) before returning home.
12. Remind the students that all requirements (readings and written) must be finished and sent to you no later than one (1) month following the close of class when grades are to be reported to Ministerial Credentialing Services.
13. Be alert to "the teachable, or experiential moment" when a student may want to give her/his testimony about what God has done in their lives, or seek prayer to enter into the experience of heart purity and sanctification.

Course Description

Course Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of this course is to provide the student with an understanding of the major theological/philosophical differences between Calvinism and Wesleyan-Arminianism. It will focus on the history and theology of John Wesley and the early Methodists. The course will center on the Wesley brothers' theology of salvation, particularly their understanding of Christian Perfection and personal holiness, as expressed in John's sermons and in Charles' hymns. An understanding of the Wesleyan quadrilateral provides a perspective for understanding Wesleyan thought.

The course is intended to sharpen the distinctions between Calvinist and Wesleyan theologies and bring the student to an understanding of the implications of both theologies particularly as it impacts the biblical message of holiness.

A secondary purpose of this course is to assist the student in an appreciation of the field of Wesley Studies and its present-day interpreters.

Daily Class Format

Each morning a student may be invited to share a brief devotional (5 minutes) from a Biblical text relating to holiness. Each afternoon session may begin with a student sharing some practical insight from one of Wesley's Journals.

Class Description

An introductory course to the historical development and the theological significance of John Wesley's contribution to evangelical Christianity. The student will wrestle with the five points of classical Calvinism and their impact on shaping the Wesleyan understanding of sanctification. The Wesleyan quadrilateral as a source of the development of Wesley's theology will be studied. With Wesley's emphasis on personal experience, the class is not exclusively cognitive, but will also include experience-oriented times, including singing of the hymns of the Wesley brothers, testimonials, prayer and conclude with the John Wesley Covenant Service and communion.

Course Requirements

The J-term course is structured as an intensive, 2-credit course concentrated course with pre-course required readings, in-class participation and discussion and post-course assignments. Ordination in the Free Methodist Church requires 3 credits of Wesleyan Theology. The additional credit is fulfilled through a Self-Directed Study Project.

Pre-Course Readings

The following readings should be completed before beginning the week of intensive classes and the student prepared to discuss elements in the following books, before coming to class. Readings unfinished before the course should be completed in the evenings, during the week of classes, so that the student will not get behind in the completion of all the course requirements.

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *Foundations of Wesleyan Arminian Theology*, 128 pages

Kenneth Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, Chapter 6, "Sanctification by Grace Through Faith," Pages 153-190

John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology. Edited by Albert C. Outler and Richard P.

Heitzenrater, Nashville: Abingdon, 1991

The following sermons are required reading:

“Christian Perfection” - January 4, 1741 – Preached multiple times
“The Scripture Way of Salvation” – March 30, 1764 and several other occasions
“On Sin in Believers” – March 28, 1763
“The Witness of the Spirit” I – August 11, 1753 (second sermon – XLV preached on April 4, 1767 –page 341, Sugden, Volume II)
“The Witness of the Spirit” II
“The Means of Grace” – June 22, 1741 (probably preached multiple times)
“The Marks of the New Birth” – January 2, 1743 – Preached at Epworth at 5 AM and multiple times thereafter.
“Scriptural Christianity” – August 24, 1744
“The Almost Christian” – July 25, 1741
“The Circumcision of the Heart” – January 1, 1733

John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 116 pages

Study key biblical passages that are fundamental in defining Wesleyan Theology.

In-Class Participation

Attendance

Attendance in all class sessions is required. If you are tardy and miss over 15 minutes of a class session, this part of your final grade will result in a reduction.

Discussion

The student is encouraged to take an active part in the class discussions.
Class attendance and discussion will constitute 20% of the final grade.

Syllabus

Because of the intensive nature of the course and brevity of our time together, a syllabus has been prepared to guide our study, to facilitate note-taking, and to ensure a more complete and uniform communication of Wesley’s theological thoughts. The syllabus can serve as a valuable tool for the student and pastor/teacher to teach Wesleyan theology to other people (2 Tim. 2:2). Careful attention should be given to sample texts from Wesley’s sermons and to biblical references, especially those pertaining to the sections on Holiness of Heart and Life and Christian Perfection.

Writing Requirements

Each student will be required to write an eight-page paper doing an analysis on the Article of Religion entitled “Entire Sanctification,” from the current *Book of Discipline*. The student must integrate the paragraphs in the *Book of Discipline* entitled “Consecration” and “Sanctification” in their analysis of the Article of Religion. Scriptural support must be provided to give the basis for the student’s analysis and conclusions. Use of the Wesleyan quadrilateral as an evaluative tool is expected.

Two-page reviews are required of two of the Wesley sermons that are on the required reading list. The student may select any two of out of the list of 10 assigned sermons.

Post Class Session Requirements

Glossary of Terms

Give a short but clear definition of the terms found on page 7 of the Syllabus. The terms “Arminianism” through “Assurance of Salvation” should be defined from the Arminian point of view and the terms “Calvinism” through “Perseverance of the Saints” from the Calvinist point of view. This is due to the instructor within thirty (30) days after the class is concluded.

Self-Directed Study Project

Ordination in the Free Methodist Church requires 3 credits of Wesleyan Theology. Two credits are earned in the classroom. The student must fulfill an additional credit by doing a self-directed study project. A form is included in the syllabus for your use in proposing a project which must be approved by the instructor. **The project is to be completed and postmarked no later than 30 days after the class is concluded** in order to avoid receiving an incomplete grade.

If the student wishes to have written assignments returned a self-addressed, stamped envelope must be provided to the instructor.

Evaluation: Students must receive a C or above to qualify for ordination.
The final grade and evaluation will be determined as follows:

- 95-100 points – A
- 90-94 points – B
- 80-89 points – C
- 79 or below – Failing grade

The final grade and evaluation will be based on five components:

- 20 points - Class attendance and discussion.
- 20 points - Completion of the reading assignments.
- 20 points - Completion of the writing requirements, including the glossary of terms
- 20 points - Final written exam
- 20 points – Self-directed study project

Glossary of Terms

(This glossary of terms must be turned in to the instructor within 30 days of the end of the course sessions.)

Give a succinct and clear definition of each of the following theological terms. Define the Arminian terms from an Arminian point of view and the Calvinist terms from a Calvinist point of view.

Arminian Terms

Arminianism –

Free Will –

Prevenient Grace –

Irresistible grace –

Original sin –

Inbred sin –

Purity –

Maturity –

Holiness –

Christian Perfection –

Sanctification –

Assurance of salvation –

Calvinist Terms

Calvinism –

Election –

Predestination –

Foreknowledge –

Supralapsarianism –

Infralapsarianism –

The Decrees of God

Perseverance of the saints –

Suggested Class Schedule and Topics for Mini-Terms

Week-day Sessions: Some J-Term courses meet from Wednesday evening to the next Wednesday noon. In other J-Terms the course is held from Monday morning through Saturday afternoon. The student is required to participate in 28 hours of classroom instruction. This equates to 2 semester credit hours, with the third hour of Wesleyan theology fulfilled through the post self-directed project.

The format for the week allows nearly 28 hours of classroom instruction, or 14 classroom hours per credit hour.

Weekend Sessions: This involves three weekends with 9 hours of classroom sessions each weekend.

Class Format: The instructor is encouraged to open the morning session with a student giving a brief devotional (5 minutes) from a biblical text relating to holiness and prayer. Other class sessions may be opened with the singing of Wesley hymns related to the theological theme of that session. Pertinent selections from Wesley's Journals may also be included.

Day One

Historical and Theological Background for Wesley's Thought

- Lesson 1 - From the early Church to Arminius
- Lesson 2 - From Arminius to Wesley
- Lesson 3- Life of John Wesley and Factors in the Development of his Theology, The Quadrilateral as Wesley's Way of Doing Theology
- Lesson 4 - Theological Characteristics of Calvinism, Arminianism and Wesleyanism
- Lesson 5 - Wesleyan Influence on Classical Theology

Day Two

The Soteriological Heart of Wesley's Thought

- Lesson 6 – God's Existence and Attributes
- Lesson 7 – In the Image of God
- Lesson 8 – Wesley's Understanding of God's Grace

Day Three

- Lesson 9 – From Slumber to Awakening
- Lesson 10 – Convincing Grace: Awakening and Initial Repentance
- Lesson 11 – Pardon and the New Birth

Day Four

- Lesson 12 – Assurance of Salvation
- Lesson 13 – Holiness of Heart and Life
- Lesson 14 – The Process of Sanctification

Day Five

- Lesson 15 – Christian Perfection
- Lesson 16 – Sanctification—Growth and Maturity
- Lesson 17 – The Means of Grace and Wesley's View of the Sacraments
- Lesson 18 – The Influence of Wesley's Theology on Discipleship Structures

Day Six

- Lesson 19 – The Legacy of John Wesley
John Wesley Covenant Service, Communion, Final Exam

It is suggested the instructor conclude the class by using the John Wesley Covenant Service from the Free Methodist Hymnal and also share communion.

**Self-Directed Study Project
Request for Extra Credit
Introduction to Wesleyan Theology
(Instructor Copy)**

Student's Name: _____

Guidelines:

The project must include research in some area of Wesleyan Theology and involve a written paper, 8-10 pages in length. The paper must show evidence the subject is clearly understood and carefully presented, utilizing standard research guidelines. The Wesleyan quadrilateral should be utilized as an important tool to assist the student in doing the project.

Suggestions:

- A written book review of some scholarly work in Wesleyan theology.
- A carefully-crafted sermon developed from a biblical passage on the subject of sanctification, holiness, Christian perfection.
- Development of a survey of your local congregation to gain insights into their understanding of some aspect of Wesleyan theology.
- A descriptive and analytical study of a particular topic of Wesley's thought, such as predestination, prevenient grace, justification, sanctification, the witness of the Spirit, the theology of the Wesleyan hymns.

The project must be approved in advance by the course instructor.

The project must be mailed postmarked no later than 30 days after the last class session in order to avoid receiving an "Incomplete" grade.

Proposed Project for 3rd credit in Wesleyan Theology

Identify the research project you wish to pursue and the methodology you will utilize.

Approved by: _____

Mail to:

Date Approved: _____

(Remove this form and give it to the instructor.)

**Self-Directed Study Project
Request for Extra Credit
Introduction to Wesleyan Theology
(Student Copy)**

Student's Name: _____

Guidelines:

The project must include research in some area of Wesleyan Theology and involve a written paper, 8-10 pages in length. The paper must show evidence the subject is clearly understood and carefully presented, utilizing standard research guidelines. The Wesleyan quadrilateral should be utilized as an important tool to assist the student in doing the project.

Suggestions:

- A written book review of some scholarly work in Wesleyan theology.
- A carefully-crafted sermon developed from a biblical passage on the subject of sanctification, holiness, Christian perfection.
- Development of a survey of your local congregation to gain insights into their understanding of some aspect of Wesleyan theology.
- A descriptive and analytical study of a particular topic of Wesley's thought, such as predestination, prevenient grace, justification, sanctification, the witness of the Spirit, the theology of the Wesleyan hymns.

The project must be approved in advance by the course instructor.
The project must be mailed postmarked no later than 30 days after the last class session in order to avoid receiving an "Incomplete" grade.

Proposed Project for 3rd credit in Wesleyan Theology

Identify the research project you wish to pursue and the methodology you will utilize.

Approved by: _____

Mail to:

Date Approved: _____

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WESLEY MATERIALS

I. Primary Sources

- Baker, Frank, Albert C. Outler, Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. *The Works of Wesley*. 35 volumes projected. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975-. [known as the "Bicentennial Edition".]
- Kimbrough, S. T., Jr. and Oliver A. Breckerlegge. *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*. 3 volumes. Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1988-92.
- Wesley, John. *The Works of John Wesley* (14 volumes) Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, (reprinted in 1991 from the 1872 edition published by the Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, London, England)
- Wesley, John. *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*. Salem, Ohio: Schmull Publishers, n.d.
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- Wesley, John. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, London: The Epworth Press, 1952
- Whaling, Frank, ed. John and Charles Wesley: *Selected Prayers, Hymns, Journal Notes, Sermons, Letters and Treatises*. The Classics of Western Spirituality: A Library of the Great Spiritual Masters. New York: Paulist Press, 1982.

II. Secondary Sources

A. Theological

- Cannon, W.R. *The Theology of John Wesley*, Lanham, MD: The University Press of America, 1984
- Collins, Kenneth J. *A Faithful Witness: John Wesley's Homiletical Theology*. Wilmore, KY: Wesley Heritage Press, 1993.
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- Taylor, Richard S. *Understanding Ourselves: Acquiring a Christian Mind*. Salem, Ohio: Schmull Publishing Co., 1997.
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- Wynkoop, Mildred B. *Foundations of Wesleyan-Armenian Theology*, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1967

B. Evangelism and Discipleship

- Coleman, Robert E. “*Nothing to Do But to Save Souls*”. Wilmore, KY: Wesley Heritage Press, 1990.
- Henderson, D. Michael. *John Wesley's Class Meeting*. Nappanee, IN. Evangel Publishing House, 1997.
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- Snyder, Howard. *The Radical Wesley*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980.

C. Practical/Pastoral for Ministers and Lay Persons

- Demaray, Donald, *Wesleys' Hymns and Poetry; A Daily Devotional*, Anderson, Indiana: Bristol House, LTD, 2003
- Duewel, Wesley L. *God's Great Salvation*. Greenwood, IN: OMS International, Inc., 1991.
- Duewel, Wesley L. *More God More Power, Filled and Transfigured by the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000.
- Kendall, David. *God's Call to Be Like Jesus*. Indianapolis, IN: Light and Life Communications, 1999.
- King, C. Wesley, *Holiness for Earnest Christians*. Nicholasville, KY: Schmull Publishing Co., 2009.
- Oswalt, John N. *Called to be Holy, A Biblical Perspective*. Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1999.

D. Other Resources

- The Man from Aldersgate**—John Wesley, a 75 minute video of the life of John Wesley dramatized by Roger Nelson. Gospel Films, Inc., PO Box 455, Muskegon, MI 49443-0455
- Living Holiness**, the first in a series of annual videos showing Free Methodism's historical commitment to personal and social holiness. Videos are available from the Wesleyan Publishing House in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- DVD: Wesley's Chapel, Past and Present** – Presented by Paul Hulme, 20 minute guided tour of Wesley's Chapel
- WEB Site:** Wesley Center for Applied Theology <http://wesley.nnu.edu/>

Historical and Theological Background for Wesley's Thought

LESSON 1

From the Early Church to Arminius

1. Background Reading

Wynkoop, pages 1 - 46

2. Teaching Outline

Apostolic (Early Church) beliefs

- That Christ died for all men
- The God-given ability of all men to respond to God's salvation

Post-Apostolic beliefs

- The human will is free to choose good or evil, God or sin.
- But there is a drift to salvation by merit more than by faith.

The Pelagian-Augustinian Controversy

- Pelagius taught
 - Man has a perfectly free will. He can do what God requires him to do.
 - There is no innate impulse to sin, no original sin inherited from Adam.
 - Sin is the simple choice to do wrong.
 - Grace, as a cause, is unnecessary to move the will toward God. Christ acts as an Example (Moral Influence) and motivation to right acting.
- Augustine rejected this and affirmed
 - God created humans with the possibility of not sinning and not dying.
 - Man misused his freedom and willed to disobey God. As a consequence he entered the state of original sin and spiritual death because God no longer gave direction to the will.
 - The will became a sinning will. All people share in this evil will and all are guilty.
 - Salvation is only by Baptism, which assures a child of salvation; or by Grace, which is absolutely necessary for salvation, because only grace can move a person's will.
- Logical outcome of Augustine's reasoning
 - Absolute sovereignty of God
 - Fallen humans, absolutely powerless
 - Grace is irresistible
 - Elect persons are chosen from all eternity
 - Personal predestination is based on a divine decree.

The Development of the Doctrine of Personal Predestination

- The Catholic Church followed Augustine's teaching that the Church is the only door to God's grace and eternal salvation.
- Augustine's intellectual leadership furnished the philosophical foundation for the Reformation, particularly his concept of the sovereignty of God.
- Faith becomes subservient to grace and predestination becomes the controlling principle of Reformation theology.
- Calvin's **Institutes** became the theological authority in the Protestant world.

- **Calvin**
 - Built on Augustine's philosophy,
 - Reasoned that if some men are predestined to salvation, all others are predestined to damnation.

- **Beza**, Calvin's successor, went further
 - God causes persons to sin just as He causes persons to be saved.
 - He subscribed to a specific sequence of divine decrees with regard to creation, the Fall, and salvation
 - He presumed to know, apart from biblical teaching, what the correct order was.
 - The divine decrees having to do with the time sequence of creation, the Fall and salvation, were pre-determined in the pre-historical councils of the Godhead.

- Various positions on the timing of God's decrees developed:
 - Supralapsarianism
 - Infralapsarianism - (see Wynkoop, p. 44)
 - Sublapsarianism

- **Arminius**
 - Observed that in some systems Christ was made secondary and virtually unnecessary by these decrees in whatever order some of them appear.
 - He challenged this as an unbiblical interpretation of predestination.
 - We are not in ignorance with respect to God's purpose in creation.
 - "The Lamb slain before the foundation of the world" points the way to postulating a "decree," if such a word is proper, which puts Christ in the very center of human existence.
 - He is not only the creative Word of God, but He is the Fountainhead of God's love and redemptive grace.
 - Back of creation was the personal love of a personal God expressed through the second Person of the Godhead.
 - This is grace---original grace that preceded original sin, and anticipated it.

Reflective Questions (for further study)

1. Are persons saved by divine decrees predetermined in the secret counsel of God's inscrutable will?
2. Is a person saved by the church's baptism, or by faith in Christ?
3. How would you define Supralapsarianism? Infralapsarianism? Sublapsarianism?
4. Were the Protestant Reformers correct in making faith subservient to grace and predestination and to become the controlling principle of theology? Relate your answer to New Testament truth.

LESSON 2

From Arminius to Wesley

1. Background Readings

Wynkoop, pages 46-61

Note the material which follows. There is some duplication in these readings but there are some important differences in the details as well, so the student should read both.

2. Teaching Outline

The Rise of Arminian Ideas

The struggle for freedom and independence in the Low Countries

- The Low Countries were under the domination of Emperor Charles V and his son, Philip II of Spain.
- The south was heavily influenced by Catholicism and the north greatly influenced by Reformation ideas (Calvinistic side) and by medieval Mysticism (Gerhard Groot, Thomas à Kempis and the Brethren of the Common Life).
- Philip II attempted to crush Protestantism in the north by an invasion of Spanish forces in 1567 and a reign of terror that lasted six years.
- The Protestants in the north, led by William of Orange (1568-1584), finally won the victory over the Spanish forces by opening the dikes and flooding the countryside with sea water.
- This led to the formation of two nations: Holland (Protestant) and Belgium (Catholic), and to
- The subsequent organization of the Reformed Church of Holland.

- The Life of James (Jacob) Arminius (1560—1609)

- He was born in 1560, four years before the death of Calvin.
- He studied at Leyden, Geneva and Basel.
 - He had contact with Theodore Beza, successor to Calvin in Geneva.
 - He disliked the importance given to Aristotelian teaching.
- In the pastorate (1588 – 1603)
 - Koornhert, a rich Dutch businessman attacked the extreme Calvinistic viewpoint of double predestination.
 - Arminius was chosen to respond to Koornhert's attack.
 - As a result of Arminius' biblical studies with respect to predestination:
 - He discovered certain serious implications in the doctrine of predestination.
 - He became convinced that Calvinism was indefensible.
 - From a rather complete examination of the Scriptures, there was born a theological point of view that did not harmonize with the austere Calvinism of that day, namely, the Arminian point of view with regard to God, man, sin and salvation.
 - The new theological point of view of Arminius awoke much attention and provoked heated debate and controversy in the heart of the Reformed Church of Holland.
 - Franz Gomarus, professor of Theology at Leyden and a colleague of Arminius, considered him to be a dangerous element in the training of new generations of ministers.

The years on the Theological Faculty (1603 – 1609)

- Arminius awakened the jealousy of Gomarus when he searched the New Testament to better understand the Book of Jonah.
- The situation became so inflamed that the authorities of the Church called a meeting of the two contenders, Arminius and Gomarus, with the presence of eight (8) ministers from the United Provinces.
 - The attack and the defense
 - In the end, the Council felt that the controversy was not that important and advocated mutual tolerance.
- Arminius was condemned by Gomarus throughout the country.
- Persecution, misunderstandings and physical suffering followed Arminius to the end of the journey in 1609.
- He died at the age of 49. He did not live long enough to see the end of the great struggle for his ideas.

Summary of Arminius' views

- Arminius did not reject the fact of predestination or the biblical teaching regarding it, but he showed by careful exegesis that Beza's interpretation was not biblically sound.
- Arminius' teaching was an ethical criticism of the supralapsarian concept of predestination. The implications of this theory tend to relax moral integrity.
- Arminius stressed an interpretation of predestination, which understood God's grace as strengthening moral life rather than weakening it.
- Grace is God's love and moral energy available to all persons.
- Grace is not, he thought, an arbitrary imposition of the will of God on passive people.
- To Arminius, predestination must be Christ-centered, as all theology must be Christ-centered.
- His emphasis on Christ was the major corrective of Calvinism's errors and the major Arminian emphasis.
- Final authority for Christian faith and theological truth is God's Word. God's Word must become the judge of the creeds and of all theological proclamation about God's nature and work.

The Dissemination of Arminian Ideas

- The systemization of Arminius' doctrines by his successors
- Soon there appeared many sympathetic followers such as John Oldenbornveldt, Leader of the Province of Holland, Hugo Grotius, John Uytenbogaert and Simon Episcopius (1583-1643), Arminius' successor at Leyden. He wrote:

“The First Arminian Confession of Faith”
“An Apology”
“An Institutiones Theologicae”.

- The controversy waxed hotter and hotter involving even politics.
- The political and religious situation was intimately interwoven in the following way.

Arminianism	Calvinism
Oldenbornveldt, an Arminian sympathizer defended the republican regime.	Maurice of Orange fought for centralized nationalism and was supralapsarian.
Arminianism advocated tolerance and religious freedom.	Calvinism tended to be dogmatic and did not favor democracy.
Arminianism sought to give importance to the value of each person.	Calvinism exalted the sovereignty of God.

- In an attempt to reconcile the two points of view, Oldenbornveldt, in 1610, asked the followers of Arminius to prepare a declaration of faith to be presented to the government to obtain tolerance for their position.
- Hugo Grotius compiled the Arminian ideas in a document that came to be known as the Remonstrance, and the adherents known as Remonstrants.
 - Five fundamental points of the Remonstrant's declaration:
 1. Conditional election based on man's acceptance of Christ's invitation to salvation
 2. Universal atonement
 3. Total depravity of the sinner but only in the sense of extent, not degree. Sin touched the whole being of a person but did not make one incapable of responding affirmatively to God's call to salvation, inasmuch as God offers every person the grace that enables him/her to return to Christ to receive forgiveness
 4. Resistible grace
 5. The possibility of person renouncing his/her faith and being lost

Five Cardinal Points of Arminianism	Five Cardinal Points of Calvinism
1. Conditional election based on one's acceptance of Christ's invitation to salvation.	1. Unconditional election based on God's decrees.
2. Universal atonement, Christ's vicarious sacrifice extends to all humankind.	2. Limited atonement, only those whom God has elected to salvation are covered by the atonement.
3. Total depravity of the sinner but only in extent, not degree.	3. Total depravity of the sinner in both extent and degree.
4. Resistible grace, a person can refuse the gracious offer of salvation.	4. Irresistible grace, a person cannot refuse.
5. The possibility of person renouncing his/her faith and being lost eternally.	5. The impossibility of apostasy, linked to the concept of "eternal security".

The Final Crisis

- The Calvinists answered with a “Counter-Remonstrance.”
- There followed many polemics and even armed struggle; Oldenbornveldt was decapitated in prison and Grotius was exiled from the country.
- In the end, Maurice of Orange and the Calvinists won the victory.
- The Synod of Dort (1618-1619) was convened to definitively resolve the theological questions and unify the religious administration.
 - Present were 84 theological delegates and 18 lay delegates representing Calvinism. Simon Episcopius and 14 colleagues were present representing Arminianism.
 - Results of the conclave:
 - The adherents of Arminianism were branded as heretics
 - The following declarations were confirmed:
 - Counter-Remonstrance
 - The Belgian Confession
 - The Heidelberg Catechism.
- The ultimatum of the Synod to the Arminians: Cease teaching your theology or go into exile with the resulting “Act of Cessation”.

The Repression of Arminianism

- The repression of the Arminians in Holland continued until the death of Maurice of Orange, a Calvinist, but the Arminian theology spread to other countries, notably England, and later North America.
- Those embracing Arminianism became the Wesleyans and General Baptists in England and the Quakers, Methodists, Free Will Baptists, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Salvation Army, Assemblies of God, Christian and Missionary Alliance, some charismatics and pentecostals and all the holiness denominations [such as Free Methodist, Nazarene, Wesleyan and Church of God-Anderson] in America and elsewhere.

The Introduction of Arminian Ideas into the Church of England

- The living ember of Arminianism from the bonfire of controversy in Holland was carried to England by John Hales.
 - Hales was a clergyman from Eton, professor of Greek at Oxford, beginning in 1612, and was present at the Synod of Dort.
 - Converted by the pleading of Simon Episcopius, Hales returned to his homeland and became a strenuous defender of Arminianism.

The Ebb and Flow of Arminian tendencies within the Church of England

- Beginning with the Reign of Edward VI (1547–1553), the Church of England embraced Lutheranism for a while, adhering at last to Calvinism, but maintaining a position midway between Protestantism and Catholicism.
- This transition to which the Church held dated back to the preaching of Peter Baro, a French anti-Calvinist divine (1534–1599), and to Bishop Richard Hooker (1553?–1600), but by the time King George I (1714-1727) ascended to the English throne, was almost concluded.
- From the time of Hooker, Anglican theologians such as Laud, Andrews, Hales, Chillingworth, Taylor, Benjamin Whichcote, Burnett and Bull, attempted to reconcile the Calvinist doctrine of grace with that of works in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church, and the resulting consequence was an evident approximation to Arminianism.
- In his debate with the Jesuit Fisher in 1622, Laud gave to faith a rational interpretation in such a way as to make man operative with God in the work of his salvation. (W.R. Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley* p. 35.)
- Later, in 1699, Bishop Burnett gave a new stimulus to Arminian thought on the publication of his *Exposition of the 39 Articles* with an interpretation of Article XVII, where he dealt with predestination giving it a distinctive Arminian meaning.
- The best example of an effort to reconcile grace with works and of this Arminian tendency is found in the work entitled “Apostolic Harmony” by Bishop George Bull (1634-1710).
- In this work, Bull affirms that justification is by faith and works. Faith includes all the works of Christian piety. Faith is not limited only to accepting as valid the teachings of the Gospel. It also involves one’s desire to be good and to do good. In other words, faith comes to be an act of man himself. (Cannon, p. 41.)
- The theology of Bishop Bull was so widespread in the official Church of England that by the beginning of the eighteenth century, the “39 Articles of Religion” were still Calvinistic, but the Anglican clergy were primarily Arminian in their ideas.
- John Wesley lived in this eighteenth century and was a part of the ministry of the official Church of England.

Reflective Questions (for further study)

1. How did Arminius harmonize his predestination theology with the ideas of decrees? See the four decrees he set forth.
2. How did the Anglican theologians of the 17th century deal with the Calvinist idea of grace and the Catholic teaching on works?

LESSON 3

The Life of John Wesley and Factors in the Development of his Theology

1. Background Reading

The material that follows in this lesson

Give primary attention to “The Introduction to John Wesley” in **Appendix A**

2. Teaching Outline

The Life of John Wesley

- Wesley’s life before Aldersgate (1738)
 - Upbringing and education
 - Ordination to the ministry
 - The trip to Georgia
 - The Moravian influence on Wesley with regard to their emphasis on faith
 - John Wesley’s life-changing evangelical conversion on May 24, 1738 at Aldersgate, and Charles Wesley’s conversion three days before.

- Wesley’s life after Aldersgate (1738)
 - The Moravian influence on Wesley with regard to their piety, theology and organizational plan to foster spiritual formation (small groups).
 - Wesley initiates field preaching to reach the masses with the Gospel.
 - His tireless efforts during his 50-year evangelistic ministry.
 - Charles Wesley’s outstanding contribution to the success of John’s ministry with the writing of hundreds of hymns expressing Wesleyan theology (see Appendix C). The early Methodists “sang their theology.”
 - John Wesley’s unhappy marriage to Mary Vazeille.
 - Wesley’s emphasis on the evangelical aspects of faith, universal redemption, divine assurance that one is saved and on Christian Perfection and personal holiness often brought him into sharp conflict with Calvinists and other opponents of his teaching.
 - The Wesleyan “quadrilateral” as sources of authority for Wesley.
 - Scripture
 - Reason
 - Tradition
 - Experience
 - Wesley’s extensive writings.
 - Wesley’s self-evaluation of his undiminished strength and ability in his later years.
 - The strength of the **Methodist movement** at his death on March 2, 1791.

Factors in the Development of Wesley's Theology

Rational, Moral and Political Factors in England

- **Rational:** Deism was the prevailing philosophy.
 - The crowning feature of the English Deists was the naturalization of religion, whereby they eliminated from it all supernatural elements.
 - A group of religious thinkers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries began to (1) harmonize reason and revelation; (2) cast doubt upon traditional supernaturalism and the possibility of external revelation; and (3) emphasize the fact that faith ought to serve Reason. (W.R. Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley* pp. 18-20.)
 - Probably Matthew Tindal was the best representative of the Deist movement and his book titled *Christianity As Old As Creation* that appeared in 1730 sought to prove that natural religion is a pure and unalterable phenomenon, independent of dogmas and the faults of the priesthood. He wrote:
 - Considering that God is perfect, any religion that God gives to man perfect; therefore, revelation is unnecessary and irrelevant to religion.
 - The Bible is a fallible book, full of errors and many unworthy things.
 - Reason is one's ultimate guide, philosopher and friend. It is the ground of revelation and the criterion of faith. (Cannon, p. 18)
 - Rationalism had penetrated the ranks of orthodoxy; Christianity was seen as a simple set of good ideas and opinions.
- **Moral:** Corrupt tendencies characterized the eighteenth century.
 - Even though there were some traces of religion in the land, the nation was characterized by immorality and impiety.
 - The statesmen and intellectuals had little contact with religion; in fact, they laughed at it.
 - The masses of the people were poor, ignorant, and brutal.
 - The criminal classes were bold; the punishment for small offenses was severe.
 - The leaders of England encouraged the slave trade.
 - Genuine religion was on the decline, and the Church itself was spiritually far too weak to face up to and impact the moral deficiency of the century. (Cannon, pp. 23-24.)
- **Political:** It was an era of great political changes.
 - In France, there was the collapse of the political schemes of Louis XIV, with the horrors of the French Revolution.
 - It marked the birth of German nationalism under the leadership of Frederick the Great, and the birth of the North-American nation in the War of Independence.
 - This era also witnessed the growth of the British Empire in the vision of William Pitt.

Theological Factors that Influenced Wesley

- **Anglican theology in the 16th and 17th centuries.**

The theology of the 39 Articles, the Book of Common Prayer and the Homilies were Calvinistic and presented the main doctrines of the Reformation. (W.R. Cannon, p. 88 and footnote no. 37.)

Richard Hooker (1553–1600), more than any other English theologian put Anglicanism within the flow of historical Christianity of the sixteenth century (Cannon, pp. 31 ff.)

He insisted that justification is a divine act that is made possible only through the merits of Jesus Christ. (Cannon, p. 34.)

However, “the validity of man’s election to justification does depend on his own consent; his will is consulted, and nothing is given him except by his own deliberate advice and choice.” (Ibid, p. 35.) Here he leaves the company of John Calvin.

Cannon observes that “Anglicanism was a roof which covered many opinions; and side by side in the house of the same tradition sat Calvinist and Arminian, the followers of Abbott and those of Laud. Even more, the temper of a particular period picked its favorites and conferred its popularity, so that justification by faith was the slogan of the age of Elizabeth, while that of justification through the Church was characteristic of the time of Charles I.” (Cannon, pp. 32-33.)

- **Anglican Theology on the Eve of the 18th Century**

- Even though at the opening of the eighteenth century there was an attempt to hold together in a single system God’s grace and man’s responsibility, the chief emphasis was laid on man and on the requirements one must meet in order to be justified. (Cannon, p. 43.)
- George Bull (1634–1710), Bishop of the Church of England, emphasizes the point by saying: “Justification signifies that love of God, by which he embraces those who are already leading a holy life, and determines them to be worthy of the reward of life eternal through Christ.” (Bull, *Whole Works*, II, 7, and quoted by Cannon, p. 38.)
- The Anglican Church put great emphasis on the sacraments and considered them among the good works necessary to the fulfillment of the conditions for justification. (Cannon, p. 42.)
 - Anglicanism accepts baptismal regeneration. This does not mean that an un-baptized child will necessarily be lost, but that baptism is the usual means that God takes to regenerate. (see Cannon, footnote 55 on p. 42.)
 - The Lord’s Supper signifies that God confirms and strengthens and keeps a person in the Christian life and causes one to perform good works. (Cannon, p. 42.)
- The death of Christ was for all humankind, but personal salvation is conditioned to one’s free will. Faith is, in reality, a work. (Cannon, p. 41.)

The Theology of John Wesley's parents

- Wesley's parents belonged to the school that could be called "English Arminianism". They rejected the Calvinist doctrines of predestination and unconditional election. The Wesleys affirmed the freedom of humankind. (Cannon, p. 45ff.)
- John Wesley's parents also accepted the doctrine of universal atonement, but believed that the work of Christ had to be appropriated by each person.
- In harmony with the Anglican emphasis of the period, John Wesley's parents believed that one is justified both by faith and by works. Faith does not remain alone; it has always to be sustained by works of obedience.
- They viewed the sacraments in harmony with the teaching of the Anglican Church.
 - Baptism washes away the condemning guilt of original sin by the application of virtue of Christ's death and, thus, the individual is admitted to the Christian Church.
 - The sacrament of the Lord's Supper grants power and strength to defeat sin and carry out the duties of the Christian life.
- Faith for the Wesley's parents was not a free gift from God implanted in the soul, but a human act that is found among the works of moral endeavor. (Cannon, p. 48.)

John Wesley before 1738 (the year of his evangelical conversion)

- His training in the home.

- Wesley was reared in a very pious home, but one that emphasized duty.
- The family was reared according to rules. Religion is nothing else than doing the will of God and not our own will.
- "The forces which produced John Wesley's theology are not...found in the intellectual subtleties of various and conflicting modes of philosophical thought. Rather, they are to be found in the moral and spiritual endeavors of his life, in his earnest attempt to be something and to do something in and for the Kingdom of God." (Cannon, p. 53.)

- His reading of four classic works.

- In 1725, Wesley read Jeremy Taylors' *Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Holy Dying*. The result was that he understood the importance of purity of intention. The book also emphasized service and obedience. **Results:** Wesley resolved to dedicate all his life to God. (Ibid, p. 54.)
- In the same year, he read *The Christian Pattern, or A Treatise of the Imitation of Jesus Christ* by Thomas à Kempis. **Results:** Wesley was impressed with the nature and extent of inward religion and with the fact that the true Christian seeks to imitate his/her Lord. His religious efforts were thus revived.
- Sometime thereafter he read William Law's *Christian Perfection and Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. **Results:** He resolved to devote himself wholly to God. Christian perfection for Law consisted in nothing but the right performance of our necessary duties, in our holy and religious conduct in every state of life.
- As Cannon points out, "Law's temper in these two works is stern, austere, melancholy. The brighter side of Christianity is not emphasized, and the joy and glad

tidings of the gospel are silenced by the uncompromising command of duty and of law.” (Cannon, pp. 57ff.)

- His humanistic center of faith.

- Prior to Aldersgate, the chief motive of John Wesley’s life, to which all other motives were subordinate, was the hope of saving his own soul. (Cannon, p. 62.)
- The basic principle of Wesley’s ideas prior to 1738 was that a person had to be saved by moral goodness, through universal obedience and through the rigid fulfillment of all the commandments of God. (Cannon, p. 63.)
- Self-love was at the very center of his life.
- During this earlier period (1725–1738) Wesley had the religion of a servant but not of a spiritually adopted son. (Cannon, p. 65.)
(See Illustration No. 2 on page 26)

Factors in the Collapse of Wesley’s Early View of Justification

- The chief factor lay within himself and expressed itself in the form of uncertainty, doubt, and at times even un-garnished fear. (Cannon, pp. 69ff.)
- The second factor was the complete failure of his missionary efforts in Georgia. [North America]
- The third factor was his disillusion with human nature and the self-adaptability of man to the conditions of salvation, stemming from his work with the American Indian, or “noble savage”.
- The fourth factor was the Moravian influence in Wesley’s life, particularly that of Spangenberg and Peter Bohler, and their insistence that faith itself is the gift of God, not a rational belief in the Christian way of life.

The Experiential Factor

- The importance of Wesley’s heart-warming experience at Aldersgate on May 24, 1738 is emphasized for various reasons:
 - First, it marks the date of Wesley’s evangelical conversion (conversion here is defined as that act of God Himself by which man is saved from sin and made a new creature in Christ Jesus. It involves repentance and faith). (Cannon. p. 68.)
 - Second, it brought a new emphasis in Wesley’s ministry, especially in preaching salvation by faith. Observation: his sermon “Salvation by Faith” was preached for the first time eighteen days later on June 11, 1738.
 - Third, it also marked the beginning of the Eighteenth-Century Revival and the beginning of Wesley’s 50-year period of evangelistic activity.

Stages of Development in Wesley's Ministry

Wesley himself gives an important glimpse into his experience as preacher in which his glowing transformation in 1738 at Aldersgate is highlighted as a great release and upon which he begins to build his evangelistic ministry. There were four phases in the development of his ministry as preacher, with Wesley himself characterizing each period. The analysis is so significant we present it in its entirety:

- **“First stage:** Between 1725 and 1729 I preached much, but did not see fruit from my work. In reality, I couldn't see it because I did not present the foundation of repentance, nor belief in the gospel; I presumed that all of my listeners were believers and that they had no need of repentance.”
- **“Second stage:** Between 1729 and 1734, basing myself more on repentance, I began to see fruit. But they were few; and it couldn't be different; I did not preach faith in the blood of the covenant.”
- **“Third stage:** Between 1734 and 1738, speaking more about faith in Christ, I saw more fruit from my preaching and visits from house to house than I had ever seen; but I did not know whether or not those who were externally changed, were also internally and entirely converted to God.”
- **“Fourth stage:** From 1738 on, speaking continually of Jesus Christ, putting Him alone as the foundation of the building, making Him everything in all, the First and the Last, preaching only this: ‘The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the gospel,’ the Word of God ran as fire through the dry fields; it was glorified more and more; multitudes cried out: ‘what must we do to be saved?’ (*The Works of Wesley*, VIII, 468-469.)

Wesley's evaluation of his belief prior to 1738:

In his treatise, “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,” Wesley wrote: “I was ordained deacon in 1725 and priest in the following year. But it was many years later that I was convinced of the great truths mentioned above. During all this time, I was completely ignorant of the nature and conditions of Justification. At times, I confused it with sanctification (particularly when I was in Georgia); on other occasions, I had confused ideas with respect to the forgiveness of sins; but, then, I was certain that that very moment would be the hour of death or the day of judgment.

Equally I was ignorant of the nature of saving faith, believing that it signifies no more than a “firm acceptance of all the declarations contained in the Old and New Testaments.” (Cannon, p. 111.)

In one of his first conferences with his preachers (the first was held in 1744), Wesley asked: “In what does our present doctrine differ from that that we preached at Oxford?”

Wesley's answer is significant: “Mainly in these two points: (1) At the time we knew nothing about the righteousness of faith in justification; (2) nor of the nature of faith itself, that it implied a knowledge of forgiveness.” (Cannon, p. 290.)

Aldersgate is a dividing line in the life and ministry of Wesley. Before 1738, there was duty, a rational approach to salvation and minimal success in Wesley’s ministry, but after the 1738 Aldersgate experience, Wesley had an implicit trust in Christ for salvation, a message focused in Christ and his ministry began to bear much fruit. (See Richard Green, *The Conversion of John Wesley*, pp. 39-40.)

Wesley Summarizes His Main Doctrines:

“Many, many times I have declared with all the clarity I possess, what are our doctrines, where we are distinguished from pagans and nominal Christians and from those who do not worship God in spirit and truth. Our main doctrines, which include the rest, are three: Repentance, Faith and Holiness.

The first of these may be considered as it were the porch of religion; the second, the door; and the third, religion itself.” (Letter to Thomas Church, June 17, 1746. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, A.M., John Telford Edition, II, pp. 267-8.)

ILLUSTRATION No. 1

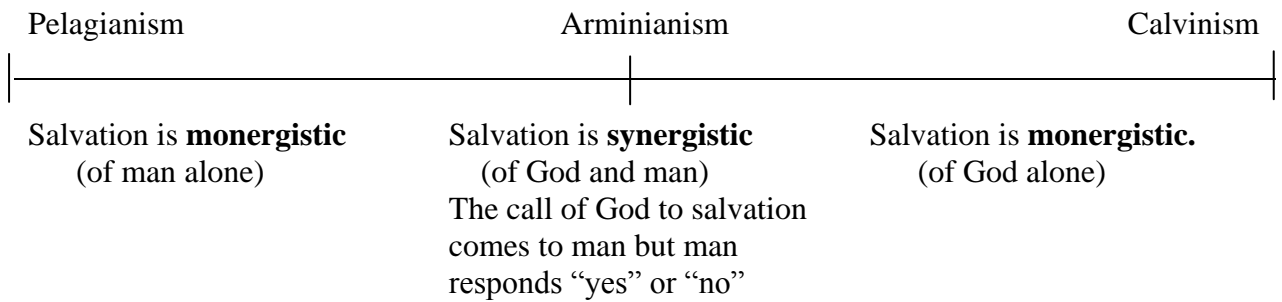
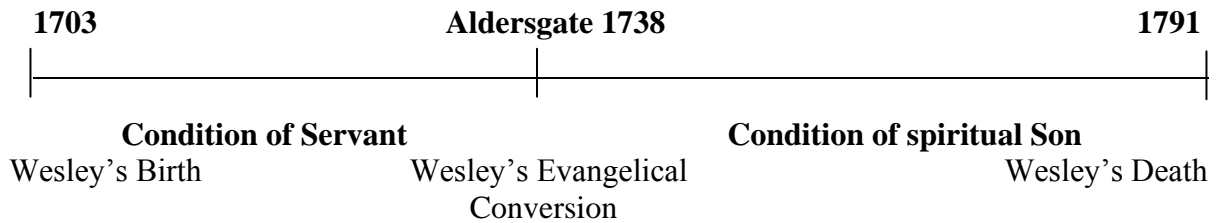


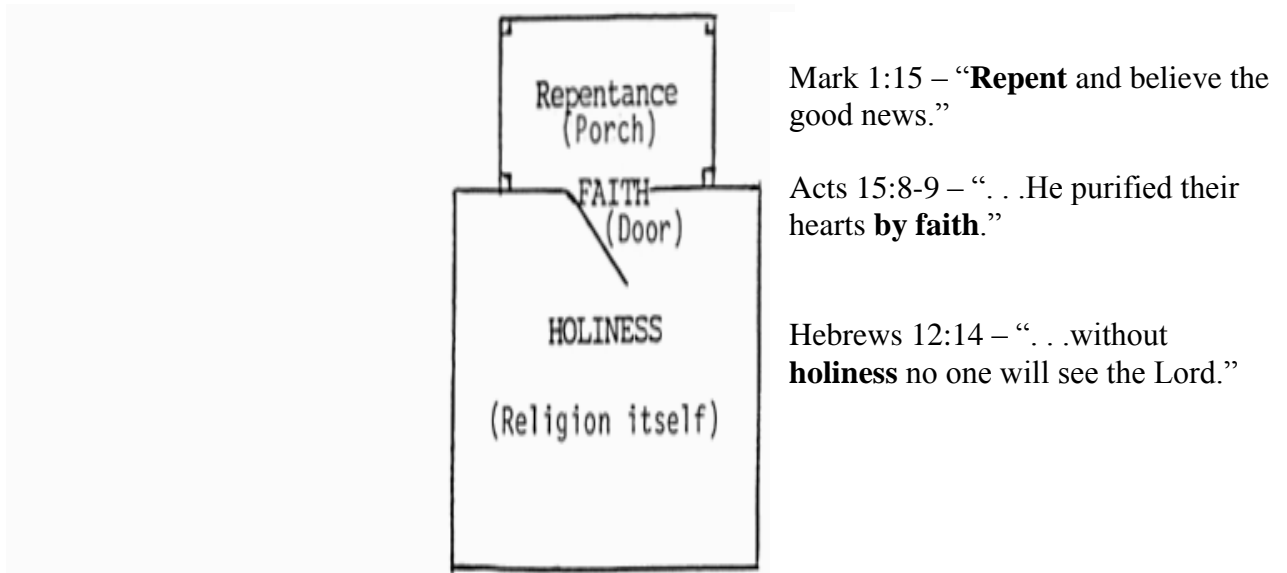
ILLUSTRATION No. 2



For Wesley’s distinctions between being “a servant” and “a son” see Kenneth Collins, *A Faithful Witness*, p. 134.

ILLUSTRATION No. 3

For the significance of this illustration, or diagram, see John Wesley's statement above.



Reflective Questions (for further study)

How do you explain the fact that John Wesley never gave a clear personal testimony that he was ever entirely sanctified, yet taught that this experience was for all believers?

What factors in England and in John Wesley's life did God use to bring about the Eighteenth-Century Revival?

Wesley was deeply influenced by the writings of Jeremy Taylor, Thomas a Kempis and William Law.

In addition to the Bible, what books are deeply influencing your life as a follower of Jesus?

Who are the people in your life that have influenced and are influencing you to become a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ?

Take time to read and review Wesley's life as presented in the appendix. What most impresses you about John Wesley?

How sound is Wesley's quadrilateral as a method for determining truth? Scripture, reason, tradition and experience?

Have you had a vital "Aldersgate" kind of encounter with God?

LESSON 4

Theological Characteristics of Calvinism, Arminianism and Wesleyanism

1. Background Reading

Wynkoop pages 61-69

2. Teaching Outline

High Calvinism

- Defined by the Five Points of the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) and elaborated in the Westminster Confession of Faith.
- Built on God's absolute sovereignty which elects (predestines) some people to salvation and others to damnation, and makes any genuine human initiative impossible.
- This "fixed fate" theology readily contributes to a lack of evangelistic urgency.
- Two extreme and theologically opposing streams flow from high Calvinism.
 - One is the "orthodox" stream just described
 - The other stream flows into the neo-orthodox movement, which leads to a belief in "universalism," or the salvation of all people in the end.

The Calvinist "Tulip"

T-otal Depravity
U-nconditional Election
L-imited Atonement
I-rrestible Grace
P-erseverance of the Saints

Arminianism

- Liberal Arminianism is based on Pelagian rationalism and is humanistic.
- Evangelical Arminianism is based on the Remonstrants' Five Points (see lesson 2)
- Arminians believe that salvation is conditional on faith in Christ.
- Arminianism is a protest against the antinomian tendencies of Calvinism.

Wesleyanism

- Wesleyans put personal faith at the very heart of religion.
- They hold not only to "justification by faith" but also the twin truth of "sanctification by faith" with all its ethical implications.
- Evangelical faith is the foundation for love and obedience to Christ.
- To stem the tide of liberal Arminianism and cold, high Calvinism in their day, the Wesley brothers raised a strong appeal to:
 - The necessity of a personal transforming experience of God's pardoning grace for committed sins,
 - The Holy Spirit's cleansing power to remove the stain of inbred sin
 - A life worthy of God to be lived in this world and which answered the needs of a society saturated with selfishness and greed.

Wesleyan-Arminianism

- Wesleyan-Arminianism opposes Pelagian liberalism by insisting upon the need for Christ, the Redeemer, who must save us from actual and inbred sin.
- It also opposes the antinomianism of high Calvinism by the doctrine of deliverance from the “taint of depravity”, and the doctrine of grace which enables a person to live without willful sin in his/her life.
- Wesley’s emphasis was not so much on free will as it was on free grace, or prevenient grace at work in all people.
- Wesley added an essential element to the Arminian insight, the work of the Holy Spirit, which is now a pervasive and far-reaching element in today’s evangelical theology.
- Wesleyanism is Arminian orthodoxy infused with the warmth and power of the Holy Spirit.

Two Widely-Held Calvinist Points

In the contemporary theological climate, some Calvinists reject, diminish or ignore all but two of Calvin’s Five Points. The two that remain are:

1. Absolute human depravity

A total rejection of Pelagius. Emphasis on imputed guilt or inherited depravity. Original sin involves both guilt and depravity.

Calvinism holds to the incurable sinfulness of the whole person. The spirit may be saved, but the body cannot. Human nature is so corrupted by original sin that its effects are experienced in one’s thoughts, words and deeds, whether the person is a believer or an unbeliever.

This underlying assumption impacts one’s understanding of sanctification. Most who hold this view believe one is finally made holy only in the moment of death.

2. Unconditional eternal security of the believer

Commonly held as the view that once a person has trusted in Christ, one cannot lose their salvation regardless of one’s life style subsequent to the salvation event. A primary argument is that once we have become a child of God through election, we cannot undo that. A son is always a son. A daughter is always a daughter. This position is known as “once saved, always saved.” The following conclusions may result from this theological position:

- a. As a sinner one is free to accept or reject Christ
- b. As a Christian one loses the freedom to reject Christ.
- c. As a sinner, one is held morally responsible for sin.
- d. As a Christian, God no longer sees any continuing sin, but only the blood of Christ.

The danger of this position is that sin can easily be excused in the believer.

This position is variously held by Calvinist theologians.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the biblical texts:

1. There is “eternal security” in Christ. One who walks in faithfulness to Christ need not live in constant doubt about their salvation.
2. The responsibility for continuing obedience is essential for the believer. The Bible requires more than “acceptance of Christ” as Savior. Not only is initiating faith required, there is also a call for continuing obedience. (see Wynkoop, Foundations, p. 120)

Reflective Questions (for further study)

How does the governing will of high Calvinism differ from the more evangelical and biblical teaching on God's permissive will?

In what ways have the 5 Cardinal Points of Arminianism influenced Christian theology since the days of Arminius and Wesley?

What are the primary contrasts in theology between Calvin and Wesley as found in Wynkoop's book on pages 65-68?

What are the potential implications of a "fixed fate" theology on both evangelistic outreach and the life-long discipleship of believers?

LESSON 5

Wesleyan Influence on Classical Theology

1. Background Readings

Wynkoop, pages 70-105

Donald Bastian, *Does Doctrine Matter?* A pamphlet published by Free Methodist Communications.

2. Teaching Outline

Neo-Calvinism (Mild, or Low Calvinism)

- Under the biblical impact of Arminius' and Wesley's preaching, the doctrine of "particular" or personal predestination began to crumble in many regions where Calvinism was the dominant Protestant theology.
- When the emphasis on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit weakened the rigid structure of Calvinism, there emerged a new emphasis on evangelism. The revivals of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries and the work of evangelists like Charles Finney, Dwight L. Moody and Billy Graham are often cited as examples.
- Neo-Calvinism has been influenced by Arminian theology, although it retains two of the Original Five Points:
 - Absolute human depravity (extent and degree).
 - The unconditional eternal security of the believer, or "once saved, always saved."
- Most Calvinist Christians live better than the implications of their theology. Many have deeply spiritual lives and a fervent, dynamic witness for Christ.
- A belief in an evil human nature that cannot be changed in this life, coupled with a belief in unconditional eternal security, easily robs Christians of the spiritual victory which the Bible teaches is possible in this life. One need not wait until the moment of death to experience deliverance from sinning. The current popular teaching of "eternal security" i.e. "once saved, always saved" must never become an excuse for habitual sin in the believer's life.

Wesleyan Calvinism

- This is the result of uniting Calvin's doctrine of human depravity and unconditional eternal security to Wesley's doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Wesley's teaching relative to victory over sin and dynamic power for service is fused with Calvin's concept of human nature which says that it is antagonistic to grace and cannot be reformed in this life.
- This sets up a lifelong conflict between the Holy Spirit and the "flesh" or human nature which is regarded as normative Christian lifestyle.
- The source of this concept may well originate in Gnostic/Greek dualism, or the basic conflict between spirit and body which is neither Pauline nor biblical.
- Emphasis is placed on "process" rather than on "crisis" with the indwelling Holy

Spirit gradually overcoming and controlling the “flesh”. (See **Appendix E** for several variations of this concept.)

- In this view, a believer may speak of being possessed, or filled with the Holy Spirit, and experience some degree of victory, yet wait to be delivered from inbred sin or “inbeing sin” until the moment of death.

Calvinistic Wesleyanism

- This is a tendency within holiness circles to link a Calvinistic view of human nature to the concept of the “eradication” of the carnal nature.
- This viewpoint sets up a sort of dual human nature--human nature itself and carnal nature--almost two entities or selves and is a faulty concept of human nature and personality.
- Paul’s philosophy was not pagan and dualistic, but Hebrew. He held the Hebrew view of the unity of personality and wrote about this in the New Testament under divine inspiration.
- Inbred sin, inherited from Adam, is a deep stain in human personality, which can be purged, or cleansed, by the blood of Christ and the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit.
- Wesleyan Calvinism tends to emphasize the growth aspect, or the gradual subduing of the carnal nature.
- Calvinistic Wesleyanism, on the other hand, tends to emphasize the crisis aspect of sanctification to the neglect of the growth aspect.
- Wesley’s view of human nature enabled him to relate crisis and process, creatively keeping them together.
- The overemphasis on “crisis” and “experience” easily leads to inner subjectivism (introspection) and diminished energy for aggressive evangelism and winning the lost. An unhealthy preoccupation with self emerges.

Doctrinal Differences in the Light of Biblical Interpretation (see Wynkoop, pp. 82- 86)

- The Doctrine of God and Human Responsibility
- Human Presuppositions
- The Bible and Human Experience

Theological Tensions Raised by the Doctrine of Personal, or Particular, Predestination (See Wynkoop, pp. 87-105)

- God’s will and Man’s will
- God’s will and God’s grace
 - Common Grace (Calvinistic)
 - Wesley’s view of Grace
- God’s Grace and Man’s Sin
 - The Image of God

- Christ is the “image of God.”
- The image in which we are made is precisely Christ image.
- He becomes the Christ-pattern for our renewal in the moral image of God, which is “righteousness and true holiness.”
- This gives meaning to Romans 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; and Colossians 3:10.
- Predestination and holiness are not mutually exclusive but a “perfect fit”.

Reflective Questions (for further study)

How can God be sovereign and we be free persons?

As you reflect on the distinctions between a Calvinist and Arminian understanding of salvation, which do you believe to be more coherent and biblical, salvation by decree or salvation by faith? Why?

How do you make the distinction between the Calvinist understanding of predestination and a Wesleyan understanding of predestination?

The Soteriological Heart of Wesley’s Thought

Introduction for the Remaining Lessons

“There can...be no doubt that ‘life in the Spirit’ and ‘the fruit of the Spirit’ were the deepest and most nearly constant concerns of both brothers, from childhood till death.

“It may be important,...in reading the Wesleys, to realize how intently but almost without full awareness, they were working with a distinctive **pneumatology** that has no exact equivalent in ‘Western spirituality’ up to their time. This distinctive emphasis on the person and work of the Holy Spirit separates them at least by nuance from Puritan, Moravian and Lutheran Pietists before their time and from all Pentecostals and holiness associations after them.(who have so often invoked their authority). Their doctrine of **perfection** as the perfection of intention and love had a sub-surface pre-history in Anglicanism (in obscure men like Robert Gell and Thomas Drayton); there are echoes of it in medieval Catholicism (as in Fénelon and William of St. Thierry). But the brothers Wesley placed it as the capstone of their vision of the entire ‘order of salvation’ and made it turn on an especially vivid sense of the pervasive and personal reality of the Holy Spirit in all human experience--in conscience, faith, reason and moral agency. So wide and vital is the role and range of prevenient grace (which for the Wesleys, was always identified as the special work of the Holy Spirit). In religious experience, this means that conscience is always in order to repentance (understood as self-knowledge rather than remorse), just as repentance, then is in order to faith, as faith is in order to hope and love, as finally, love is in order to that holiness and true happiness for which we were created in the first place. This also means that ‘Christian Perfection’ is perfection in love--to God above all and to neighbor as a spiritual consequence. Such a doctrine presupposes both the sovereignty of grace and the participation of the human spirit, always and only in re-action to the actions of the Holy Spirit.”

--from Albert C. Outler, *John and Charles Wesley: Selected Writings and Hymns*, Preface pp. xiii—xvi.

LESSON 6

God's Existence and Attributes

Texts: **Jeremiah 23:24** "Do not I fill heaven and earth? says the Lord."

Mark 12:32 "There is one God."

1 John 5:20 "This is the true God and eternal life."

1. The Background Sermons of John Wesley

"On the Omnipresence of God" (1788)

"The Unity of the Divine Being" (1789)

"On the Trinity"

"On Divine Providence"

"Salvation by Faith" (1738)

"The Wisdom of God's Counsels"

"Spiritual Worship" (1780)

2. Teaching Outline with Sample Wesley Texts

The Existence of God

- He is in every place
- He acts in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, through the whole compass of his creation
 - By sustaining all things
 - By governing all
 - By influencing all without destroying the liberty of his rational creatures.

The Nature of God

- God is Triune
- God is Spirit, Light and Love
- God is Creator, Sustainer, Preserver and Governor
 - God's activity as Creator
 - God's activity as Governor and Preserver
 - God's activity as Judge
 - God's activity as Redeemer

The Providence of God

- General Providence
- Special Providence

The Attributes of God

- He is eternal.
- He is holy.
- He is perfect.
- He is just.
- He is kind.
- He is omnipotent.
- He is omniscient.
- He is omnipresent.
- His wisdom and knowledge are evident.
- He is one.
- He is love. (This is God's predominant attribute for Wesley. His favorite book of the Bible was 1 John.)

Wesley's dominant understanding of God's character is centered in His love. The Calvinist doctrines of unconditional election, irresistible grace and a limited atonement bring into question the character of God as love.

If a loving God selects some to be saved unconditionally and irresistibly, why doesn't He choose all?

On what basis and for what reason would a loving God pass over some sinners and choose to "bend the will" of other sinners to respond in faith?

Arminians believe the Calvinist account of the scope of the atonement is flawed. It limits the love of God. Calvinists generally interpret John 3:16 as not referring to the world as to all persons, but persons out of every tribe and nation.

God is a self-giving God. At the heart of Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection is the perfection of God's love in the human heart. To be truly sanctified is to be perfect in self-giving love. It is a love that expels sin from the believer's life. It is a love that reaches out in self-giving compassion. It is a love that purifies the motivational force of one's life.

The final theological divide between Wesleyan-Arminians and Calvinists is not primarily over the issue of predestination and free will. It is centered in one's understanding of the essential character and nature of God.

Is God. . . Absolutely sovereign, powerful and controlling?
Absolutely loving, good and merciful?

The love and mercy of God is defined by His absolute sovereignty in Calvinism.
The absolute sovereignty of God is defined by His love in Wesleyan-Arminianism.

Accompanying Hymns

"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

(Composed by Isaac Watts in 1719 and altered by John Wesley in 1738.)

"Before the Great Jehovah's Throne"

(Composed by Isaac Watts in 1719 and altered by John Wesley in 1739)

Reflective Questions (for further study)

What is Wesley's understanding of the omnipresence of God?

How is the doctrine of God's omnipresence related to the Christian life?

Reflect on a Wesley's emphasis on the primary character of God as "self-giving love" and how this influences his teaching of Christian perfection?

How does your understanding of the essential nature of God as love affect your theology?

LESSON 7

In the Image of God (Imago Dei)

Biblical Texts:

Genesis 1:27 “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

Genesis 6:5 “The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually.”

Mark 10:42 “One thing is needful.”

1. The Background Sermons of John Wesley

“The Image of God” (1730)

“The One Thing Needful” (1734)

“Original Sin” (1759)

“The New Birth” (1760)

“What is Man?”

2. Teaching Outline with Sample Wesley Texts

The Origin and Nature of Humankind

- Man was created by God
- Man was made in the image of God
 - The Natural Image
 - The Political Image
 - The Moral Image
- Constituent elements: Body and Soul
- Freedom

The Original Perfections of Humankind

- An Unerring Understanding
- An Uncorrupt Will
- Full of Pure Love
- Perfect Freedom
- Pure Happiness
- Full of Righteousness and Holiness derived from the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit

The Human Predicament

- The Defacement of the Original Perfections
 - depraved understanding
 - corrupted will
 - forfeited freedom: from “the subject of virtue, man became the slave of vice.”
 - lost happiness
 - lost original righteousness and holiness
 - acquired an innate sinful nature
- “Life out of Sync”
- “Disease” as a Metaphor for the Human Condition

The Restoration of the Image of God in Humankind

- “The One Thing Needful” in Human Existence = the Renewal of our Fallen Nature.
- Proven by the Purposes of God’s Activity in the World
 - The Purpose of Creation
 - The Purpose of Redemption
 - The Purpose of External Ministry of God’s Providential Care
 - The Purpose of Internal Ministry of God through the Holy Spirit.
- Healing of the sick soul: “...restore it to **health**, to **liberty**, to **holiness**.”

Exhortation (See the Companion notes, Volume p. 9 item 11)

Accompanying Hymns

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (1739) Charles Wesley

3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.

“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus” (1744) Charles Wesley

1 Come, Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Reflective Questions (for further study)

What is the condition of persons who are separated from God?

What is the remedy for separation from God and how does it become operative in human life?

How is the soul healed by the redemptive work of God in Christ Jesus?

LESSON 8

God's All-Encompassing Grace

Scripture Text: Philippians 2:12b-13 “. . . continue to **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling; for it is **God who works in you**, enabling you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

Author Henri Nouwen said we can easily remember our **original sin**, but what about our **original grace**? God's grace, always available, was a major theme for John Wesley.

In Reformed theology, “common grace” is regarded as the grace that generally restrains evil in the world. Common grace is not to be seen as a stepping stone to an Arminian view of God's grace that God desires to save all persons. In 1924 the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of America wanted to avoid that view and affirmed that common grace is as follows:

Common grace is a favorable attitude on the part of God toward mankind in general.

Common grace is the restraint of sin in the life of individual men and in society.

Common grace is the performance of civic righteousness by the unregenerate.

John Wesley's view of God's grace stands in stark contrast to the typical Calvinist/Reformed view:

God initiates a renewed relationship with fallen humanity through prevenient grace.

It is God's merciful removal of inherited guilt by virtue of Christ's death on the cross.

It is God's initial move to the partial healing of the human moral condition, enabling one to sense and to respond to God.

As one responds to God's overture of grace, God's forgiving and empowering grace is experienced and spiritual transformation is begun.

Since God's grace is universal, so is the possibility of such a relationship.

Since God's grace is resistible, no individual's participation is inevitable.

1. Wesley's Background Sermons

– “On Working Out Our Own Salvation” (1785)

“This sermon is the late Wesley's most complete and careful exposition of the mystery of the divine-human interaction, his subtlest probing of the paradox of prevenient grace and human agency.” (Heitzenrater in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, p. 485.)

– “The Repentance of Believers,” “Sermon on the Mount, V,” “Sermon on the Mount, XII”, and “A Thought on Necessity.”

2. Teaching Outline with Sample Wesley Texts

The Nature of Prevenient Grace

- Prevenient grace is that grace that goes before saving faith and personal salvation.
- It is “God's grace ‘preventing, accompanying, and following’ the believer.” (from Heitzenrater)

God Works in Us: The Prevenience of Grace

- All human motion toward God is grounded in God's anticipating, enabling grace
 - “of his good pleasure”
 - “To will and to do”
- The Nature of Prevenient Grace: It is God's gracious initiative on our behalf.

Prevenient grace prompts, empowers and prepares a person to accept Christ.
It is the preparing grace that goes before the salvation experience.

- Prevenient grace is given to all people.

We Work Out Our Own Salvation: The Mandate and Manner of Human Responsiveness

- God works, therefore you **can** work - Grace is enablement
- God works, therefore you **must** work —Grace is mandate
- We work, therefore “**with fear and trembling**”

The Fourfold Sequence of God’s Saving Grace viewed as a continuum punctuated by two major crisis experiences: The **New Birth** and **Entire Sanctification** (see chart on “Order of Salvation” on page 42)

- Awakening Grace — Prevenient Grace (see above)
- Convincing Grace — Repentance
 - enables a person to grow toward repentance
 - brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, making one aware of how far away from God one is
 - elicits despair over one’s own righteousness, and leads to full repentance
- Justifying Grace
 - the point of “proper Christian salvation”
 - Saved from the penalty (guilt) of sin
 - restored to the favor of God
- Sanctifying Grace
 - saved from “the power and root of sin”
 - restored to the image of God
 - both gradual and instantaneous

Exhortation (see the Companion, volume p. 10 item 8)

Accompanying Hymns

“Jesus, The Name High Over All” (1749) Charles Wesley

“And Can it Be?” (1738) Charles Wesley

3 Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee;

“Jesus, Lover of My Soul” (1740) Charles Wesley

“What Shall I Do, My God, To Love” (1742) Charles Wesley

Reflective Questions (for further study)

How does Wesley understand the operation of grace in his sermon, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation?”

Why is Wesley’s doctrine of prevenient grace, that is, the divine-human interaction in the salvation process, so important biblically and ethically?

What is uniquely different about Wesley’s understanding of grace in contrast to a classic Calvinist understanding?

Wesley believed there is a sequence in the order of salvation. Note the Ordo Salutis on the next page. Several of the works of God in the human heart occur at the same time, but are listed sequentially for purposes of understanding.

ORDER OF SALVATION

(Ordo Salutis)

Conditional Election Based on grace and faith ARMINIANISM	Unconditional Election Based on decrees CALVINISM
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Universal Call (This indirect call is the influence of the Holy Spirit on the conscience of all people apart from His ministry through Scripture.) 2. Immediate call (This direct call is the ministry of the Holy Spirit calling people to salvation through Scripture or Christian ministry.) 3. Prevenient grace 4. Repentance (Convincing Grace) 5. Conversion (turning toward God) 6. Saving Faith 7. Justification = Initial Sanctification 8. Regeneration = New Birth 9. Adoption into the family of God 10. Sanctification begins with the simultaneous work of Justification and Regeneration 11. Prevenient grace 12. Recognition of the need for cleansing 13. Confession of sin and sinful nature within 14. Full separation from all sin (negative) and full consecration to God (positive) 15. Faith in God's promise to cleanse 16. Entire Sanctification = purity of heart and life, with the primary feature, "self-giving love." 17. More rapid growth in grace 18. Growth toward maturity in Christ 19. Death and separation from the presence of sin 20. Glorification 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General call (The purpose of this call is to restrain the iniquity of man) 4. Regeneration (The awakening of the elect whom God has chosen) 5. Effectual calling (Irresistible grace) 6. Repentance, or conversion 7. Faith 8. Justification 9. Sanctification <p>Note: See pages 108-109 for the various views on how sanctification is viewed in Lutheran and Reformed theology.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Perseverance of the saints (eternal security). The "gift" of eternal life can never be forfeited. Thus the impossibility of apostasy, or losing one's salvation.</p> <p>Note: True Repentance involves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A sense of sin 2. A sorrow for sin 3. A separation (confession) of sin, and sometimes 4. Restitution for things done or taken in one's former life of sin.

LESSON 9

From Slumber to Awakening (Prevenient and Convincing Grace At Work)

Introduction:

“Spirituality as the Wesleys understood it begins with the stirrings of ‘conscience,’ which are activated by the prevenient grace of God. This conscience, this free will, this embryonic spirituality, is not a natural gift of man; it is triggered by the prevenient grace of God. Nevertheless, because the prevenient grace of God operates in all men, all men have this embryonic spirituality, including the Jews and those outside the Judaeo-Christian world.”
(Albert C. Outler, *John and Charles Wesley: Selected Writings and Hymns*, Introduction, p. 43)

Scripture Text:

Romans 8:15 “For you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”

1. Wesley’s Background Sermon

“The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption” (1746)

2. Teaching Outline with Sample Wesley Texts

The Spirit of Bondage

Two Forms: Unconscious and Conscious

- The Natural State (= the unconscious form)
 - Sleeping
 - Spiritual senses are not awake
 - Unaware of moral danger
 - False sense of security
 - Ignorance of God and oneself
 - Imagined freedom
 - Worldly joy
 - Yet, the servant of sin--neither conquers nor fights

- The Legal State (= the conscious form; or Life under the Law) The ‘almost’ Christian
 - Awakening
 - Consciousness of danger
 - A new understanding of God
 - Fear of God’s rightful wrath
 - A new understanding of self
 - The dread and weight of guilt
 - Realization of bondage
 - Sins unwillingly--fights but does not conquer
 - Anguish of wounded and newly awakened spirit
 - Romans 7:7-24

The Spirit of Adoption

= The Evangelical State (Life under Grace) The ‘Altogether’ Christian

- Freedom from the power and guilt of sin—fights and conquers
- Sees God as loving Father
- Experiences peace and assurance
- The love of God shed abroad in the heart, and love of all humankind; thus one is purified from the love of the world, lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and pride of life.

Exhortation (See the Companion Volume p. 11 item 6)

Accompanying Hymns

“All Ye That Pass By” (1749) Charles Wesley

“O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done” (1742) Charles Wesley

3. Behold Him, all ye that pass by,
The bleeding Prince of life and peace!
Come, sinners, see your Savior die,
And say, was ever grief like His?
Come, feel with me His blood applied;
My Lord, my Love, is crucified!

Reflective Questions

What is involved in each of Wesley’s understanding of the three states of humanity? (The natural state, the legal state, the evangelical state)

Where do the ‘almost’ Christians and those spiritually ‘asleep’ fit into this typology?

Where am I in my spiritual journey? Am I an “altogether Christian”?

LESSON 10

Convincing Grace: Awakening and Initial Repentance

Scripture Texts:

Ephesians 5:14 “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

Acts 26:28 “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”

Mark 1:15 “The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

1. Wesley’s Background Sermons

“The Almost Christian” (1741)

“Awake, Thou that Sleepest” (1742) – A sermon by Charles Wesley

“The Way to the Kingdom” (1746)

2. Teaching Outline with Sample Wesley Texts

Who is the ‘almost’ Christian?

- Has the form of godliness, but denies the power thereof (2 Tim. 3:5)
- Is a sincere person who
- Avoids evil
- Does good and
- Uses the Means of Grace -”a trilogy here deprecated but soon to become fixed as the outline of the **General Rules** for the people called Methodist.” [Heitzenrater]

Who is the “altogether” Christian?

- Has the “faith that worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6)
- Has love of God, and
- Love of neighbor – “Wesley’s view of the true Christian was consistently tied to a theology of grace through faith and grounded in an ethic of love.” [Heitzenrater]

What is the Way to the Kingdom of God?

- What true religion is not.
 - Does not consist of orthodoxy, that is, ‘right opinions or beliefs’
- What true religion is.
 - Love of God and neighbor
 - Empowered by grace
 - Holiness and happiness
- By Repentance and Faith
 - Repentance is true self-knowledge and authentic contrition
 - Belief is never “bare assent” but rather assenting trust, [in the Savior] the first fruits of which are
 - reconciliation and
 - peace

Accompanying Hymns

“Jesus, the Sinner’s Friend to Thee” (1739) Charles Wesley

1 “Jesus, the sinner’s friend to Thee
Lost and undone, for aid I flee
Weary of earth, myself, and sin;
Open Thine arms, and take me in.”

“Depth of Mercy! Can There Be?” (1740) Charles Wesley

“Sinner, Turn, Why Will You Die?” (1741) Charles Wesley

Reflective Questions:

What is the crucial missing element in experience of the ‘almost’ Christian?

How does Charles Wesley define the state of sleep in his sermon “Awake, Thou that Sleepest”?

What changes when one awakens from this sleep? How does this happen?

LESSON 11

Pardon (Justification) and the New Birth

Justifying Grace and Faith at Work

Introduction:

“The year 1739 represents a watershed in the development of Wesley’s spirituality. Up to this time, he had been learning from others. From now on, although he continued to learn, others would be far more influenced by him. In 1725 he had heard the call to a deeper spiritual life [through the devotional influence of Jeremy Taylor and Thomas à Kempis]; in 1729 he had led a band of Oxford men who together, in sheltered circumstances, sought after perfect love; in 1735 he had gone into the wilderness—almost literally in Georgia, symbolically in his soul—to ascertain God’s will for the future and to do some good in the present; in 1738-1739 he discovered an inner dynamic that fused together the other elements in his interior life, [especially his evangelical conversion on May 24, 1738] and an outward role [field preaching to the masses] that would enable him to convey his own spirituality to others. The rest of his life [50-year evangelistic ministry] was basically the story of how Wesley endeavored under God to communicate his personal spirituality to countless thousands of others.”

--Frank Whaling, ed., *John and Charles Wesley: Selected Writings and Hymns*, Introduction, p. 23)

Scripture Texts:

Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.”

John 3: 7-8 “Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

1. Wesley’s Background Sermons

“Salvation by Faith” (1738)

“Justification by Faith” (1746)

* “The Marks of the New Birth” (1748)

* Required reading

“The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God” (1748)

“The New Birth” (1760)

* “The Scripture Way of Salvation” (1765)

Comment on this last sermon: “Given, ... the still unsettled state of mind among the Methodists in 1765, Wesley decided to sum up the matter yet once more: to correlate the faith that saves with the faith that sanctifies. In this sermon, then, he gathered up the best residues of earlier sermons—’**Salvation by Faith**,’ ’**Justification by Faith**,’ and ’**The Circumcision of the Heart**’. Here he could reemphasize the point that in the Christian life, all is of grace—’**preventing**,’ ’**justifying**,’ ’**accompanying**,’ and ’**sanctifying**’. The result is the most successful summary of the Wesleyan vision of the ‘way of salvation’ in the entire sermon corpus.”

--Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater, *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*, Introduction to the sermon on “The Scripture Way of Salvation” p. 371.

2. Teaching Outline with Sample Wesley Texts

The Nature of Justification = a legal term

- The Ground of Justification
 - The sinfulness of man
 - The righteousness of God
- The Definition of Justification
 - Negatively, it means only the remission of sins
 - Positively, it means restoration to favor with God
- The only condition of Justification = **faith**

The Nature of Saving Faith

- It is faith in Christ, the only condition of justification
- Not rational assent, but a disposition of the heart
- A personal reliance in and assurance of the atoning work of Christ

The Nature of Salvation by Faith

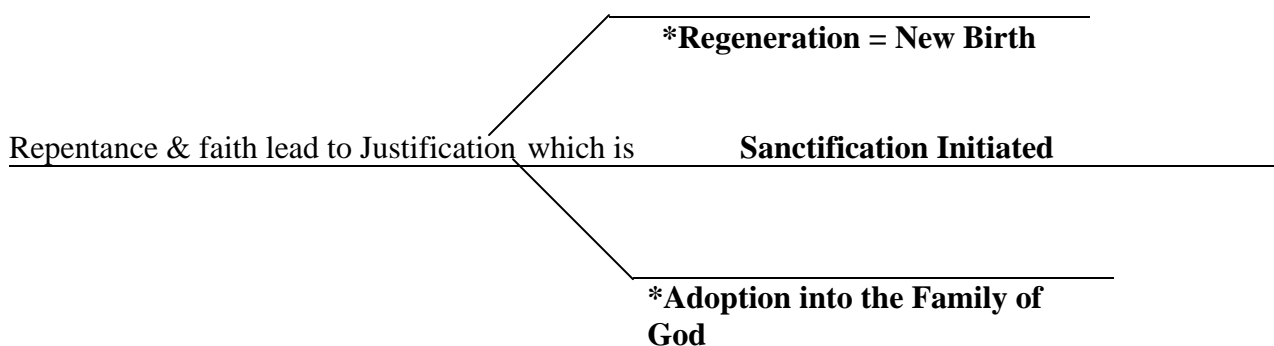
- It is Present and Attainable
- It is Salvation from sin
 - NB: Three tenses of salvation from sin:
 - From the guilt of past sin
 - From the servile fear of future forfeiture
 - of future punishment
 - of falling away from the grace of God
 - From the present power of sin
 - from habitual sin
 - from willful sin
 - from the compulsive desire to sin
 - from willful concurrence with human infirmities
- It consists of **Two Parts** as seen below:

<p>Justification Salvation Begun Deliverance from the <u>Penalty</u> of Sin</p> <p>Experienced through <i>faith alone</i> What God does for us through His Son A <u>relational</u> change whereby God accepts us in the new relation as children Restoration to the <i>favor of God</i> Removal of the <i>guilt</i> of sin The ground of <i>regeneration</i> (new birth)</p>	<p>Sanctification Salvation Continued Deliverance from the <u>Power</u> of Sin</p> <p>Experienced through <i>faith alone</i> What God <i>works in</i> us by the Spirit A <u>renewing</u> change whereby we are “inwardly renewed by the power of God” Restoration to the <i>image of God</i> Removal of the <i>power</i> of sin Begins in <i>regeneration</i> (new birth or <i>initial</i> sanctification) Continues as a process awaiting <i>entire sanctification</i>, which is followed by the continuing work of God’s maturing grace</p>
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The Nature and Experience of New Birth (see **Appendix F**)

- Justification and Regeneration: Temporally concurrent but logically distinct
- The Need and Objective of the New Birth
 - The devastation of the Fall: the loss of life and image of God = spiritual death.
 - New Birth [from above, from God, through the Holy Spirit – John 3:3, 7] is the only thing that can bring holiness and happiness—it is the birth of the renewal of God’s image in the human heart = spiritual life.
- The Awakening of the Spiritual Senses in a person
- It is Spiritual Respiration once again
- It is Power over sin Wesley pointed to I John 3:9, “Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God’s seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God.

ILLUSTRATION No. 4



*Regeneration and adoption are concurrent works of grace along with justification by faith.

Exhortations (See Companion Volume p. 13 items 8 and 10)

Accompanying Hymns

“And Can it Be?” (1738) Charles Wesley, the same year as brother John’s evangelical conversion

“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” (1739) Charles Wesley

4. He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free,
His blood can make the foulest clean
His blood availed for me.

“Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness” (Written in 1735 by Nicholas von Zinzendorf, translated in 1740 by John Wesley)

“Jesus, Lover of My Soul” (1740) Charles Wesley

“Father, I stretched My Hands to Thee” (1741) Charles Wesley

“O How Happy Are They” (1749) Charles Wesley

2. That sweet comfort was mine,
When the favor divine
I first found in the blood of the Lamb;
When my heart it believed,
What a joy it received,
What a heaven in Jesus’ name!

Reflective Questions:

1. How does Wesley distinguish justification from sanctification? How would you explain the difference to one who is a new believer?

2. On the basis of the sermon “The Scripture Way of Salvation”, give Wesleyan descriptions to the following terms: salvation, justification, prevenient grace, initial sanctification, gradual sanctification, entire sanctification, faith, assurance and repentance.

LESSON 12

Assurance of Salvation

(Confirming Grace)

Introduction:

“The question at issue between ‘enthusiasts’ and ‘rationalists’ was whether believers’ consciousness of justification and reconciliation was an inference from their religious and moral feelings, or whether those feelings, if valid, were first prompted by a free and direct testimony of the Spirit to one’s being a child of God. Characteristically, Wesley opts for a both/and solution, stressing the believers’ own consciousness of God’s favor but even more strongly the priority of the Spirit’s prevenient and direct witness as the necessary precondition of any feelings of assurance. That this point is the crucial one for Wesley would appear from the fact that he repeats the same basic argument for it in a second discourse (with the same title) over twenty years later.”

--Albert C. Outler and Richard Heitzenrater, *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*, p. 145.

Scripture Text: Romans 8:16 - “That very Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

1. The Background Sermons

- “The Witness of the Spirit” I (1746)
 - “The Witness of the Spirit” II (1767)
- * Both sermons are required reading

2. Teaching/ Outline with Sample Wesley Texts

The Problem of Extremes

- Religious fanaticism (the ‘enthusiasts’) emphasizes individualistic personal experience and private inspiration.
versus
- Rationalistic skepticism (‘the rationalists’) emphasizes naturalistic explanations of all human experience; doubts that ‘God’ is knowable by humanity.

The Problem of Interpretation

- In Calvinism the “witness of the Spirit” is with reference to the truth of the Scriptures.
versus
- In Wesleyan-Arminianism the “witness of the Spirit” is with reference to one’s acceptance before God. (George Allen Turner, *The Vision Which Transforms*, p. 273)

The Twofold Witness

- **The witness of God's Spirit**

= the direct, inward testimony from God that we are His children (This is the **objective witness**)

- Definition of this Witness

“The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God;..”

- **The witness of our spirit**

= rational evidence that we are children of God (This is the **subjective witness**)

- Definition of this witness

“This is approximately, if not exactly, the same as the testimony of a good conscience toward God (Acts 24:16) and results from the reasoning or reflection of what we feel (sense) in our own souls....”

Definition of a good conscience: “...a faculty or power, implanted by God in every soul that comes into the world, of perceiving what is right or wrong in his own heart or life, in his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions.”

- An inward consciousness, or self-awareness
- The outward scriptural marks of the child of God
 - Holy tempers and actions (being led by the Spirit of God, Rom. 8:14)
 - Obedience (1 John 2:3-4)
 - Righteous behavior (1 John 2:29)
 - Love for others (1 John 3:18)
 - The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)

The Fruit of the Spirit

- Wesley declared emphatically, “Let no one rest upon some supposed witness of the Spirit separate from its fruits.”
- On the other hand, he says, “By the fruit that He has worked in your spirit you will know the witness of the Spirit of God.

John Wesley made a distinction between the witness of the Spirit in contrast to the depraved presumption of the natural [man] mind, and from the delusion of the devil.

The doctrine of assurance, the Witness of the Spirit, is one of John Wesley's great contributions to the legacy of Methodism.

Points of Pastoral and Practical Application:

- Wesley's emphasis was on present assurance vs. future assurance of salvation based on the election and eternal security of Calvinism.
- Assurance of salvation is the normal privilege of all the children of God.
- Believers will not always experience assurance in the same way as others, or in the same degree at various points in their lives.
- Authentic Christian assurance is the result of the joint testimony: "There is a concurrence between what God whispers to us by His Spirit directly witnessing within us, and what our own hearts say to us as a consequence".
--Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity*, 230.

Exhortation

Accompanying Hymns

"Commit Thou All Thy Grievs" composed in 1653 by Paul Gerhardt, translated by John Wesley in 1739.

"Jesus, My Strength, My Hope" (1742) Charles Wesley

"Arise, My Soul, Arise" (1742) Charles Wesley

4. My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child;
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
With confidence I now draw nigh,
"Father, Abba, Father", cry.

"Give Me the Faith Which Can Remove" (1749) Charles Wesley

Reflective Questions:

In articulating his doctrine of assurance, what are the dangers on either side, between which Wesley attempts to steer a middle course?

How do you respond to the "rational" Calvinist understanding of the "witness of the Spirit" versus the "subjective" Wesleyan-Arminian understanding?

How might a Calvinist attempt to interpret the witness of the Spirit in view of Paul's teaching in Romans 8:15-17?

LESSON 13

Holiness of Heart and Life

Sanctifying, or cleansing grace is an instantaneous act in Entire Sanctification and is a continuing maturing work of God, the Holy Spirit, in the wholly sanctified believer's life until death and final glorification.

Scripture Texts:

John 17:17, 19 “Sanctify them by the truth;... For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.”

Acts 15: 8-9 “God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them [those in Cornelius' household] by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us [most probably on the Day of Pentecost]. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.”

I Thess. 5: 23-24 “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”

Wesley's Background Sermons

- The Wilderness State
- On Sin in Believers
- The Scripture Way of Salvation
- The Repentance of Believers

1. Teaching Outline with Biblical Texts

Present-day Concepts of Sanctification in Christianity at Large

See Appendix E

- Points of Agreement:
 - It is biblical truth
 - It includes freedom from sin.
 - It is accomplished through Christ's atonement.
 - It is for those who are already believers.
There is disagreement, however, as to its nature and the manner in which one achieves holiness. Is sanctification all process or does it also include a crisis? Is it achievable in this life or only at the moment of death?
- Six Major Interpretations as to when Sanctification is accomplished.
 - It occurs and is completed at the point of conversion. (Count Zinzendorf held this view)
 - It is a growth process beginning at conversion and completed only at death.
 - It occurs only in the moment of death.
 - It occurs only after death in purgatorial cleansing. This is the Roman Catholic view. It applies only to “venial” and not “mortal” sins.

- It begins at the time of conversion, but is completed in a crisis work of the Holy Spirit some time after conversion.
 - It begins at the time of conversion, includes a crisis when Christ becomes Lord of one's life and is an on-going process until one stands glorified in Christ's presence.
- Two widely-held Calvinist points assist in defining their view of sanctification:
- Absolute human depravity
 - The unconditional eternal security of the believer

(see Wynkoop. *Foundations*, p. 120)

- **Calvinism and Wesley on Sanctification**

Sanctification and Holiness Defined

The end of the redemptive process and the atonement of Christ in this life is to renew, or recreate, men and women in the moral image of God which is “**righteousness and true holiness**” according to the inspired Word of God in Ephesians 4:24.

God's holiness provides the foundation for our holiness. God's holiness is absolute. Our holiness is relative and finds its source in the holiness of God.

Sanctification is the means, or process, by which one is made **holy** in this life.

- The Bible supports sanctification as both “process” and “crisis” and gives evidence of three (3) stages of sanctification in Christian experience:
- Initial sanctification = Justification
 - Crisis sanctification = Entire Sanctification
 - Completed sanctification = Glorification/Heaven

Sanctification is a term used to describe the process through which one is cleansed and set apart as a “holy one.” The Bible supports sanctification as both “process and “crisis.”

Initial Sanctification – Sanctification begins at the moment a person is born again by the Spirit of God. The cleansing process begins. In the moment of conversion the cleansing applies to sinful actions and one's guilt for those actions. This guilt and “acquired depravity” are removed from the sinner. The cleansing applies to those sins for which the sinner is responsible.

From the moment of conversion, the Christian progresses in the process of sanctification. One is being prepared for dealing with “inherited depravity.”

The key question is: “Do I want Christ to become my Savior?”

The key issue is: Acquired depravity, freedom from the penalty and power of sin.

Crisis Sanctification – Wesleyan theology emphasizes crisis as part of the process of sanctification. This is the act of God in response to one's desire to fully consecrate one's self to God. A believer is freed from original sin, or inherited depravity, and is able to love God with all of

one's heart, mind, body and soul. Jesus Christ becomes Lord of all of life. It is the purification of one's heart (Acts 15:9) and motivations. It is being purified by faith, by the Word of God, by the blood of Christ and by the sanctifying grace in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In Mr. Wesley's A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, (pg. 51) the question is asked, "Is this death to sin and renewal in love gradual or instantaneous?" Wesley responded, "A man may be dying for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, die until the instant the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant he lives the life of eternity. In like manner he may be dying to sin for some time; yet he is not dead to sin until sin is separated from his soul; and in that instant he lives the full life of love."

Wesley further stated, "Sanctification in the proper sense is an instantaneous deliverance from all sin, and includes an instantaneous power then given always to cleave to God". (H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology*, p. 468)

The key question is: "Do I want Christ to become my Lord?"

The key issue is: Inherited Depravity, freedom from the proclivity of sin.

Completed Sanctification – While both the issues of acquired depravity (forgiven at conversion) and inherited depravity (cleansed at the crisis moment when Christ becomes Lord) have come under the cleansing power of Christ, the process of growth in the Lord continues until death.

The key question is: All questions are forever resolved!

The key issue is: Living eternally in heaven, freedom from the presence of sin

Three Possible Views of Sin in the Believer

It is Impossible to Sin

It is Impossible Not to Sin

It is Possible Not to Sin

The Biblical Vision of Christian Existence with which Wesley Resonated Wholeheartedly:

- The underlying need for Sanctification/cleansing.

- The Double Nature of Sin in Human Beings.
 - Actual sins requiring **pardon**
 - Sinful nature requiring **purification** (Ps. 51:1-10; Acts 26:18; Titus 2:14 and I John 1:9)
Accompanying Hymn: "The Thing My God Doth Hate" (1762) Charles Wesley
- Two Types of Believers: **carnal** and **spiritual**.
 - Sermon: "The Repentance of Believers" (1767)
 - Texts: I Cor. 2:15-3:4; Romans 8:3-4
- The Divided Nature (heart) in the regenerated believer (two contrary

- principles, as Wesley put it, nature and grace; flesh and Spirit)
- Sermons: “On Sin in Believers” and “The Wilderness State”
 - Texts: Romans 7:22-23; 8:5-13; Gal. 5:16-25; and James 1:8, 4:8

Accompanying Hymn: “I Want a Principle Within”

- **God’s Design and Will for Fallen Humanity and His Children/People/Church**
 - Take time to examine the following biblical texts: Luke 1:69-75; Romans 6:1-22; Ephesians 1:4, 5:18, 5:25-27; I Thess. 4:3, 5:23-24; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 2:11-14 and Hebrews 10:10

Accompanying Hymns: “I Know that My Redeemer Lives” and
“O For a Heart to Praise My God”

Key Words in New Testament Greek

When speaking of humans, the term “holiness” refers to our moral, spiritual condition. The term “sanctify” or “sanctification” is the means by which one is made holy. God’s holiness provides the foundation for our holiness. God’s holiness is absolute. Our holiness is relative and finds its source in the holiness of God.

hagios – “holy” – an adjective

- a. Reverent, or worthy of reverence as applied to God (Luke 1:49), or to things because of their connection with God (Acts 6:13; 7:33), as well as to persons whose services are used by God (Eph. 3:5).
- b. To set apart for God’s exclusive use (Mark 1:24; Luke 2:23).
- c. It is used of sacrifices and offerings prepared for God with some sacred ritual (Romans 11:16; 12:1; I Cor. 7:14; Eph. 1:4, 5:27; Col. 1:22).
- d. In a moral sense, it means pure, sinless, upright, holy (Romans 7:12; 16:16; I Cor. 7:14; 16:20; I Peter 1:16; II Peter 3:11).

hagiazō – “to make or declare holy” – a verb

- a. To hallow (Matthew 6:9).
- b. To separate from profane uses and dedicate to God,
Things – (Matthew 23:17; II Tim. 2:21).
Persons – (John 10:36; 17:19)
- c. To purify
Externally – (Hebrews 9:13; I Tim. 4:5)
By atonement – I Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26; Heb. 10:10; 14, 29; 13:12)
Internally – (John 17:17, 19; Rom. 15:16; I Cor. 1:2; I Thess. 5:23; Jude 1;
Rev. 22:11)

The primary meaning is setting apart, or a separation.

The focus in the New Testament is on the idea of being free from all sin.

God’s Promises to Make Us Holy

- **Explore these Scripture Texts:**
Deuteronomy 30: 6 Heart circumcision
Ezekiel 36:25, 29 Cleansing & salvation from all uncleanness

Malachi 3:2-3 Refiner's fire and a launderer's soap
 Matthew 3:11 The prediction that Jesus would baptize His followers with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
 Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."
 Luke 11:13 "Your Father in heaven is willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."
 Luke 24:49 "Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."
 Acts 2:38 – 39 "The promise (of the gift of the Holy Spirit) is for you and your children and for all who are far off..."
 2 Cor. 7:1 "Let us purify ourselves...perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."
 1 Thess. 5:23-24 A prayer that God will sanctify the Thessalonian believers through and through.

God's Commands to be Holy

- **Texts:** Genesis 17:1
 Leviticus 19:2
 Deuteronomy 30:6; 6:5
 Matthew 5:48; 22:37
 I Peter 1:15-16
- Mark 12:30
 Ephesians 5:18
 Hebrews 12:14

God's Provisions to Make Us Holy

Christ's death on the cross was provided for heart purity and maturity

The cross provides the cure, for the double disease of sin:

- **Pardon** for sins committed, that is, **acquired depravity**.
Purification for the inward sin nature, that is, **inherited depravity**.
- **Texts:** Romans 8: 3-4
 Ephesians 5:25-27
 Colossians 1:21-22
- Titus 2:14
 Hebrews 13:12
 I John 1:7

Accompanying Hymns

"I Thirst, Thou Wounded Lamb of God"

Written by Nicholas von Zinzendorf in 1735, translated by John Wesley in 1740

"Come, Holy Ghost, All-Quickening Fire!" (1740)

"Jesus, Thy All-Victorious Love" (1740)

3. Refining fire, go through my heart;
 Illuminate my soul;
 Scatter Thy life through **every part**,
 And **sanctify the whole**.

Leaders' Prayer for Believers

- Jesus' prayer for His disciples: Matthew 5:48, 6:13 and John 17:17, 20.
- Paul prays for believers: Ephesians 3:14-19, Colossians 4:12, I Thess. 3:12-13 and I Thess. 5:23-24
- Peter prays for believers: I Peter 1:15-16 and I Peter 5:10

Living Examples of Righteous/Blameless People

- Old Testament
 - Noah -- Genesis 6:9
 - Abraham -- Genesis 15:6; 17:1-2
 - Job -- Job 1:1,8; 2:3; 9:21; 12:4
 - David -- Psalms 32:1-5; 51:1-7; 24:3-4

- New Testament Believers who were purified and filled with the Holy Spirit
 - The 12 Apostles and 108 Disciples Acts 2:1-4; 15:8-9
 - The Apostle Paul Acts 9:17-18
 - The Romans at Caesarea Acts 10:44 and 15:8-9
 - The Samaritan Church Acts 8:12-17
 - The Greeks at Ephesus Acts 19:1-7

- All of these New Testament references to purification and the infilling of the Holy Spirit as a definite present experience in the life of believers indicates that this is not only God's will for His children but that this was also normative in the early church, and should be for all subsequent generations of believers.

Bishop Randolph Foster, one of the early holiness writers said of the theme of holiness in the Bible:

“...it breathes in the prophecy,
thunders in the law, murmurs in the narrative,
whispers in the promises, supplicates in the prayers,
sparkles in the poetry, resounds in the songs,
speaks in the types, glows in the imagery,
voices in the language, and burns in the spirit of the whole scheme,
from alpha to omega, from its beginning to its end.

Holiness! Holiness needed! Holiness required!

Holiness offered! Holiness attainable! Holiness a present duty,

A present privilege, a present enjoyment,

Is the progress and completeness of its wondrous theme.

It is the truth glowing all over, webbing all through revelation;

The glorious truth which sparkles and whispers and sings and shouts

In all its history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy and precept and promise and prayer; the great central truth of the system.

The wonder is that all do not see, that any rise up to question a truth

So conspicuous, so glorious, so full of comfort.”

(Bishop Randolph S. Foster, *Christian Purity*, p. 80)

Questions for Reflection:

Why may some resist the biblical teaching on holiness of heart and life?

What are some possible errors Wesleyan-Arminian groups may make in their understanding of the biblical teaching of sanctification?

What are potential errors the Calvinist/Reformed groups might make?

What are the two fundamental differences between Wesleyans and Calvinists regarding sanctification?

Do you experience the infilling of the Holy Spirit in cleansing power in your life?

The primary evidence of Christian perfection as taught by John Wesley is “God’s love expelling sin” or “self-giving love.” Is that evidence present in your life?

LESSON 14

The Process of Sanctification after Justification/New Birth

(Keeping and Sanctifying Grace)

Acts 20:32; Hebrews 4:16

Scripture Texts:

John 16:12 “So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.”

I Peter 1:6 “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.”

2 Cor. 10:5 “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

1. Wesley’s Background Sermons (Healing for the Wounded Soul)

“The Wilderness State”

“Heaviness Through Manifold Temptations”

“Wandering Thoughts”

* “On Sin in Believers” (1763

* Required reading

“The Repentance of Believers” (1767)

Accompanying Hymns: “O Love Divine, How Sweet Thou Art” (1749)

“I Want a Principle Within” (1749)

2. Teaching Outline with Sample Wesley Texts

The Wilderness State = the darkness of mind, or condition, into which those are often observed to fall who once walked in the light of God’s countenance.

- **Nature of this state:**

- Loss of faith, love, peace, joy and power over all sin

- Causes of this state: most usually it is sin

• Sin

- Sins of commission = addictive behaviors

- Sins of omission = neglect of prayer, for example

- Sins of the spirit = Giving way to some kind of inward sin = spiritual pride, anger etc.

• Ignorance

- Of the Scriptures

- Of the work of God in the soul

• Temptations within/without

- **Cure of this condition** - there is no single cure for everyone in this condition.

• Discover the cause

• May be due to sin, ignorance, or temptation

Accompanying Hymns

“Lord, I Believe a Rest Remains” This is a prayer to enter into Canaan Rest (1740)

“God of All Power and Truth, and Grace” (1742)

- 3 Purge me from **every sinful blot**;
My **idols all** be cast aside;
Cleanse me from **every sinful thought**
From **all the filth** of self and pride.
O that I now, **from sin released**,
Thy word may to the utmost prove,
Enter into the promised rest,
The Canaan of **Thy perfect love**.

Heaviness through Manifold Trials = heaviness of soul, which almost all of the children of God experience, in a greater or lesser degree.

- **Type of Persons in this condition** = believers
 - Possess a living faith
 - Full of living hope
 - This heaviness does not destroy their peace
 - Rejoice in the hope of the glory of God
 - Enjoy the love of God
 - Retain the same power over sin
- **Kinds of Heaviness**
 - Sorrow or grief
 - Death or bereavement
 - Constitutional disorders
- **Causes of this Heaviness**
 - Numberless circumstances
 - Some calamity
 - Poverty
 - Anguish over a loved one rushing into sin!
 - May lead to a clearer, far fuller knowledge of our inbred sin, after justification, than ever before it.
- **Purpose of Trials**
 - To refine faith and character
 - To purify, confirm and increase our living hope
 - To increase our love and gratitude to God for all His mercies
 - To advance in holiness: holiness of heart and life, both inward and outward holiness
- **Inferences**
 - There is a big difference between darkness and heaviness of soul.
 - There may be need of heaviness but there can be no need of darkness.
 - Even heaviness is not always needful.
 - Watch and pray. Use our utmost endeavors to avoid falling into darkness
- **The Repentance of Believers** (The Journey of the Christian Life continued) (See Wesley’s sermon “On the Repentance of Believers”.)
 - A conviction of sin remaining after justification
 - a proneness to evil
 - a heart ‘bent to backsliding’

- a tendency of the heart to pride, anger, love of the world, love of ease, love of honor, love of pleasure, or to self-will, atheism, or idolatry
- “and above all to unbelief, whereby in a thousand ways, and under a thousand pretences, we are ever ‘departing’ more or less ‘from the living God. (III.6)
- A conviction of sin cleaving to all our words and actions
 - **Our words:**
 - Uncharitable conversation (gossip)
 - Unprofitable conversation
 - Unholy intention
 - **Our actions:**
 - Even our religious acts sometimes done with unholy tempers
 - Sins of omission
 - Inwardly defective actions (motivated by fear, done with lack of appropriate love for God or neighbor, or without fitting confidence in God) (“The Repentance of Believers,” I.11-15)
- A conviction of our guilt
 - A word of caution!
- A conviction of our utter helplessness apart from the grace of God
- A recognition of our pressing, present need of God’s cleansing grace

Observation: At this point the crucial questions in the believer’s life become:

What can God do with my sin (carnal) nature that causes me to think, say and act as I do?

Will I just accept it and try to live with it or will I let God cleanse my heart and life of all unrighteousness so that I “will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work” 2 Timothy 2: 20-21?

Accompanying Hymns:

“God of All Power, Truth and Grace” (1742)

“Creator, Spirit! By Whose Aid” (translated by John Dryden in 1693 and adapted by John Wesley in 1741):

O source of uncreated heat,
 The Father’s promised Paraclete,
 Thrice holy Fount, immortal Fire,
 Our hearts with heavenly love inspire;
 Come, and Thy sacred unction bring,
 To **sanctify us** while we sing,
 To **sanctify us while we sing.**

Plenteous of grace, descend from high,
 Rich in Thy seven-fold energy;
 Thou strength of His almighty hand
 Whose power does heaven and earth command,
Refine and purge our earthly parts,
 And **stamp Thine image** on our hearts,
 And stamp Thine image on our hearts.

Observation: This leads naturally to the next point which highlights the believer's responsibility for cooperating with "keeping grace".

Accompanying Hymn: "Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove" (1744)

Reflective Questions:

How does Wesley distinguish between the "Wilderness State" and "Heaviness through Many Trials" in the journey of the Christian life?

Why is it important for a believer to make this distinction?

What might deter a believer from recognizing the presence of sin (inbeing, inbred sin) remaining in them after justification?

What might keep a Christian from being convinced of this inward condition in their heart and life?

LESSON 15

The Gift of “Christian Perfection” (“perfect love,” or “entire sanctification”)

(Cooperating Grace that Enables the Believer to Respond to the Limits of Perfect Love)

Introduction:

“The sermon, ‘The Circumcision of the Heart’ may profitably be paired with ‘Justification by Faith’ (1746) as two halves of the same gospel and as twin foundation stones in Wesley’s theology as a whole.” (Heitzenrater in the Introduction to the sermon ‘The Circumcision of the Heart’ in *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*, p. 23.)

Scripture Texts:

Philippians 3:12-15 “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me...Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.”

Hebrews 6:1 “Let us go on to perfection.”

1. Background Sermons and Readings

- * “The Circumcision of the Heart” (1733) = **one of Wesley’s most careful statements of his doctrine of holiness.** [Heitzenrater, *Ibid.*]
- * “Christian Perfection (1741) * Required reading
- “Thoughts on Christian Perfection” (1759)
- “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection” (1777, Final edition)
- “The Scripture Way of Salvation”

2. Teaching Outline with Sample Wesley Texts

The Problem of Language

- “**Perfection**” is a term that many cannot bear.
- We have no authority to set aside biblical terminology just because some are offended, because these are the words of God, not the words of humanity.
- We are called to do the hard work of understanding the true meaning of difficult biblical language—in this case, the Greek term, “**teleiotes**.”

What Christian Perfection is Not

- It is not freedom from **ignorance**
- It is not freedom from **mistake or error**
- It is not freedom from **infirmities**
- It is not freedom from **temptation**

What Christian Perfection Is

In the Negative Sense:

- It is freedom from the root and being of sin, even the **carnal nature**.
- As such, it is “deliverance from all evil dispositions implied in that expression, ‘I will circumcise thy heart.’” (Sermon: “On the Discoveries of Faith”)

- In his sermon “On Perfection” Wesley elaborates:
“...thus you experience that he whose name is called Jesus does not bear that name in vain; that he does in fact ‘save his people from their sins’, the root as well as the branches; and this ‘salvation from sin’, from all sin, is another description of perfection...”
- Commenting on James 1:4, Wesley again pursues this theme in a sermon written in 1784:
“Ye shall then be perfect. The Apostle seems to mean by this expression, **teleioi**, ye shall be wholly delivered from every evil work, from every evil word, from every evil sinful thought; yea, from every evil desire, passion, temper, from all inbred corruption, from all remains of the carnal mind, from the whole body of sin...” (Sermon: “On Patience”)

- **In the Positive Sense**

- To be perfect in love (that means to have love as the only principle of action, the governing motive of all of life) (Letter to John Hosmer)
 - This is the root of all holiness. (Sermon: “The Witness of the Spirit” II)
 - This is the sum of all religion. (Notes: on John 4:18-19)

***To love God with all the heart, body, understanding and strength
and
To love one’s neighbor as oneself.***

It is always good to keep in mind that this perfection is relative and not absolute. The fullness of the stature of Christ = absolute perfection and love. This is our ideal and pattern.

Our perfection and love, however, is always relative to the absolute perfection and love of our Savior and Lord (see Ephesians 4:13)

- To recover the complete image of God: the full likeness of Him who created us. (“A Plain Account of Christian Perfection”)
- To have all the mind of Christ [Loc. cit.]
- To walk uniformly as Christ walked. [Loc.cit.]
- To have a heart and life completely devoted to God [Loc. cit.]
- To have clean hands and a pure heart (Psa. 24:4) [Loc.cit.]
- Not to be the cause of others stumbling. [Loc. cit.]
- Not to commit sin. [Loc. cit.]
- To be crucified with Christ. [Loc. cit.]
- To be holy in life and conversation. [Loc. cit.]
- To be full of works of faith, of patience, of hope and of love. [Loc. cit.]
- To be replete with the fullness of the Holy Spirit. [Loc. cit.]
- To have purity of intention. [Loc. cit.]
- To be free from evil thoughts and evil feelings. [from Wesley’s Sermon, “Christian Perfection”]

Accompanying Hymn: “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.

Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation
Enter every trembling heart.

2 Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast;
Let us all in Thee inherit;
Let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Two crucial points for understanding:

1. It is a developmental process: “It should be premised here that there are several stages in Christian life as well as in natural: some of the children of God being but new-born babes, others having attained to more maturity.” (*Christian Perfection* II.1)
2. It is dynamic, rather than static; not ‘perfected perfection’ but rather ‘perfecting perfection’: “a never ending aspiration for all of love’s perfecting fullness.”
--see Outler, Introduction to sermon on *Christian Perfection*

A sampling of Wesley’s doctrinal summaries on Christian perfection:

“In one view, it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all our heart; it is desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, all inward as well as outward pollution. It is a renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of him that created it. In yet another, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. Now take it in which of these views you please (for there is no material difference) and this is the whole and sole perfection... which I have believed and taught for these forty years...” (*A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, par. 28.)

Christian perfection is self-giving love. It is purity of intention. It is purity of the motivational force of one’s life.

Conclusions of John Wesley in the final edition (1777) of *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.

- There is such a thing as perfection, for it is constantly cited in the Scriptures.
- It is not as early as justification for justified persons need to “go on unto perfection” (Hebrews 6:1)

- It is not as late as death for Saint Paul speaks to us of living men who were perfect (Philippians 3:15)
- It is not absolute. Absolute perfection does not belong to man, nor to angels, but only to God.
- It does not make a person infallible; no one is infallible while he is in the body.
- Is it without sin? It is not worth contending over terms. It is “salvation from sin”.
- It is perfect love – I John 4:18. This is the essence of perfection. Its properties or inseparable fruits are: constant rejoicing, praying without ceasing and in everything giving thanks – I Thess. 5:16ff.
- It is improvable. In no way is it incapable of improvement, for a person perfected in love can grow much more rapidly than he could before.
- It can be lost. We have many examples of this. But we did not have full conviction of this until 5 or 6 years ago.
- It is constantly preceded and followed by gradual growth.
- It is instantaneous in that there must be an actual moment when self dies and sin ceases, even though some may not perceive the instant.

It is worthy of note that Wesley uses the **analogy of birth** for the **new birth**, regeneration experience and the **analogy of death**, crucifixion / mortification, for **entire sanctification**. One of Wesley’s favorite texts was Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

The instantaneous nature of entire sanctification:

John Wesley’s answer to the question, “Is this death to sin and renewal in love gradual or instantaneous?”

His answer: “A man may be dying for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, die until the instant the soul is separated from the body, and in that instant he lives the life of eternity. In like manner he may be dying to sin for some time; yet he is not dead to sin until sin is separated from his soul; and in that instant he lives the full life of love. . . Yet he still grows in grace, in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and image of God; and will do so, not only till death, but to all eternity.” -- Wesley, Plain Account, p. 53

- See the Free Methodist *Book of Discipline*, Article XII of the Articles of religion
- Note the aorist tense of the Greek in certain texts which speak of the sanctification or purification of believers.

Did John Wesley regard this as a second, distinct work of grace?

Here are some of Wesley’s writings:

“We should neither be forward nor backward in believing those who think they have attained the **second blessing**.” --Letter to Thomas Olivers, 1757

“I believe within five weeks, six in one class have received remission of sins and five in one band received a **second blessing**.” --Letter to Mrs. Crosby, 1761

“Never be ashamed of the Old Methodist doctrine. Press all believers to go on to perfection. Insist everywhere on the **second blessing** as **receivable in a moment**, and receivable now, by simple faith.” --Letter to Samuel Bardsley, 1771

“Exhort all the little ones that believe to make haste and not delay the time of receiving the **second blessing**; and be not backward to declare what God had done for your soul to any that truly fear him.” --Letter to Jane Salkeld, 1772

“It is exceeding certain that God did give you the **second blessing**, properly so called. He delivered you from the root of bitterness, from inbred as well as actual sin.” --Letter to Mrs. Barton, 1774

“Certainly till persons experience something of the **second awakening**, till they are feelingly convinced of inbred sin so as earnestly to groan for deliverance from it, we need not speak to them of present sanctification.” --Letter to Ann Bolton, 1775

Accompanying Hymn: “Come, O Thou Traveler Unknown”. This hymn is based on the story of Jacob wrestling with the angel all night.

Conditions for receiving entire sanctification, or Christian Perfection.

- A recognition of one’s deeper need for heart cleansing.
- Consecration of one’s whole being to God. (Romans 12:1-2)
- Faith in the blood of Christ to cleanse the heart and life of all sin.

Accompanying Hymn: “Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me” (Composed by Paul Gerhardt in 1653 and translated by John Wesley in 1738)

- 2 O grant that nothing in my soul may dwell
But **Thy pure love alone**;
O may **Thy love possess me whole**,
My joy, my treasure, and my crown.

The occasion for its realization

- Generally not in conversion
 - Certainly not at death
 - During one’s lifetime
- “O, insist in every place on full redemption, attainable by faith alone!
Consequently to be expected now.” (Wesley’s Letters)

Believing God for Holiness of Heart and Life

- A conviction that God has promised it
- A conviction that God is able to do what he has promised
- A conviction that God is willing to do it now
- A present conviction that God does it

The Witness of the Spirit in Sanctification

“None, therefore, ought to believe the work is done till there is added the testimony of the Spirit witnessing his entire sanctification as clearly as his justification.”

“We know it by the witness and by the fruit of the Spirit.” Wesley, *Plain Account*, pages 79, 118

Three Evidences of The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Believer from the Book of Acts

The presence of power – Acts 1:8 – “You will receive power. . .”

The presence of purity – Acts 15:9 – “He purified their hearts by faith.”

The presence of proclamation – Acts 1:8 – “You will be my witnesses. . .”

Errors in Some Wesleyan-Arminian Groups Regarding Sanctification

1. Whenever the term “sanctification” is used, the reference is only to the “crisis” aspect of sanctification.
2. The concept of “progressive sanctification” is confined to the “pre-crisis” process.
3. Sanctification is regarded only as a crisis experience and appears as a terminal point.
4. Over-preoccupation on “spiritual pulse taking,” leads some holiness groups to turn inward on subjective Christian experience, rather than outward in service to the world and bringing lost persons to Christ.
5. The idea, “We are small in number, but we are holy,” often leads to a fortress mentality. It can lead to an unhealthy focus on inwardness to the exclusion of outwardness in mission. Any thought of withdrawal from life to achieve a monastic kind of holiness was foreign to John Wesley’s view of the process of sanctification. He stated there is no religion but “social religion.”
6. Some have an unrealistic view of sanctification that makes it impossible for one to sin following the crisis experience.
7. If one believes it is impossible to sin after “entire sanctification” occurs in the life of the believer, it readily leads to a subtle kind of “eternal security,” which makes it impossible to fall from grace from the point of this experience. The presence of sin in the life of the believer then can be excused and called “human nature,” or “frailty of the flesh.”

Errors in Some Calvinist’s Understanding of Sanctification

Some Calvinists attempt to synthesize Calvin’s doctrine of total depravity and unconditional security with Wesley’s doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Victory over sin and power for service is tied to Calvin’s concept of human nature, which cannot be cleansed or transformed in this life.

1. Human nature cannot be changed, but it can be controlled by the Holy Spirit.
2. The believer can move in one of two directions in lifestyle:
 - a. Yield to the base, depraved human nature
 - b. Yield to the Holy Spirit
3. A continual war goes on between the flesh and the Spirit.

4. The Holy Spirit controls, subdues, suppresses the desires of the flesh. Christ reigns and “holds down” the sinful nature.
5. The “finished work of Christ on Calvary” includes one’s “standing” in Christ, which constitutes perfection while the believer remains unclean. God does not see one’s continuing sins because of Christ’s blood.
6. There is focus on the process aspect of sanctification to the exclusion of the crisis aspect.
7. A few “holiness” groups are guilty of the error of saying that sanctification makes it impossible for a person to sin, while some Calvinistic groups make the error of saying it is impossible not to sin!

Conclusions of a Calvinist View

There is an emphasis on holiness being “imputed” rather than holiness “imparted.” The Christian is “called holy” rather than “made holy.” One has a “standing” in Christ which “imputes” perfection while the sinful nature remains and the believer remains unclean.

There is an emphasis on the process of sanctification, which involves chipping away of the sinful nature and gradually replacing it with a spiritual nature.

Holiness is primarily a “position” rather than a “possession.” The Christian’s position in Christ is the key, rather than the reality of God’s cleansing presence.

Years ago a Calvinist theologian, Edward J. Carnell stated, “In Christ we are sinlessly perfect, while in ourselves we remain unclean” *Philosophy of Christian Religion*, p. 77.

Wesley’s Emphasis

Through conversion the believer receives a new life that will grow and develop toward perfection. Sanctification is initiated at regeneration.

Salvation is a present deliverance from sin and a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity; a recovery of the divine nature. (His sermon, “A Further Appeal”)

Theology that restricts holiness to an imputed righteousness is unbiblical and relieves one of the necessity of a change of heart. Wesley regarded this position as “a blow at the root, the root of all holiness, all true religion”. (His sermon, “A Blow at the Root”)

Sanctification is God’s way of healing a soul. It is God’s way to cleanse the corrupt nature of humankind. (His sermon, “Original Sin”)

Exhortation (Companion volume p.19 item 10)

Accompanying Hymns: All of the following hymns are marvelous invitations for the Holy Spirit to accomplish His work of cleansing and perfecting in love.

“Jesus, Thy All-Victorious Love” (1740)

“Come, Holy Spirit, All-Quickening Fire!” (1740)

“Creator Spirit! By Whose Aid” (a pietistic hymn adapted by John Wesley in 1741)

“God of All Power, and Truth and Grace” (1742)

“What is Our Calling’s Glorious Hope? (1742)

(All six stanzas of this hymn are deeply moving. Here are two of them.)

What is our calling’s glorious hope
But inward holiness?
For this to Jesus I look up;
I calmly wait for this.

Be it according to Thy word!

Redeem me from all sin;

My heart would **now receive** Thee, Lord,
Come in my Lord, come in!

Reflective Questions:

From a Wesleyan-Arminian perspective, how does one experience Christian perfection, purity of intention, self-giving love, sin-expelling love?

What are the primary indicators in the life of one who lives the life of Christian perfection as understood by John Wesley?

Why might one conclude that it is more biblically reasonable to believe that a believer may be delivered (cleansed) of the carnal nature in life rather than in death?

LESSON 16

Sanctification ... Further Growth and Maturity in Perfect Love and in the Christian Graces

Some important distinctions Wesleyans make between purity (received in entire sanctification) and maturity (as continued progress in Christian Perfection)

- Purity is the entrance into Canaan- - maturity is the possession of the land.
- Purity is received- - maturity is acquired.
- Purity is the work of a moment- - maturity is the harvest of years.
- Purity is always received by faith- - maturity is often reached through pain.
- Purity has to do with quality- -maturity has to do with quantity.
- Purity brings fellowship—maturity develops experience.
--See an old holiness book, Harry E. Jessop, *Foundations of Doctrine*, p. 134
- Purity is accomplished in us through the power of the Sanctifying Spirit--maturity is a process involving the cultivation of Christian graces [virtues] and disciplines.
- Purity is a present privilege and duty--maturity is indefinite and comparative.
- Purity has to do with moral cleansing and deliverance from the depravity of sin as an inbred principle in our lives--maturity has to do with moral strength and stature, with being spiritually mature and adult in the faith, and with going on to the “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

Distinctions between growth and maturity

- Growth is a process that takes an entire lifetime--maturity is the result of that growth.
- Growth involves training, discipline, education, and instruction in spiritual things--maturity means that Christ perfectly controls my whole life: words, thoughts, actions, attitudes and dispositions. This does not happen instantaneously as purity is attained; rather it comes through patient and consistent growth in entire sanctification.
- Perhaps the classic passage on Christian perfection, growth in holiness and Christian maturity is Philippians 3:8-16:
 - Christian perfection.
The Apostle Paul witnesses to being perfect (teleioi = moral perfection as in Matt. 5:48 and James 1:4) in the sense of having a:
 - pure heart
 - pure motives
 - perfect devotion to the will of God (Phil. 3:15-16)
 - However, Paul was not perfect (teteleiomai = to become perfect, that is, to complete the work of perfection) in the sense of having already reached the point where his life was no longer improvable in terms of complete maturity and knowledge of God, and where his Christian career was ended. This is evident from certain expressions Paul uses such as:
 - “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (v.11).
 - “not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect;...” (v.12).
 - “...I count not myself to have apprehended;...” (v.13).

“Paul realized that fullness and completeness of spiritual life and blessing would only be possible in the perfect conditions of heaven and in the conscious presence of his glorified Savior. Having glimpsed the glory that awaited, when at the consummation present limitations would be forever removed, he denied having reached the objective God had in view for him. But he was pressing toward the mark, assured of victory in and through Christ.” --from *Aldersgate Doctrinal Studies*, p. 113

- That Paul believed in the necessity of growth and maturity is clearly taught in Phil. 3:12, 13, and 14 where he employs such phrases as:

“Not that I have already obtained all this. . .”

“I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me”

“. . . straining toward what is ahead. . .”

“I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Growth is Necessary both Before and After the Crisis of Entire Sanctification

- “Being made perfect in love does not mean that further growth and constant improvement are not necessary. Purity prepares the soul to grow more rapidly and symmetrically than before, because the impediments have been purged from the heart. The entirely sanctified life has a new center and a new goal—to sit with Him in His throne and to behold His glory” (John 17:24; Rev. 3:21). See the illustration below and on page 73.

John Wesley’s teaching on the need for growth:

Before Entire Sanctification:

“From the moment in which we are justified, there may be a gradual sanctification, a growth in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God” (Works: “Minutes of Several Conversations,” VIII, p. 329)

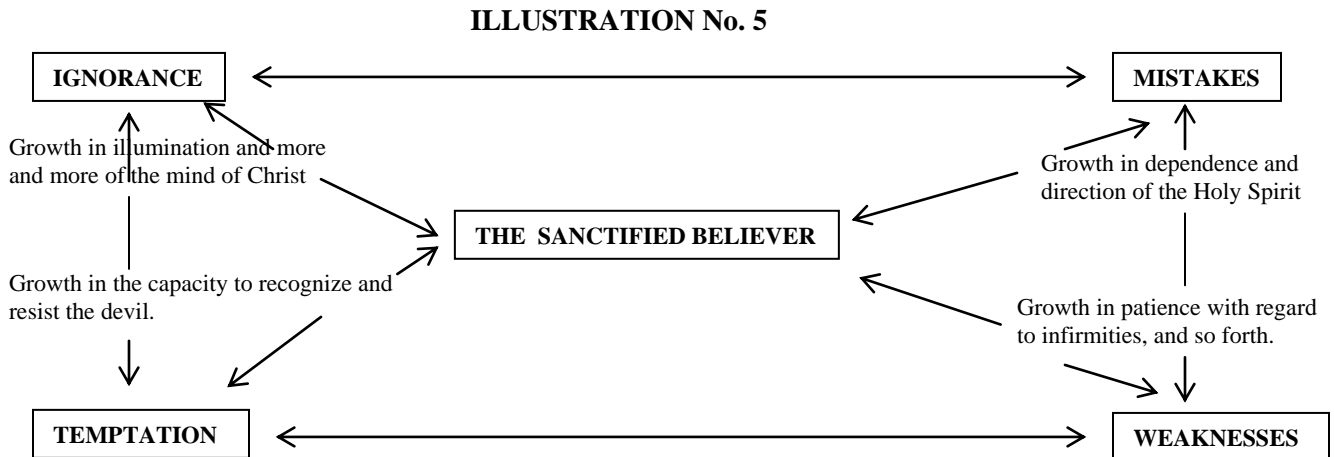
After Entire Sanctification:

“Christian perfection is improvable. In no way can it remain an indivisible point, or be incapable of development, for a person perfected in love can grow in grace much more rapidly than he could before” (*A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, p. 26)

The sanctified person will never be able to attain complete perfection that would suggest one remains static or stationary in the Christian journey. Let us hear Wesley once more:

“Thus the change operated when a soul dies to sin is of a different and infinitely greater kind than any other [change] before, and that any person can imagine until he experiences it. Yet, the person still grows in the grace and knowledge of Christ, and will continue to grow, not only until death, but probably during all eternity” (*A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*)

- For Wesley, Christian perfection is a growing process, the objective life resulting from holiness, which is never static, but always subject to development.
- Besides the sanctified believer growing and increasing in the capacity to know and love God, one can also grow in the following ways in relation to certain human limitations:



- This process of maturation and growth in love, patience, and the other Christian virtues, continues throughout our entire lives.
- “In summary fashion, it may be said that process in sanctification [Christian Perfection as maturity] includes three major elements: the unfolding implications of consecration; the developing and maturing of the gifts, graces, and fruits of the Spirit; and the sublimation and control of human instincts and tendencies.” (Purkiser, *Exploring our Christian Faith*, pp. 343-344)

Going on to Maturity

- “There is no perfection of degrees, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase. So that how much soever any man has attained, or in how high a degree soever he is perfect, he hath still need to ‘grow in grace,’ and daily to advance in the knowledge and love of God his Savior”. (from Wesley’s Sermon on “Christian Perfection”)
- Maturity is not attained instantaneously, as purity, it comes through patient and consistent growth. “. . . *make every effort to add* to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love” (2 Peter 1:5-7).
- As Peter says, “For if you possess these qualities *in increasing measure*, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:8).
- And more, “For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich

welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:10b-11).

- At the end of life, every sanctified believer will appear before Christ as a perfect man or woman (mature or complete = teleion as in Col. 1:28 and teleion as in Heb. 5:14), lacking nothing of that which God requires, blameless. Each one will have attained a different measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ according to his/her growth and maturity in holiness during this life.

Two admonitions of Wesley:

1. The sanctified person is always dependent on Christ:
“The holiest of men still need Christ as their Prophet...their King...and their Priest. Even perfect holiness [humanly speaking] is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ.” (John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, p. 34)
2. The sanctified person can fall from sanctification:
“...those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant, may, however, fall and perish eternally. Therefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” (John Wesley, “Serious Thoughts on the Perseverance of the Saints”).

Two extremes the sanctified believer needs to avoid:

1. **One is that we’ve “arrived!”**
 - a. “If the Bible makes anything clear, it is that the cleansing which is the heart of holiness is not only a cleansing that begins at a definite point of consecration and faith, but it is also a cleansing which continues moment by moment. This is the meaning of the verb tenses in 1 John 1:7, which literally reads, ‘If we are walking in the light as He is in the light, we are having fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son is cleansing us from all sin.’ It begins to cleanse, and it keeps right on cleansing; completely and continually.
 - b. “Holiness...is not only an act of God; it is a relationship begun at a given time and place and renewed and maintained day by day.”
 - c. “There is, for instance, an obvious difference between a wedding and a marriage. The wedding is a ‘once-for-all’ event, permanently identified with a time and place,... By its very nature, it establishes what both God’s law and human ideal intend to be a permanent union. But the marriage is not a ‘once-for-all’ event. It is an ongoing relationship. When the wedding is over, there is nothing more we need to do about it. But we have to work at the marriage.” (Purkiser, *Interpreting Christian Holiness*).
2. **The other extreme is to conclude, that if we sin after we’ve been sanctified, we’ve “lost it all!”**
 - a. “It is the view commonly held today that a single act of sin in the sanctified life immediately cuts off the soul completely from God and plunges it into total rebellion and complete depravity once more.” (Purkiser, *Interpreting Christian Holiness*, p. 25)
 - b. Let us hear Wesley again: “A believer may fall, and not fall away. He may fall and rise again. And if he should fall, even into sin, yet this case, dreadful as it is, is not desperate. For ‘we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.’” (John Wesley, “Sermon on the Mount IV”)
 - c. “A sanctified Christian involved in an unpremeditated act of sin (what

Thomas Cook called a ‘surprise sin’) can be immediately forgiven and fully restored by confessing that sin and receiving forgiveness through our divine Advocate with the Father.” (Purkiser, Interpreting Christian Holiness, p. 25)
This is the assurance found in 1 John 2:1-2

3. Wesleyans are not faithful to the whole message of redemption if the grand biblical truth of heart cleansing and Christian perfection is not taught and preached.
4. There may be multiple reasons for this.
 - People get “turned off” by negative examples of those who profess to be sanctified.
 - Some pastors/leaders have never experienced this heart cleansing and Spirit infilling.
 - Some may never fully realize that the central purpose of God’s redemptive process is to renew, or re-create, men and women in the moral image of God, from which they fell in Adam, which is “**righteousness and true holiness**” (Ephesians 4:24)
5. John and Charles Wesley caught this biblical vision and very carefully and lovingly passed the vision on to the church through their writings and hymns. We are grateful to them for recovering this profound biblical truth and experience that God has for His children.
6. The experience of “entire sanctification” is not the end of religion, as Wesley pointed out time and time again. The experience of heart cleansing, infilling of the Holy Spirit and perfect love is only the means to the end that we might love God and others more perfectly in loving good works, as living examples of His preventing, justifying, accompanying, and sanctifying grace. Wesley’s primary focus on Christian perfection as being the perfection of love is critical to our understanding of Wesleyan thought. **It is God’s perfect love that expels sin. It is God’s self-giving love at work in the life of the believer.**
7. John Wesley was so convinced of this truth that, in writing to a friend he said: “**This doctrine [and experience] is the great depositum that God has entrusted to the people called Methodist; and for the purpose of propagating it, it seems that He has raised us up**”. (*Letters*)
8. Let us be faithful to God, to ourselves and to our people by “going on to perfection,” and leading other people to experience this work of God.

Summary:

Wesley was insistent that we must be free of the “being” of sin before we die. This emphasis was distinctly different from Lutheran, Calvinist or Catholic thought. He said, “Unless we have clean hearts before we die, it had been good we had never been born.” --Wesley’s Letters, Telford, Letters, IV, 44

Reflective Questions

Why does the entirely sanctified Christian need to grow in Christian perfection?

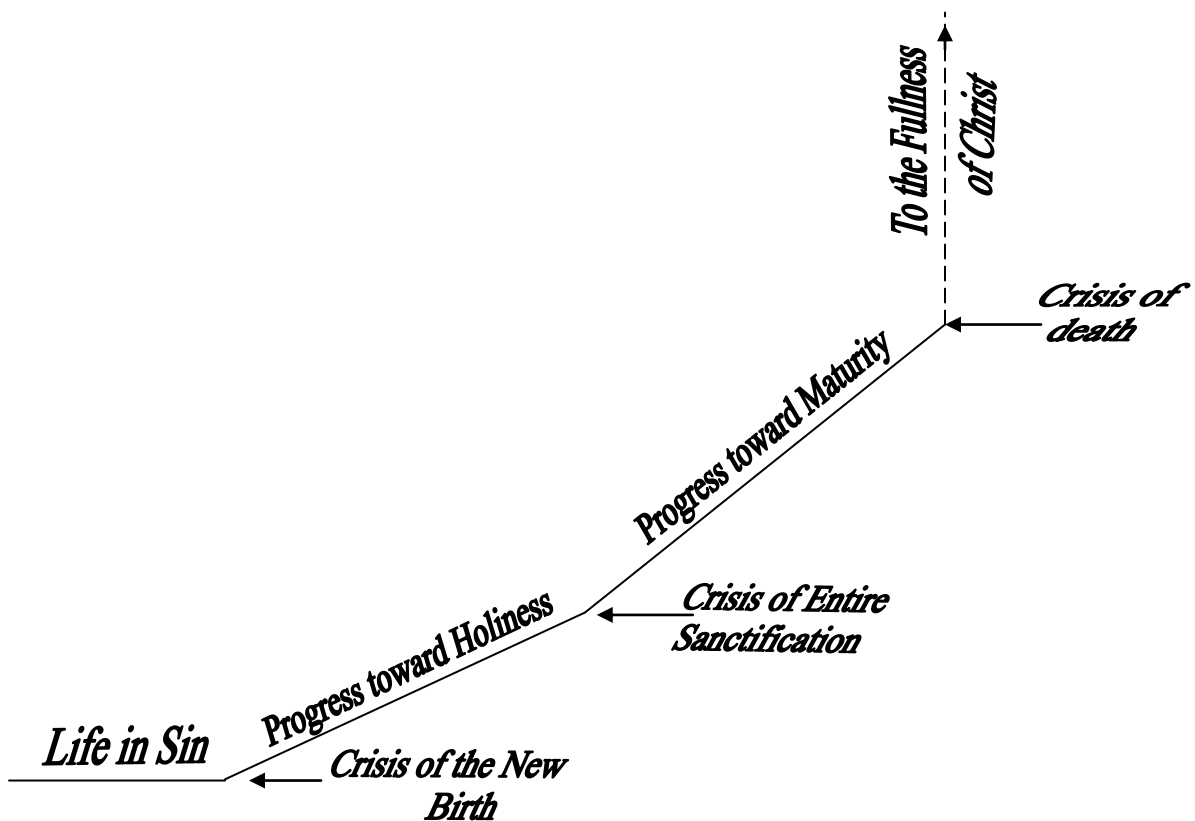
What does the Christian need to remember after being entirely sanctified?

How can Wesleyan-Arminians be faithful in communicating the biblical truth of holiness of heart and life?

ILLUSTRATION No. 6

A Wesleyan Conception of Full Salvation

Presented by Dr. Leslie R. Marston, a bishop in the Free Methodist Church for many years:



LESSON 17

Practicing and Partaking of the Means of Grace Wesley and the Sacraments

Wesley's Background Sermon - *The Means of Grace *Required reading

1. Teaching Outline with Sample Wesley Texts

John Wesley taught two focal areas on the “means of grace.” By “means” he simply meant the channels or the ways God’s grace is experienced in the life of the believer.

- **Instituted Means of Grace**: “...outward signs, words, or actions ordained of God...to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey...preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace.” (“The Means of Grace,” II.1)
 - Prayer: private, family and public prayer
 - Searching the Scriptures: reading, meditating, and hearing the Scriptures
 - Receiving the Lord’s Supper
 - Fasting
 - Participating in Christian Conference (Counsel)

- **Prudential Means of Grace**: “Arts of holy living” which sensitive followers of Christ might deem prudent for the nurture of spiritual life” (see “Large Minutes,” *Works* 8:323)
 - Small group meetings (society, class, band)
 - Spiritual disciplines
 - Dietary prudence
 - Self denial
 - Works of mercy: providing for the poor, visiting those who are sick, in prison, or otherwise in need.

John Wesley and the Sacraments

Baptism

In his Journal of May 24, 1738, Wesley wrote, “I believe, till I was about ten years old I had not sinned away that ‘washing of the Holy Ghost’ which was given me in baptism.”

Wesley appears to retain a sacramental view of baptism even after his evangelical conversion. He appears to have kept a high sacramental view of infant baptism, while making it very clear in his writing, A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion of the distinction between infant baptism and adult baptism. “Infants indeed our Church supposes to be justified in baptism, although they cannot then either *believe* or *repent* (emphasis is Wesley’s). But she expressly requires both *repentance* and *faith* in those who come to be baptized when they are of riper years.”

Wesley held that no infant would ever be punished in eternity for Adam’s sin. The guilt of Adam’s sin is canceled by the righteousness of Christ as soon as they are sent into the world.

--see Telford, Letters, 6:239-240 (A letter to John Mason, 11-21-1776)

He moved from a sacramental view of baptism to an evangelical view in insisting that adults must evidence the marks of the new birth, expressly, faith, hope and love. The new birth is an inward change, it is a spiritual change. --see Cragg, Appeals, 107

He regarded baptism as an outward sign of an inward grace. --see Wesley’s sermon on “The New Birth” in Outler, Sermons, 2:196-97.

The Lord's Supper

In Wesley's sermon on "The Means of Grace," he deals with the issue of the Lord's Supper. Is it strictly a "confirming" sacrament meant only for believers, or can it also be a "converting" sacrament for those who are seeking God. Check Wesley's Journal, June 27, 1740, his letter, "Answer to Mr. Church" in 1747 and his sermon, "The Means of Grace." Wesley moved to believe the sacrament held the possibility of being both a converting as well as a confirming ordinance.

Wesley held that eating the bread and drinking the cup was the outward, visible means by which God "conveys into our souls all that spiritual grace, that righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, which were purchased by the body of Christ once broken and the blood of Christ once shed for us. . ." Wesley, "The Means of Grace."

Counsel: "In using all means, seek God alone. In and through every outward thing look singly to the power of his Spirit and the merits of his Son. . . Remember also to use all means as means; as ordained not for their own sake but in order to the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness." ("The Means of Grace" V.4)

Charles Wesley's hymn, "I Do Believe"

Father, I stretch my hands to Thee, no other help I know.
If Thou withdraw Thyself from me, Ah! Whither shall I go?
What did Thine only Son endure, before I drew my breath.
What pain, what labor, to secure my soul from endless death!

How would my fainting soul rejoice, could I but see Thy face.
Now let me hear Thy quickening voice, and taste Thy pardoning grace.

I do believe, I now believe, that Jesus died for me, and that He shed His precious blood from sin to set me free.

Reflective Questions:

What did Wesley mean by the "prudential" means of grace?

What is the value of the prudential means of grace for the Christian?

How does Wesley's view of the Lord's Supper impact our practice in offering this sacrament?

How frequently should the Lord's Supper be offered in a local church?

LESSON 18

The Influence of Wesley's Theology on Discipleship Structures

How Theology Influences Structures of Discipleship

If God has already chosen the elect, it is tempting to minimize intentional discipleship plans

If one is eternally secure following the conversion experience, it can also lessen the need and motivation for a discipleship plan

If personal holiness is not a high priority in the Christian's life, one might also minimize the need for intentional forms to cultivate fully-devoted disciples.

Wesley's Passion

Personal holiness was a high priority with a focus on Christian perfection.

Since Wesley believed one could lose his/her salvation, he developed structures to encourage Christians to grow in their walk of faith.

John Wesley said:

"I am more and more convinced that the devil himself desires nothing more than that the people should be half-awakened and then left to fall asleep again. Therefore, I determine, by the grace of God, not to strike one stroke in any place where I cannot follow the blow."

Wesley's Basic Discipleship Structures

➤ **The Society**

Large groups of those seeking to "flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins" as the condition for admission.

➤ **The Classes – High Accountability and Care for One Another**

Small groups of 12 persons

➤ **The Bands - Highest Accountability and Care for One Another**

Five to six people, men meeting with men, women with women

The Purpose of Groups

From Wesley's "The Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies," 1743, come these primary purposes:

- ✓ Take on the pattern of godliness
- ✓ Seek the power of God
- ✓ Unite to pray
- ✓ Receive words of encouragement
- ✓ Watch over one another in love
- ✓ Help each other work out their own salvation

Questions for Reflection:

How does your theology impact your emphasis on providing follow up discipleship support for believers?

If spiritual growth happens best in the community of believers, how will your future ministry emphasis reflect this truth?

Wesley as Organizer

Within a few months of the beginning of his field preaching in 1739, John Wesley set up a structure that was unique to Methodism for well over 100 years. Wesley's organizational skills were crucial to the development and growth of the Methodist movement. He described how the organization began in a 1748 letter he called "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists" (Works, Volume VIII, 248-268).

THE SOCIETY

Mr. Wesley said, "In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London and desired that I would spend some time with them in prayer and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come. This was the rise of the United Society." The numbers grew rapidly. Soon he realized he could not visit them regularly in their homes so he instructed them, "If you will all ... come together every Thursday, in the evening, I will gladly spend some time with you in prayer, and give you the best advice I can."

"Thus arose, without any previous design on either side, what was afterwards called a Society; a very innocent name, and very common in London, for any number of people associating themselves together. ... They therefore united themselves 'in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they might help each other to work out their salvation.'

"There is only one condition previously required in those who desire admission into this society, 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.'" With this one simple entrance requirement, the society became the easy way to join, but the rules for continuing were very stringent.

The "**General Rules**" were drawn up in 1743 containing a number of directions for Christian conduct. These General Rules used to form the major section of our *Book of Discipline* on the subject of Christian Conduct, but now have found their way into the Historical Section at the end of the *Book of Discipline*.

In the General Rules the society was defined, "Such a society is no other than 'a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.'" Each society was divided into smaller groups, called "classes," with about twelve persons in each class, one of whom was appointed as the leader.

The Specific Rules of Christian Conduct were as follows:

First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced, such as,

The taking of the name of God in vain.

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein, or by buying or selling. Drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.

Slaveholding, buying or selling slaves.

Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother, returning evil for evil, or railing for railing, the using many words in buying or selling.

The buying or selling of goods that have not paid the duty.

The giving or taking things on usury, that is, unlawful interest.

The putting on of gold and costly apparel.

The singing those songs or reading those books which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.

Laying up treasure on earth.

Borrowing without the probability of paying.

Second, by doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible to all men.

To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.

To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine, that 'we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it.'

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another; helping each other in business; and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only.

By all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race which is set before them, denying themselves and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and off-scouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake.

Third, by attending upon all the ordinances of God; such are,

The public worship of God.

The ministry of the word, either read or expounded.

The Supper of the Lord.

Family and private prayer.

Searching the Scriptures, and

Fasting or abstinence.

These are the General Rules of our societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, which is the only rule and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be known unto them who watch over that soul as they who must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways. We will bear with him for a season. But if then he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls."

Of the rise of the Methodist societies, Wesley says, "Upon reflection, I could not but observe, this is the very thing which was from the beginning of Christianity" (Ibid, p. 250).

THE BAND

Due to the Moravian influence in Wesley's life, he also formed "bands." Wesley had found several bands meeting at Herrnhut. In a letter from Wesley back to Herrnhut, he reports ten bands meeting in the Fetter Lane Society by October 1739, with an average number of six persons participating.

The bands were small groups of either men or women of not more than five or six persons, meeting weekly to talk to each other about their Christian experience, receive pastoral care, spiritual encouragement and be accountable to each other. New converts needed encouragement, and an opportunity for confession of need.

John Wesley wrote of the bands, "These, therefore, wanted some means of closer union; they wanted to pour out their hearts without reserve, particularly with regard to the sin which did still easily beset them, and the temptations which were most apt to prevail over them. And they were the more desirous of this when they observed it was the express advice of an inspired writer: 'Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed.'

In compliance with their desire, I divided them into smaller companies; putting the married or single men, and married or single women, together" (Works, Vol. VIII, p. 258). The examination of personal character was very strict. The intention was to promote a more holy life.

Wesley drew up these rules for the bands:

To meet once a week, at the least.

To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason.

To begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour, with singing or prayer.

To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word or deed, and the temptations we have felt, since our last meeting.

To end every meeting with prayer, suited to the state of each person present.

To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins and temptations (Ibid, p. 272).

Before admission into a band the following questions had to be satisfactorily answered:

Have you the forgiveness of your sins?

Have you peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?

Have you the witness of God's Spirit with your spirit that you are a child of God?

Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart?

Has no sin inward or outward dominion over you?

Do you desire to be told of your faults?

Do you desire to be told of all your faults, and that plain and home [plain and right to the heart]?

Do you desire that every one of us shall tell you from time to time whatever is in his heart concerning you?

Consider, do you desire we should tell you whatsoever we think, whatsoever we fear, whatsoever we hear, concerning you?

Do you desire that in doing this we should come as close as possible, that we shall cut to the quick and search your heart to the bottom?

Is it your desire and design to be on this end on all other occasions entirely open, so as to speak everything that is in your heart without exception, without disguise and without reserve?

In 1744, Wesley gave them these specific directions for bands:

1. Carefully to abstain from doing evil in public

Not to buy or sell anything at all on the Lord's Day
To taste no spirituous liquors nor dram of any kind unless prescribed by a physician
To be at a word both in buying and selling
To pawn nothing, no, not to save life
Not to mention the fault of any behind his back, and to stop short those that do
To wear no needless ornaments, such as rings, earrings, necklaces, lace ruffles
To take no needless self-indulgence, such as taking snuff or tobacco, unless prescribed by a physician

2. Zealously to maintain good works in public

To give alms of such things as you possess, and that to the utmost of your power
To reprove all that sin in your sight, and that in love and meekness and wisdom
To be patterns of diligence and frugality, of self-denial and taking up the cross daily

3. Constantly to attend on all the ordinances of God in public

To be at church and at the Lord's table every week and at every public meeting of the bands
To attend the ministry of the word every morning unless distance, business, or sickness prevents
To use private prayer every day and family prayer if you are at the head of a family
To read the Scriptures and meditate thereon at every vacant hour
To observe as days of fasting or abstinence all Fridays in the year

Matthew Simpson, *Cyclopaedia of Methodism*, Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1880, pp. 84-85.

THE CLASS MEETING

The class meeting began in Bristol on February 15, 1742. While discussing the subject of debt, one arose in the meeting of the society and proposed that every member of the society should pay one penny a week. Another said that some were so poor they could not afford it, when the first replied, "Put eleven of the poorest with me, and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself, and each of you call upon eleven weekly, receive what they can afford and make up the deficiency." From this sprang for the concept of the "class meeting." Soon, the financial and the spiritual were joined together. Wesley met with the class leaders and requested them to inquire into the spiritual state of the members of their class. Disorderly ones were rejected, some reclaimed and the whole of the society edified.

Wesley found the class meeting helped address his growing concern that many Methodists were not living the gospel. . . "several grew cold, and gave way to the sins which had long easily beset them."

The class leaders secured weekly contributions to meet the debt on the preaching house in Bristol. The society there now numbering well over 1,000 persons, was divided into classes of twelve people each. Leaders were appointed to secure weekly contributions for the debt. "As soon as possible, the same method was used in London and all other places. Evil men were detected, and reprov'd. They were borne with for a season. If they forsook their sins, we received them gladly; if they obstinately persisted therein, it was openly declared that they were not of us. The rest mourned and prayed for them, and yet rejoiced, that, as far as in us lay, the scandal was rolled away from the society" (Works, Volume VIII, p.253).

At first the class leaders met each person in their homes. After that proved too time consuming, “. . .it was agreed that those of each class should meet all together. And by this means, a more full inquiry was made into the behaviour of each person” (Ibid, p. 253).

Mr. Wesley saw the class meeting to be the genius of his movement. He reflected, “They began to ‘bear one another’s burdens,’ and naturally to ‘care for each other.’ As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for each other. And ‘speaking the truth in love, they grew up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ” (Ibid, p.254).

The class was disciplinary unit of each society. The band became the confessional unit. Such accountability, confession and mutual support encouraged a deeper walk with the Lord among the early Methodists.

The duties of each class leader were twofold:

1. To see each person in his class, once a week at the least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the poor.
2. To meet the minister and the stewards of the society, in order to inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that are disorderly and will not be reproved; to pay the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding (Ibid, p. 253).

All band and class members met together quarterly for the love feast, something Wesley gleaned from his associations with the Moravians. A system of membership tickets was used and only people with tickets were admitted to the love feasts. (Ibid, p. 307)

Wesley saw how his organizational structure made possible “the very thing” the New Testament Church experienced in fellowship and encouraging each other in the Lord. His organizational plan was eminently successful in conserving the results of his evangelistic endeavors.

Conclusions:

Our local church’s organizational structures should reflect our theology of personal holiness.

We will develop structures to help keep people on the Journey.

We will care deeply about people.

We will not only rescue the perishing, we will care for the rescued.

A passion for personal holiness runs counter to three contemporary issues in the western world’s “Christian culture”:

Theological liberalism

(a perfect set up for post moderns)

No hell

No authoritative Word of God

No objective source of authority

Antinomian behavior sets in, life style expectations are diminished.

Humanism becomes the order of the day.

“I” become the center, the “autonomous self” is dominant.

Whatever “I” want to do is appropriate.

Classic Calvinism

Once I am saved, I am eternally secure

Diminishes responsibility for personal holiness

If I am eternally secure, I don't need a Christian convoy (groups) to help me through the demonic hazards lurking ahead.

Holiness teaching that places primary focus on crisis and tends to ignore subsequent spiritual growth

Phoebe Palmer led the holiness movement of the nineteenth century in a pre-occupation with viewing sanctification as primarily a crisis experience.

An exclusive focus on the act of sanctifying grace rather than the process of sanctifying grace will diminish personal holiness living in the local church.

Entire sanctification becomes an end rather than an entry into a new way of holy living.

A passion for holiness will affect the way a local church organizes itself for mission.

John Wesley understood this.

"I am more and more convinced that the devil himself desires nothing more than that the people should be half-awakened and then left to fall asleep again. Therefore, I determine, by the grace of God, not to strike one stroke in any place where I cannot follow the blow." — John Wesley

Within a few months of the beginning of his field preaching in 1739, John Wesley set up a structure that was unique to Methodism for well over 100 years. Wesley's organizational skills were crucial to the development and growth of the Methodist movement. He described how the organization began in a 1748 letter he called "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists" (Works, Volume VIII, 248-268).

LESSON 19

The Legacy of John Wesley/Who are the Wesleyans?

Legacy of John Wesley

John Wesley was interested in the world around him. He was well informed in the classics, in Greek and Hebrew, as well as contemporary philosophy, literature, history, politics, science, medicine and social problems.

Wesley said, “The world is my parish.” He reached out to the world with the gospel and with concern for the poor and powerless. He cheered Wilberforce in his great work to eliminate slavery from England. He established schools for the poor. He ministered in jails and in prisons. He went to the coal mines to visit the poor miners and bring the gospel to them. He wrote a medical book giving cures for those who could not afford medical help. He set up a free medical dispensary, adapted an electrical machine for healing and set up spinning and knitting shops for the poor. He provided a loan fund for the poor because of excessive interest rates in England.

Wesley was abused and derided by many of his contemporaries, yet before his death, he was held in high regard by the masses of the people. He was the beloved friend of Dr. Samuel Johnson. His opinions were respected by the highest dignitaries of the British Parliament. He has been regarded as one of the moral heroes and leaders of the human race.

He was a man of one book, the Bible. He read it, translated it, preached it, lived it, grounded his theology on it. The Bible was his “norming, norm.” In the Wesleyan quadrilateral, one must be careful to note that reason, tradition and experience always came under the authority of the Bible for John Wesley.

Wesley drew on historic Christianity. He was well acquainted with the ancient creeds, the early church fathers, the Protestant reformers as well as pietism, mysticism and Puritanism. For Wesley, if a doctrine was new, it was not true. His theological methodology followed biblical truth, historic orthodoxy and practical religion.

Wesley’s discipleship method is a worthy model. He articulated doctrine as “plain truth for plain people.” He released lay people for the work of ministry. He sought not only to bring souls to Christ but also to bring them up “in our most holy faith.” He wrote, “How grievously are they mistaken who imagine that, as soon as children are born, they need take no more care of them! We do not find it so. The chief care then begins.” The Works of Wesley, Jackson ed., 13:23. His focus on Christian growth happening in Christian community was modeled in the development of the society, class and band.

Wesley’s message was simple. It can be summarized in the following statements:

- All need to be saved.
- All can be saved.
- All can know they are saved.
- All can be saved to the uttermost.

Who Are the Wesleyans?

In John Wesley’s publication, “The Character of a Methodist,” the following descriptors are given:

- They have no desire to be distinguished from other believers
- They join in ministry with other Christians and are not sectarian nor Separatist

They affirm the historic creeds
They believe the basic Christian doctrines

Wesleyans believe in an order of salvation. Theology is the story of God's grace.

Prevenient grace
Converting grace
Sanctifying grace
Glorifying grace

God has provided various means of grace. There are the instituted means and the prudential means of grace.

Three features are at the heart of Wesleyan Theology:

All people can be saved. God is not willing that any should perish. God has made no decision that would exclude anyone from the possibility of being saved.

All people can know they are saved. We have the assurance of salvation through the witness of God's Spirit and the witness of our own spirit. This is not presumption, but confidence in God.

All people can be saved to the uttermost. A Christian is not only saved from the penalty of sin, but also from the power of sin in this world and the presence of sin in eternity. Christian perfection is the perfecting of love in the human heart. It is love excluding sin. It is self-giving love. It is perfection of motive, holiness of heart resulting in holiness of life.

Wesleyan Theology is Wholistic. Wesleyans have a healthy balance between:

Faith and works
Personal holiness and social holiness
Head and heart
Word and sacrament
Piety and mercy

Wesleyans minister to the whole person, body, mind and soul. There is no holiness but "social holiness." Salvation finds its expression in concern for the needs of the whole person.

Wesleyan Theology draws on the Wesleyan Quadrilateral as its method for determining theological truth:

Scripture
Reason
Tradition
Experience

Wesleyans Make Disciples. The theology of holy living rejects any hint of antinomianism. They are intentional about the instituted means of grace, i.e. prayer, scripture, Lord's Supper and the prudential means of grace, i.e. small group, spiritual disciplines, works of mercy.

Wesleyans Are Called Into Community. They are engaged in "social holiness," together in corporate worship and sacrament, alert to and ministering to the needs of others. Wesleyans believe spiritual growth happens best as Christians are in biblical community with one another.

“The World is my Parish.” Wesleyans are engaged in bringing people to faith in Christ. Evangelism is central to the mission. They reach out to the world, all races and all cultures with the gospel of redemption.

APPENDIX A

Introduction to John Wesley

A stranger visiting a community in England asked an old Cornishman to explain the spiritual life of the villagers. He replied, "A man named Wesley passed this way." The substantial impact of the life of John Wesley is influencing people all around the world to this very day.

Stanley Ayling, a Wesleyan biographer who wrote biographies of King George III and William Pitt, declares John Wesley as "the single most influential Protestant leader of the English-speaking world since the Reformation." (Stanley Ayling, John Wesley, page 318)

JOHN WESLEY, famous clergyman and founder of the Methodist movement, was born in Epworth, England on June 17, 1703. He died in London on March 2, 1791. His father, Samuel Wesley (1690-1739), was a scholarly clergyman of Epworth and a distant relative of Arthur Wesley, Duke of Wellington. Samuel Wesley's example and training encouraged his son's unwavering orthodoxy, love for the Church of England, stern self-discipline, unflinching courage and above all, his thirst for learning.

John Wesley's mother, Susannah, was born on January 20, 1669 and died on July 23, 1742. She was the daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, a Nonconformist minister. She was the 25th of 25 children. She and Samuel Wesley were married on November 21, 1688 when Samuel was 26 and she was 19. They had 19 children. Nine of the children died as infants. Four of the children who died were twins. Susannah was a saint, scholar, beautiful woman and efficient homemaker. She educated the children herself. All of the children learned Latin and Greek and were well educated in classical studies. Susannah is known as the "Mother of Methodism." Her two sons, John and Charles were deeply influenced by their mother, applying the example and teaching of her life in their ministry.

One cold night on February 9, 1709, the old parsonage at Epworth in Lincolnshire, England went up in flames. The Reverend Samuel Wesley and his wife, Susannah, brought their family out into the garden, only to discover that their fifteenth and youngest child, John (called Jacky) was still in the house. Hurrying inside to attempt to rescue his son, Samuel found his way blocked at the foot of the stairs by a wall of fire and dense smoke. He knelt down in the blazing hall and "commended the soul of his child to God." But, then help came. A rescuer, standing on the shoulders of another, reached up to the upper floor window and pulled the little boy to safety. John Wesley was barely rescued from the flames. In later years he described himself as "a brand plucked out of the burning."

Wesley entered Charterhouse School in 1714 and in 1724 graduated from Oxford University. Wesley's reading of Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and Holy Dying took him into regular periods of self-examination. He began to summarize the events of his daily

life in a diary to document his spiritual journey. His extensive diary entries are an invaluable resource in documenting his personal Christian experience as well as his ministry. In 1726 he was made a fellow at Lincoln College, Oxford. On September 22, 1728, he was ordained.

On October 14, 1735, John and his brother Charles, sailed to Georgia. The Atlantic crossing introduced Mr. Wesley to some emigrant Moravians, who clearly possessed the spiritual peace for which he had been seeking. The time spent with the Moravians was to have a deep impact on John Wesley. He joined the colonists in Georgia as a preacher and missionary, landing in America on February 6, 1736. Wesley's declared his chief motive in going to America was "to save his own soul." His brother Charles served as secretary to Governor Oglethorpe. John spent two abortive years with the colonists and in missionary work to the Indians. In December 1737, he returned to England after dealing with a frustrating law suit against him initiated because he refused communion to a woman whom he determined unworthy.

In London he met Moravian, Peter Bohler, who convinced Wesley that what he needed was a personal faith. At Wesley's request, Bohler produced witnesses who personally testified they had been saved by faith alone. Wesley's mind was convinced and his heart quickly followed. On May 24, 1738, in a meeting largely attended by Moravians, but meeting under the auspices of the Church of England on Aldersgate Street in London, Wesley's intellectual conviction was transformed into personal experience while Martin Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans was being read. Here are Wesley's own words as recorded in his Journal:

"About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

The Aldersgate experience had a profound impact on Wesley. In subsequent entries in his Journal it is interesting to note some of his spiritual struggles. The night after his conversion he wrote he "was much buffeted with temptations." On May 31, he wrote that he "grieved the Spirit of God. . . and was troubled and in heaviness." Months later on October 14, he wrote, "I have not that joy in the Holy Ghost; no settled, lasting joy. Nor have I such a peace as excludes the possibility of fear or doubt." In these personal struggles is the evidence of his strict logic colliding with his experience.

Because of Peter Bohler's influence, Wesley became interested in studying the doctrines and disciplines of the Moravians. The Moravians were a group of Protestants originating in Bohemia from the reforms of John Huss and John Wycliffe. Bohemia was a historic country of central Europe that lost its political identity in 1949 when it became a part of today's Czech Republic. In the late seventeenth century, revival among the Moravians came in the form of a renewed emphasis on pietism. Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf became the leader through whom the "hidden seed" was restored.

Zinzendorf founded Herrnhut, a Moravian settlement established for Protestant refugees in Germany. Herrnhut was a unique type of religious community in which civic and church life were integrated. Christian nurture came through fellowship groups, daily worship, boarding schools, and concentration on foreign missions and evangelism. The first foreign missionaries left Herrnhut to work among the slaves in the West Indies in 1732. Within twenty years, missionaries were sent to Greenland, South Africa, Algiers and to the North American Indians. The community supported itself by various industries.

John Wesley had been impressed with the theology of the Moravians while on his journey by ship to America, as well as Peter Bohler's influence and the "Aldersgate Experience." In 1738 Mr. Wesley visited Herrnhut, Germany. While there he was deeply influenced both in his theology and the discipleship plan in practice. Count Zinzendorf and the Moravian community placed a high emphasis on personal piety, evangelism and world missions. Not only was Wesley influenced by Moravian piety and theology, but also their organizational plan designed to foster spiritual formation.

Upon his return to England, John Wesley began preaching salvation by faith wherever a pulpit was offered him. Soon, church after church refused to let him preach. Although Wesley was ordained in the Church of England, he was frequently forbidden to preach in many of the established churches. The encouragement of his friend, evangelist George Whitefield, spurred him into his "open-air" preaching style. On Sunday, April 1, 1739, Wesley preached for Whitefield at Bristol in the open air to a crowd of 3,000 people. This launched a new approach to Wesley's preaching ministry that helped him reach the common people with the gospel. Preaching in fields and in the open air was a radical approach for a priest of the Church of England.

Here is Wesley's journal entry (Saturday, March 31, 1739) the day before his first experience at "preaching in the fields":

"In the evening I reached Bristol and met Mr. Whitefield there. I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; having been all my life (till very lately so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church."

Wesley's friendship with Evangelist George Whitefield is a good example of Wesley's distinction between opinions and essential doctrines. Wesley and Whitefield disagreed strongly on the doctrine of election and predestination. Neither was able to convince the other to change his position. Yet, they respected one another and worked together for the cause of Christ. Wesley preached Whitefield's funeral sermon. Charles Wesley wrote a hymn, "Servant of God, Well Done," that was included in the sermon.

John Wesley was the founder of a distinct faith movement, but never formally separated from the Church of England. Even though he was forbidden to preach in many of the established churches he saw the Methodist movement as the church within the

church. On several occasions he reports preaching in a cemetery as he stood on his father's grave at Epworth. Thousands of earnest listeners who attended his meetings were drawn by Wesley's music. Wesley always gave an earnest and able exposition of Bible truth, saying he was "a man of one book."

Important to the success of John Wesley's ministry was that of his brother, Charles Wesley, who early joined him in the work that led to the founding of the Methodist movement. Charles Wesley was born on December 18, 1707, the third surviving son and eighteenth child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. He was called the "sweet singer of Methodism." He, along with his brother, John, believed if the Methodists "sang their theology" it would transform their lives. He composed over 6,000 hymns in his lifetime. Many of his hymns are still sung today. When he lay dying in March, 1788, he dictated these lines to his beloved wife, Sally:

In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a helpless worm redeem?
Jesus, my only hope Thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart,
O, could I catch a smile from Thee
And drop into eternity

Included in the current Free Methodist hymnal are the following hymns written by Charles Wesley: "I Want a Principle Within," "Jesus, Thine All Victorious Love," "O How Happy are They," "O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done?", "O for a Thousand Tongues," "Arise, My Soul Arise," "And Can It Be," "Christ the Lord is Risen Today," "A Charge to Keep I Have," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Soldiers of Christ, Arise," "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling," "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus," and "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." A chronological addendum identifies Charles Wesley's theological development in the hymns he wrote.

The Wesley brothers had a passion to communicate the Gospel. Altogether in John Wesley's long life, he preached between 40,000 to 50,000 sermons and traveled 250,000 miles in the British Isles, almost exclusively on horseback. Wesley's journal records the fact that he often preached in open-air meetings to crowds of 10,000 to 20,000 people. It was not uncommon for him to preach up to 800 sermons per year. He made good use of his travel time on horseback, often reading or writing as he rode.

John Wesley published four books of sermons, dated 1746, 1748, 1750 and 1760. The Standard Sermons of John Wesley, as well as his Notes Upon the New Testament, contained Wesley's basic theology. Persons appointed by the conference were permitted to preach only on condition that "the said persons preach no other doctrine than is contained" in the New Testament Notes and his standard sermons. There are 53 sermons designated as his "standard sermons." No minister or local preacher was to preach any doctrine contrary to the Notes and Sermons. Mr. Wesley's rule for preachers was this: ***"You have nothing to do but to save souls, therefore, spend and be spent in this work."***

In Wesley's Standard Sermons and Notes on the New Testament the primary doctrines are:

The atonement of our Lord

Assurance of pardon by the witness of the Spirit

Justification by faith

Entire sanctification/Christian perfection

The impossibility of a sincere seeker after the Truth being lost

Free grace as contrasted with "elected" grace

"Our main doctrines," said Wesley, "which include all the rest are repentance, faith and holiness. The first of these we account, as it were, the porch of religion; the next, the door; the third, religion itself." Wesley was a theological pragmatist. His theology always linked doctrine to conduct. Doctrine was to be realized in human experience and validated by that experience. It is important to realize that the development of Wesleyan theology did not end in 1791 when John Wesley died. It is equally important to appreciate the great contribution of this "practical" theologian to Christianity.

In Wesley's Journal he occasionally notes the presence of rabble rousers who were usually subdued by the end of his preaching. He apparently had an unusual gift for captivating a crowd. Although he did not have the oratorical gifts of George Whitefield, the combination of the singing, plus the able and earnest exposition of the scriptures drew the great crowds into giving careful attention to the preaching.

The name "Methodism" was tagged on the Wesley brothers as a result of their strict and methodical "holy habits." The term Methodist was meant to be a derisive term given also to those who belonged to the Holy Club on the campus of Oxford University.

Few laborers in the Christian cause have exceeded Wesley's energy as an incessant worker. It was not uncommon for him to travel on horseback thirty to sixty miles a day, deliver two or three sermons and write and read while making his journey. His success in stirring the conscience of England to the demands of a holy God may be attributed to his unrivaled personal magnetism, powerful oratory, methodical plans and perseverance in carrying forward his work.

The major turning point in John Wesley's life appears to have been his "heart-warming experience" at Aldersgate Street when he heard Martin Luther's preface to the Romans being read. The influence of his godly mother and father also provided powerful foundations in energizing him to cut a wide blazing swath of holy fire to purify the moral decay of England.

John Wesley's theology placed an emphasis on the evangelical aspects of faith, which he believed had been dangerously neglected. He constantly debated the Calvinists who maintained God had eternally predestined some to salvation and some to damnation.

Wesley preached the possibility of a universal redemption by faith alone and also insisted that an added privilege of being a believer was a divine assurance that one was saved. He emphasized the witness of the Spirit within, affirming one to be a child of God. Wesley also urged the necessity of Christian living with good works as proof of faith. He constantly called his followers to what he variously called holiness, sanctification, Christian perfection and perfect love. He maintained Methodism was raised up "to spread scriptural holiness over the land." Holiness for Wesley implied not only a spiritual experience but also disciplined conduct.

The term "Wesleyan Quadrilateral" was coined by Albert C. Outler to emphasize that Wesley relied more on "standards of doctrine" rather than on theological systems or the exacting Confessions of Faith. This "quadrilateral" consisted of four primary sources of authority for Wesley. He drew on Scripture, reason, tradition and experience. He saw Scripture as the "norming norm" to be the ultimate and highest authority. His emphasis on Christian experience was guarded from pure subjectivism because of his high regard for the Word of God as well as his emphasis on the witness of the Spirit, with the work of the Holy Spirit validating the Word of God in personal experience.

The Wesleyan quadrilateral is to be distinguished from the Epworth quadrilateral which is a popular summary of Wesley's theology summarized by W.B. Fitzgerald in 1903:

"all need to be saved,
all can be saved,
all can know they are saved,
all can be saved to the uttermost."

This quadrilateral shapes the heart of the purest expression of Wesleyan theology to this very day. People who remain true to the message of Wesleyan theology keep these four convictions at the forefront of their teaching and preaching.

Wesley's emphasis on fruit in the believer's life led him to a proper emphasis on social religion. His was practical, applied theology. He was convinced that a proper biblical belief led to proper behavior. Holiness had powerful social implications. He preached, "There is no holiness but social holiness."

For Wesley, holiness was not a private, individualistic experience isolated from involvement in the world. His 400 publications include many medical, scientific and educational books, tracts and hymns, as well as biblical and theological writings. His Primitive Physic, his medical self-help book, is archaic for today, but is fascinating reading.

John Wesley wrote many works on religious themes. He and his brother Charles published a number of original hymns and translated several songs from the German. Wesley preached to the "blue collar worker" of his day. He established schools. He developed an effective organizational structure for disciple making that became an amazing dynamic. His method of organizing Christians into societies, classes and bands predates the modern emphasis on small groups.

His chief writings include "A Calm Address to Our American Colonies," "Notes on the Old and New Testaments," "The Doctrine of Original Sin," "Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation," "Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion," and the publication of his standard sermons. His journals record a wealth of detail about his ministry, theology and personal life.

In 1751 he married Mary Vazeille, a widow with four children. The union did not prove a happy one and separation followed twenty years later in 1771. Wesley underwent persecution from his wife. She bitterly resented his pastoral oversight of hundreds of young women. Her scolding effectively removed any danger that "domesticity might impede his itinerancy." Someone has suggested any preacher would also have been a "circuit-riding preacher" if he had a wife like Mary Vazeille.

On Mr. Wesley's eighty-fifth birthday he made this entry in his Journal:

"I this day enter on my eighty-fifth year. And what cause have I to praise God, as for a thousand spiritual blessings, so for bodily blessings also! How little have I suffered yet, by the truth of numerous years! It is true, I am not so agile as I was in times past:

I do not run or walk so fast as I did.

My sight is a little decayed.

My left eye is grown dim, and hardly serves me to read.

I have daily some pain in the ball of my right eye, as also in my right temple (occasioned by a blow received some time since) and in my right shoulder and arm, which I impute partly to a sprain, and partly to the rheumatism.

I find likewise some decay in my memory, with regard to names and things lately past; but not at all with regard to what I have read and heard, twenty, forty, or sixty years ago.

Neither do I find any decay in my hearing, smell, taste, or appetite (though I want but a third part of the food I once did,) nor do I feel any such things as weariness, either in traveling or preaching. And I am not conscious of any decay in writing sermons, which I do as readily, and I believe, as correctly as ever.

To what can I impute this, that I am as I am? First doubtless, to the power of God, fitting me for the work to which I am called, as long as he pleases to continue me therein: and next, subordinately to this, to the prayers of his children--May we not impute it as inferior means,

1. To my constant exercise and change of air?
2. To my never having lost a night's sleep, sick or well, at land or sea, since I was born?
3. To my having sleep at command, so that whenever I feel myself almost wore out, I call it, and it comes day or night?
4. To my having constantly, for about sixty years, risen at four in the morning?
5. To my constant preaching at five in the morning, for above fifty years?
6. To my having had so little pain in my life and so little sorrow or anxious care?

Even now, though I find pain daily in my eye, temple, or arm, yet is never violent, and seldom lasts many minutes at a time. Whether or not this is sent to give me warning, that I am shortly to quit this tabernacle, I do not know: but be it one way or the other, I have only to say,

*My remnant of days
I spend to His praise,
Who died the whole world to redeem:
Be they many or few,
My days are his due,
And they all are devoted to Him!"*

On Wednesday, February 23, 1791, Wesley preached his last sermon from the text, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." On Wednesday, March 2, 1791, at age 88, John Wesley died in London. His closing words included, "The best of all is, God is with us." The last word he was heard to articulate was "Farewell." He spent sixty-five years in the ministry, a life of exceptional zeal, diligence and usefulness in His Master's vineyard.

When John Wesley died there were in the British Isles 300 traveling preachers, 72,000 members, and about 500,000 adherents, and about two-thirds that many overseas, especially in the United States where the church was growing rapidly under the leadership of godly men like Bishop Francis Asbury.

For all the energy and the power of his voice, John Wesley was five feet, three inches tall and weighed 128 pounds. The success of his ministry was not among the rich and famous, but among simple commoners. They were the ones who often persecuted Wesley and his followers.

The rigors of Wesley's personal life indicate he practiced what he preached. His was a well-ordered personal life. Few laborers in the Christian cause have exceeded Wesley's energy in intensity, as well as longevity, as a faithful exponent of biblical Christianity.

His success in stirring the conscience of England to the demands of a holy God and His call to holy living, may be attributed to his unrivaled personal magnetism, powerful oratory, methodical plans, perseverance and absolute devotion to Jesus Christ. He was God's instrument to spread a powerful swath of holy, purifying fire to cleanse the moral decay of England.

--Prepared by Dr. Darold L. Hill

APPENDIX B

CHRONOLOGY OF PRINCIPLE EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF JOHN WESLEY

- 1703 Born June 17 at Epworth, England, son of Samuel and Susannah Wesley, 15th of 19 children (nine died in infancy).
- 1707 December 18, Charles Wesley born, the 18th child of 19 born.
- 1708 Feb. 9, saved from the fire, “plucked as a brand from the burning.: (Cf. Amos 4:11, Zech. 3:2)
- 1714 Jan. 28, pupil at Charterhouse, London, 10 ½ yrs old, there 5 years.
- 1720 June 24, enters Christ Church, Oxford; spent 5 years there.
- 1725 Sept. 19, ordained deacon.
- 1726 March 17, elected fellow of Lincoln College.
- 1728 Ordained priest in the Church of England
- 1729 Name “Methodist” given on account of the “regularity of their behavior.”
- 1730 “The Holy Club.”
- 1733 Jan. 1, Sermon, “The Circumcision of the Heart” preached at Oxford. First printed production, “A Collection of Forms of Prayer for every day in the Week.”
- 1735 October. 1, Wesley sails for Georgia (April 25, his father’s death).
- 1736 Feb. 5, reaches America. Aug. 11, Charles Wesley leaves Georgia.
- 1737 Dec. 2, John leaves Savannah.
- 1738 Feb. 1, lands in England. First Hymn Book published.
May 21, Charles Wesley’s evangelical conversion.
May 24, John Wesley’s evangelical conversion.
- 1739 May 2, Wesley becomes an out-door preacher, i.e., field-reaching in Bristol.
Nov. 11, preaches in the Foundry, first Methodist meeting-house in London
- 1740 Wesley withdraws from Fetter Lane Society (Moravians)
First Methodist Society founded in July 23.
Wesley and Whitefield separate over doctrine of election.
- 1741 The first Methodist newspaper entitled “The Weekly History.”
- 1742 Wesley and Whitefield re-united. Formation of Methodist Classes. June 6, preaches on his father’s tombstone. July 30, death of Susannah Wesley.
- 1743 Writes “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion.”
- 1744 June 25, First conference of Methodists. Aug. 24, his last university sermon at Oxford in “Scriptural Christianity.” (approximately 176 Scripture verses woven in sermon)
- 1746 Wesley’s first volume of sermons. Reads King’s “Account of the Primitive Church.”
- 1747 First visit to Ireland; Methodism begins there.
- 1749 April 8, marriage of Charles Wesley; October 3, Grace Murray marries John Bennet.
- 1751 Wesley marries Mrs. Vazeille, Feb. 18. In April, his first visit to Scotland.
- 1755 Jan., published *Explanatory Notes Upon the N.T.* which he had begun in January 1754. May 6-8 Question of separation from the Church discussed at Leeds.
- 1756 Publishes “A Treatise on Baptism” written by his father.
- 1758 March 10, Assize sermon at Bedford.

- 1759 "Thoughts on Christian Perfection," a 30-page publication.
- 1763 Published tract entitled "Farther Thoughts upon Christian Perfection."
March 28, the "Sermon on Sin in Believers." Model Deed issued concerning Preaching Houses.
- 1765 April 25, Preface to Explanatory Notes on the Old Testament; last page date, Dec. 24, 1766. Published "The Scripture Way of Salvation" and "The Lord our Righteousness."
- 1766 Plain Account of Christian Perfection" (Last revision in 1777).
- 1767 April 4, wrote sermon on "The Witness of the Spirit" Discourse II.
- 1768 April 27, Wesley makes a will. August 24, Trevecca College opened.
- 1770 Sept. 30, Death of George Whitefield; Nov. 18, Wesley preaches funeral sermon.
- 1771 Jan. 23, Mrs. Wesley leaves him. Sept. 4, Francis Asbury sails for America. Wesley issues the first five volumes of his collected works.
- 1775 A Calm Address to our American Colonies published. April 27, death of Peter Boehler
- 1778 Jan. 1, first number of Arminian Magazine; Nov. 1, opening of City Road Chapel.
- 1781 Oct. 8, death of Mrs. Wesley
- 1782 August - Adam Clarke at Kingswood School.
- 1784 Feb. 28, Deed of Declaration executed. Sept. 1-2 Ordinations for America. Dec. 25-7, Francis Asbury ordained and set apart as General Superintendent for America.
- 1786 Sept. 24, Dr. Coke sails with three missionaries.
Sept - Nov. writing John Fletcher's Life (Fletcher died Aug. 14, 1785).
- 1788 March 29, death of Charles Wesley, burial on April 5 in Marylebone.
- 1790 John Wesley's revised Translation of the New Testament published, his last important publication. July 27, Wesley's last conference in Bristol; July 30, letter to William Wilberforce; Oct. 6, last open-air sermon; Oct. 24, last Journal entry.
- 1791 Feb. 1, last letter to America; Feb. 22, last Sermon, at Leatherhead; last entry in his Diary; Feb. 24, last letter, to Wilberforce; Feb. 25, returns to City Road; March 2, dies at City Road at 10 a.m.; March 9, buried at City Road.

John Wesley's final words: "THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US."

APPENDIX C

A Chronological Arrangement of the Wesley Hymns

Hymns Translated by John Wesley

Year Translated Or Composed	Hymn Title	Theme
1736	“Thou Hidden Love of God: Gerhardt Tersteegen -1729 Translated by John – 1736	Inward Cleansing
1737	“I’ll Praise My Maker While I’ve Breath” Isaac Watts - 1719 Altered by John – 1737	Adoration
1737	“Come, Ye That Love the Lord” Isaac Watts - 1707 Altered by John – 1737	Rejoicing and Thanks
1738	“O God, Our Help in Ages Past” Isaac Watts - 1719 Altered by John – 1738	Adoration
1738	“Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me” Paul Gerhardt - 1653 Translated by John -1738	Consecration
1738	“O Thou, To Whose All-Searching Sight” Nicholas von Zinzendorf -1725 Translated by John -1738	Trust and Confidence
1739	“Lo, God Is Here!” Gerhardt Tersteegen - 1729 Translated by John – 1739	Adoration
1739	“Before The Great Jehovah’s Throne” Isaac Watts - 1719 Altered by John – 1739	Adoration
1739	“Commit Thou All Thy Grievs” Paul Gerhardt -1653 Translated by John – 1739	Trust and Confidence
1739	“Give To The Winds Thy Fears” Paul Gerhardt -1653 Translated by John -1739	Trust and Confidence
1740	“I Thirst, Thou Wounded Lamb of God” Stanzas 1,2 by Nicholas von Zinzendorf - 1735 Stanzas 3-5 by Johann Nitschmann -1735 Translated by John -1740	Inward Cleansing
1740	“Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness” Nicholas von Zinzendorf – 1735 Translated by John – 1740	Forgiveness

1741	“Creator Spirit! By Whose Aid” Translated by John Dryden – 1693 Adapted by John – 1741	Holy Spirit
1744	“My God, The Spring of All My Joys” Isaac Watts – 1707 Altered by John – 1744	Adoration

Comments on these early translated and adapted hymns:

1. Isaac Watts was a phenomenal English hymn writer (1674-1748) whose poetic talent John Wesley greatly admired. He was a Dissenter and Congregationalist and, because the theology reflected in his hymns was sometimes Calvinistic, John Wesley felt it necessary to alter them.
2. The above hymns by Watts reflect the influence Isaacs Watts had on John Wesley both prior to and just after his Aldersgate experience on May 24, 1738.
3. Frank Whaling, in his introduction to *John and Charles Wesley* notes that “the Moravians put Wesley into contact with the German language and some of the greatest German pietist hymns. Wesley’s superb translations of thirty-three of those hymns (some of which are noted above) have become justly honored within Anglo-Saxon spiritual hymnody, and they were also important in his own spiritual progress.” (Whaling, ed., 1981/17)
4. While in Georgia (1736-1737), John Wesley learned German and translated these thirty-three pietist hymns from German to English. It is reasonable to assume that he chose them on the basis of their inherent merit as hymns and also because of their relevance to his own need and seeking heart at this point in his spiritual pilgrimage. (Whaling, 19)
5. This Moravian influence in Wesley’s life comes just prior to and right after his heart warming Aldersgate experience.

Chronological Arrangement of Hymns written by Charles Wesley

Charles Wesley was born on December 18, 1707, the third surviving son and eighteenth child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. He was called the “sweet singer of Methodism.” He, along with his brother, John, believed if the Methodists “sang their theology” it would transform their lives. He composed over 6,000 hymns in his lifetime. Many of his hymns are still sung today. When he lay dying in March, 1788, he dictated these lines to his beloved wife, Sally:

In age and feebleness extreme,
 Who shall a helpless worm redeem?
 Jesus, my only hope Thou art,
 Strength of my failing flesh and heart,
 O, could I catch a smile from Thee
 And drop into eternity.

Year Composed	Hymn Title	Theme
1738	“And Can It Be?” (Written shortly after the evangelical conversions of Charles and John in 1738.)	Forgiveness
1738	“Where Shall My Wondering Soul Begin?”	Forgiveness
1739	“Jesus, The Sinner’s Friend, to Thee”	Repentance
1739	“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” “Written on the first anniversary of Charles Wesley’s conversion on May 21.	Adoration
1739	“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”	Christmas
1739	“Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”	Easter
1739	“Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise”	Easter
1739	“Peace, Doubting Heart”	Assurance
1740	“Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies”	Person of Christ
1740	“Depth of Mercy! Can There Be?”	Repentance
1740	“Jesus, Lover of My Soul”	Refuge
1740	“Jesus, Thy All-Victorious Love”	Inward cleansing
1740	“Come, Holy Ghost, All-Quickening Fire!”	Inward cleansing
1740	“Lord, I Believe a Rest Remains”	Rest, Spirit-filled Life
1740	“Talk With Us, Lord, Thyself Reveal”	Love
1740	“Christ From Whom All Blessings Flow”	Fellowship, Body of Christ, Gifts
1741	“Father, I Stretch My Hands to Thee”	Faith
1741	“Sinners, Turn, Why Will You Die?”	Invitation
1742	“Arise, My Soul, Arise”	Assurance

1742	“O For a Heart to Praise My God”	Inward cleansing and Renewal
1742	“What Shall I Do, My God, To Love”	Adoration
1742	“O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done”	Worship and praise
1742	“I Know that My Redeemer Lives”	Adoration
1742	“Jesus, My Strength, My Hope”	Faith
1742	“Come, O Thou Traveler Unknown” (Wrestling Jacob)	Surrender and Inward Cleansing
1742	“What Is Our Calling’s Glorious Hope?”	Inward holiness
1742	“God of All Power, and Truth, and Grace”	Spirit-filled life
1742	“Lamb of God, I look to Thee”	Youth and Humility
1744	“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”	Christmas/Advent
1744	“Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim” (This hymn was first published in one of the “hymn tracts” which the Wesleys issued for use in their Class Meetings. It appeared in 1744 when the Wesleys were in the midst of their evangelistic campaigns and when their converts were suffering more frequent and worse attacks from mobs led by the clergy and others.)	Worship
1744	“Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove” Isaac Watts – 1707 Altered by Charles – 1744	Holy Spirit
1746	“Rejoice, The Lord is King!”	Ascension and Reign
1746	“God Is Gone Upon High”	Ascension
1746	“Spirit of Faith, Come Down”	Holy Spirit
1747	“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”	God’s love and Perfect love as a result of inward cleansing.
1749	“Soldiers of Christ, Arise”	Courage and Spiritual warfare.
1749	“Jesus, We Look to Thee”	Worship
1749	“Jesus, The Name High Over All”	Worship
1749	“O Love Divine, How Sweet Thou Art”	Provisions
1749	“All Ye that Pass By”	Invitation
1749	“Thou Judge of Quick and Dead”	Judgment

1749	“O How Happy Are They”	Regeneration
1749	“I Want a Principle Within”	Watchfulness
1749	“Give Me the Faith Which Can Remove”	Stewardship
1749	“Light of the World”	Trust and Confidence
1749	“Thou Hidden Source of Calm Repose”	Trust and Confidence
1749	“Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I Go” “How Oft Have I the Spirit Grieved” (Attributed to Charles Wesley. Date unknown)	World Evangelism Repentance
1758	“Lo, He Comes, with Clouds Descending”	Second Coming
1759	“Let Saints on Earth in Concert Sing”	Hope of Heaven
1762	“O Thou Who Camest From Above”	Consecration
1762	“The Thing My God Doth Hate”	Inward cleansing, Holiness, Renewal in God’s image.
1762	“ A Charge to Keep I Have ” (Composed 15 years before the final edition of “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection” which was published in 1777)	Watchfulness
1770	“Servant of God, Well Done!” (This hymn was appended to John Wesley’s sermon delivered at the funeral of George Whitefield, his Calvinist friend.)	Endurance and Triumph at last!

Historical Note: All the above hymns are found in *Hymns of Faith and Life*, a hymnal published jointly by the Free Methodist Church and the Wesleyan Church in 1976. It contains:

51 hymns written by Charles Wesley
1 hymn written by Isaac Watts and altered by Charles
14 hymns translated or altered by John Wesley
and
1 hymn written by Samuel Wesley, Sr., father of John and
Charles

APPENDIX D

Book of Discipline

VIII. Law of Life and Love

¶A/112. God's law for all human life, personal and social, is expressed in two divine commands: Love the Lord God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself. These commands reveal what is best for persons in their relationship with God, others, and society. They set forth the principles of human duty in both individual and social action. They recognize God as the only Sovereign. All people as created by Him and in His image have the same inherent rights regardless of sex, race, or color. All should therefore give God absolute obedience in their individual, social, and political acts. They should strive to secure to everyone respect for their person, their rights, and their greatest happiness in the possession and exercise of the right within the moral law.

IX. Good Works

¶A/113. Good works are the fruit of faith in Jesus Christ, but works cannot save us from our sins nor from God's judgment. As expressions of Christian faith and love, our good works performed with reverence and humility are both acceptable and pleasing to God. However, good works do not earn God's grace.

Salvation

X. Christ's Sacrifice

¶A/114. Christ offered once and for all the one perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. No other satisfaction for sin is necessary; none other can atone.

XI. The New Life in Christ

¶A/115. A new life and a right relationship with God are made possible through the redemptive acts of God in Jesus Christ. God, by His Spirit, acts to impart new life and put people into a relationship with Himself as they repent and their faith responds to His grace. Justification, regeneration, and adoption speak significantly to entrance into and continuance in the new life.

Justification

¶A/116. Justification is a legal term that emphasizes that by a new relationship in Jesus Christ people are in fact accounted righteous, being freed from both the guilt and the penalty of their sins.

Regeneration

¶A/117. Regeneration is a biological term which illustrates that by a new relationship in Christ, one does in fact have a new life and a new spiritual nature capable of faith, love, and obedience to Christ Jesus as Lord. The believer is born again and is a new creation. The old life is past; a new life is begun.

Adoption

¶A/118. Adoption is a filial term full of warmth, love, and acceptance. It denotes that by a new relationship in Christ believers have become His wanted children freed from the mastery of both sin and Satan. Believers have the witness of the Spirit that they are children of God.

XII. Entire Sanctification

¶A/119. Entire sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to regeneration, by which the fully consecrated believers, upon exercise of faith in the atoning blood of Christ, are cleansed in that moment from all inward sin and empowered for service. The resulting relationship is attested by the witness of the Holy Spirit and is maintained by faith and obedience. Entire sanctification enables believers to love God with all their hearts, souls, strength, and minds, and their neighbor as themselves, and it prepares them for greater growth in grace.

XIII. Restoration

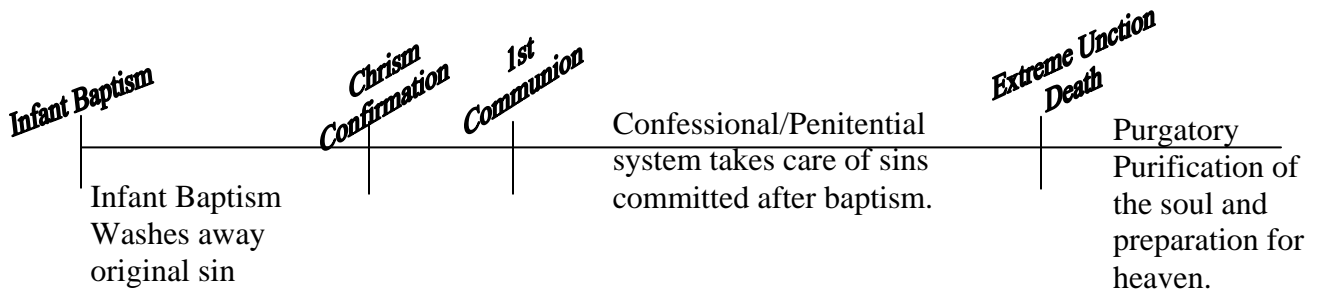
¶A/120. Christians may be sustained in a growing relationship with Jesus as Savior and Lord. However, they may grieve the Holy Spirit in the relationships of life without returning to the dominion of sin. When they do, they must humbly accept the correction of the Holy Spirit, trust in the advocacy of Jesus, and mend their relationships.

Christians can sin willfully and sever their relationship with Christ. Even so by repentance before God, forgiveness is granted and the relationship with Christ restored, for not every sin is the sin against the Holy Spirit and unpardonable. God's grace is sufficient for those who truly repent and, by His enabling, amend their lives. However, forgiveness does not give believers liberty to sin and escape the consequences of sinning.

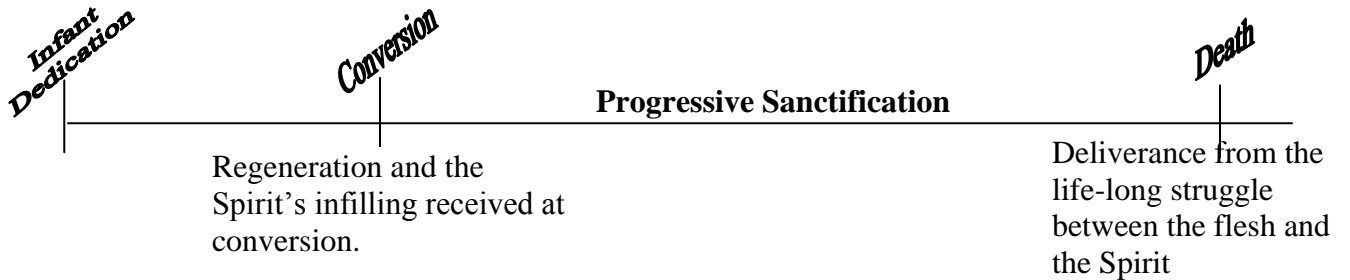
God has given responsibility and power to the church to restore penitent believers through loving reproof, counsel, and acceptance.

APPENDIX E Major Views on Sanctification

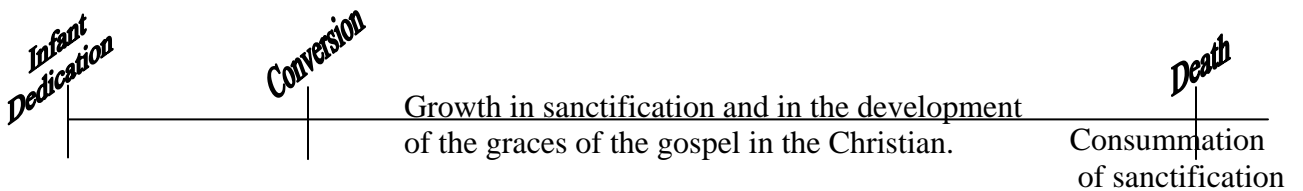
1. The Roman Catholic Position



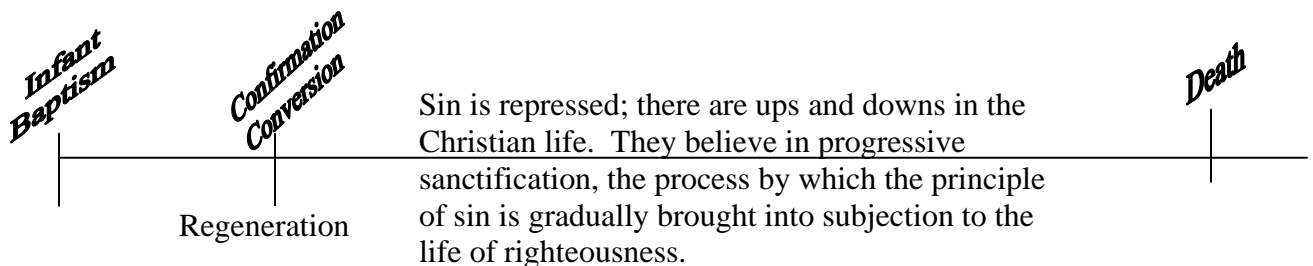
2. The “Conversion” Position (Count Zinzendorf and Baptists who believe in the supposed biblical model of Jesus who was baptized by John and filled with the Holy Spirit at the same time.)



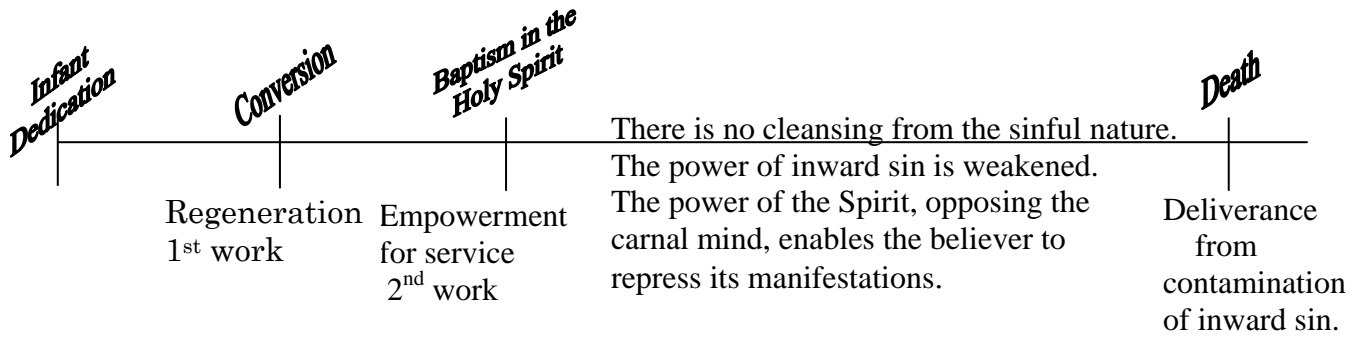
3. The “Growth” Position (Oberlin School represented by Asa Mahan and Charles G. Finney.)



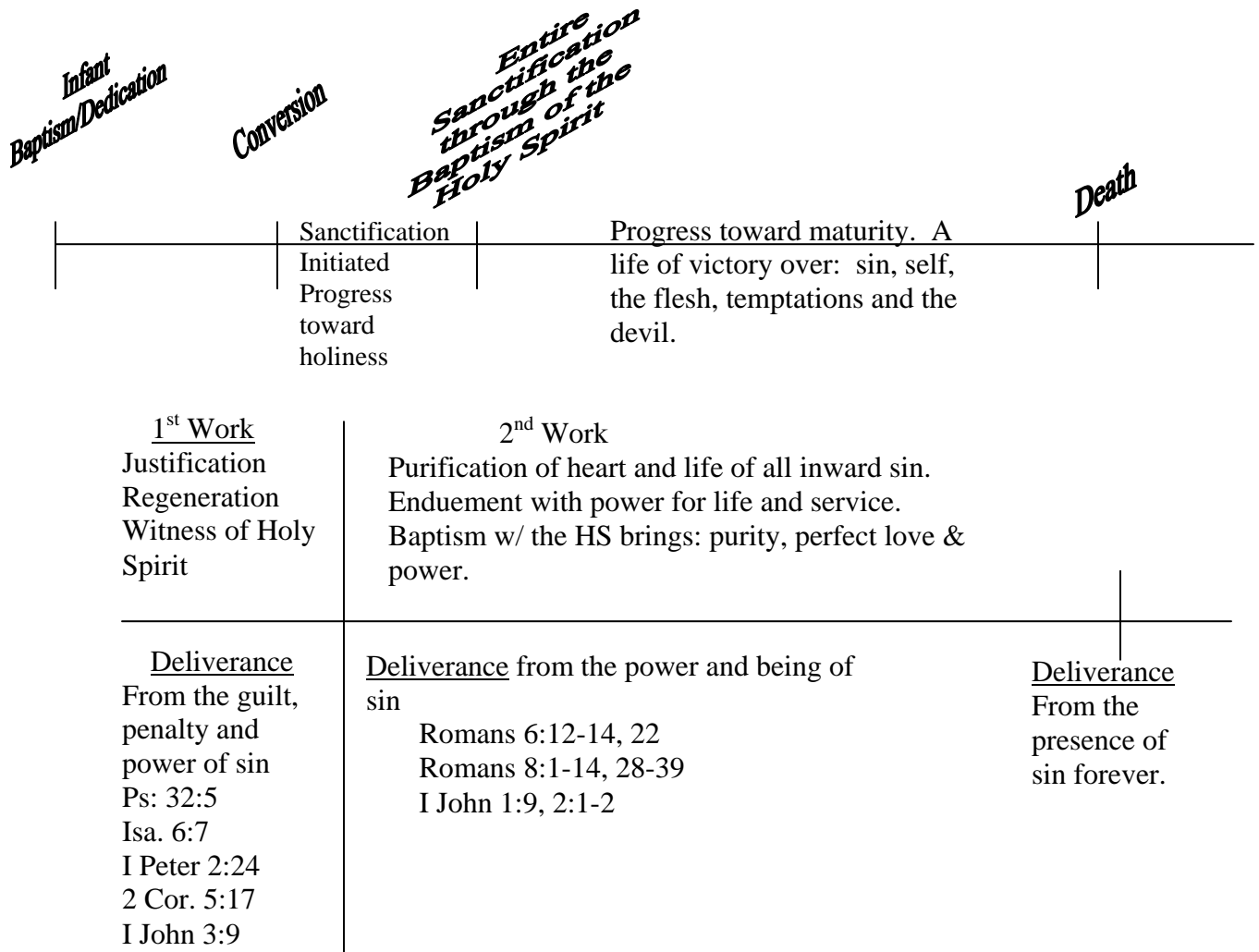
4. The “Constant Struggle” Position (Lutherans and Calvinists such as Presbyterian and Reformed churches.)



5. The Keswickian Position (Independent believers & some Pentecostals)



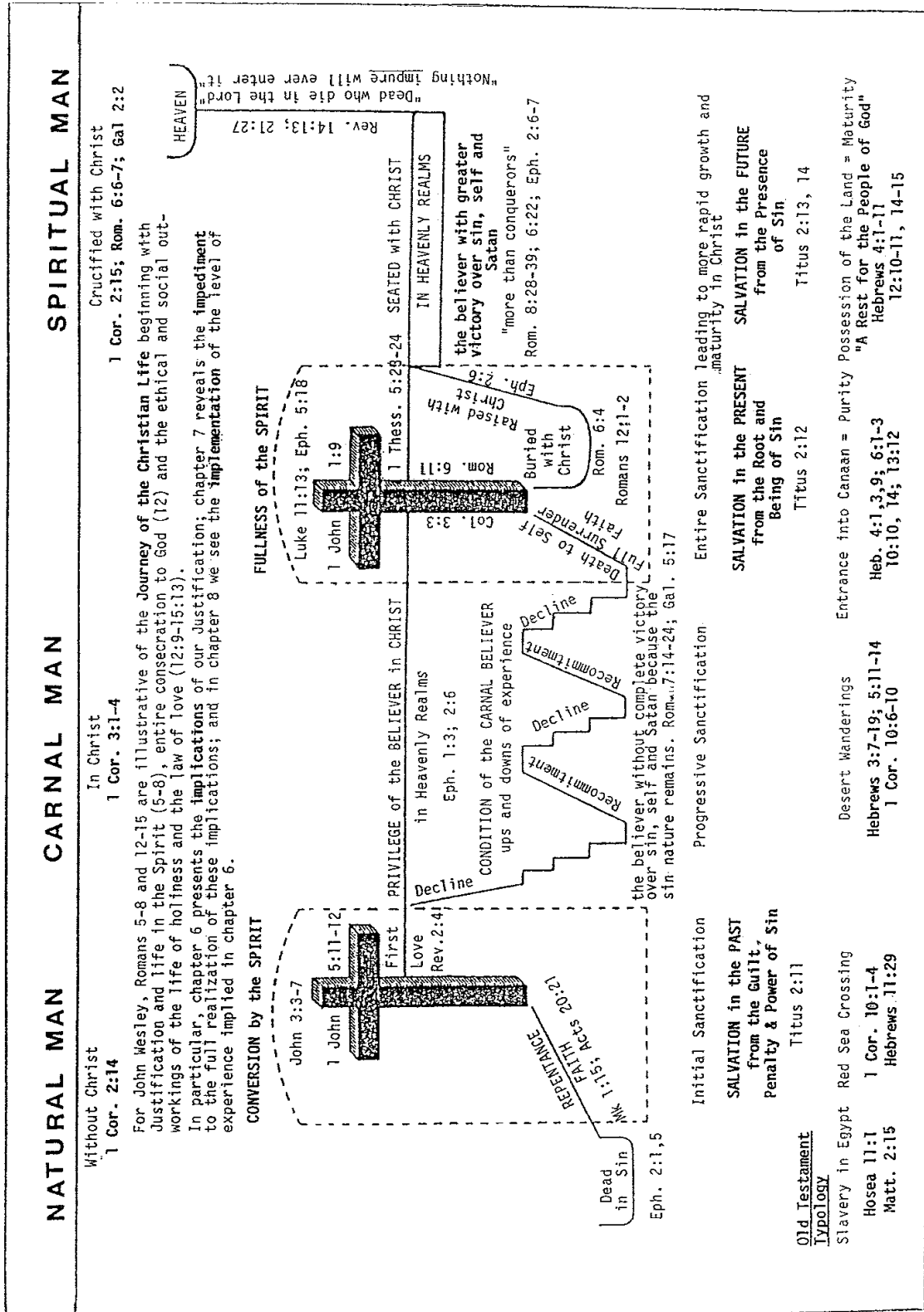
6. The Crisis/Process or Purity/Maturity Position (All Wesleyans)



APPENDIX F

Regeneration and Entire Sanctification

THE WESLEYAN-ARMINIAN POSITION ON REGENERATION (The 1st Work of Grace) and ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION (The 2nd Work of Grace)



Prepared originally by Don Phillips and Wesleyanized by Wes King, D. Min. both former missionaries to Brazil
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This hymn, written by **Charles Wesley** and found in most church hymnals, reflects the **centrality of God's love** in the theology and spirituality of the **Wesleys**, and is a measure of the influence of the **Wesleyan tradition** on the church as a whole.

335 LOVE DIVINE, ALL LOVES EXCELLING

Charles Wesley, 1747

BEECHER 8. 7. 8. 7. D.

John Zundel, 1870

1. Love di-vine, all loves ex-cel-ling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
 2. Breathe, O breathe Thy lov-ing Spir-it In-to ev-ery troub-led breast;
 3. Come, al-might-y to de-liv-er, Let us all Thy life re-ceive;
 4. Fin-ish then Thy new cre-a-tion; Pure and spot-less let us be;

Fix in us Thy hum-ble dwell-ing, All Thy faith-ful mer-cies crown.
 Let us all in Thee in-her-it; Let us find that sec-ond rest.
 Sud-den-ly re-turn, and nev-er, Nev-er-more Thy tem-ples leave.
 Let us see Thy great sal-va-tion, Per-fect-ly re-stored in Thee;

Je-sus, Thou art all com-pas-sion, Pure, un-bound-ed love Thou art;
 Take a-way our bent to sin-ning; Al-pha and O-me-ga be;
 Thee we would be al-ways bless-ing, Serve Thee as Thy hosts a-bove,
 Changed from glo-ry in-to glo-ry, Till in heaven we take our place,

Vis-it us with Thy sal-va-tion; En-ter ev-ery trem-bling heart.
 End of faith as its be-gin-ning, Set our hearts at lib-er-ty.
 Pray, and praise Thee with-out ceas-ing, Glo-ry in Thy per-fect love.
 Till we cast our crowns be-fore Thee, Lost in won-der, love, and praise! A-men.

Alternate tune: HYFRYDOL

He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father. John 14:21

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” (Colossians 3:12-14).