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Wesleyan Theological Journal

Volume 7 — Spring — 1972

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Editor
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**SANCTIFICATION AND SELFHOOD:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE WESLEYAN MESSAGE**

Rob L. Staples, Th. D.

Professor of Theology, Bethany Nazarene College

I. INTRODUCTION

We must begin with a disclaimer. The term "phenomenological analysis," as used in the subtitle does not refer to all that the term connotes in contemporary philosophy. I do not propose to apply strictly all the epistemological techniques advanced by the phenomenologists such as Brentano, Husserl, Scheler, Otto and others. 1

And yet, at the risk of seeming to contradict myself, I do propose to use this epistemological methodology in a rather limited and elementary way. That is, I shall attempt to examine the Wesleyan message by "bracketing out" all that is "transcendent" in the Wesleyan understanding of sanctification and looking simply at that which is experienced subjectively. This means that we will not concern ourselves at first with what Kant would call the "noumenal," or the "things-in-themselves" which transcend the bounds of our experience. Instead we will start with a descriptive analysis of inner experience, a type of reductionism (not unlike that of Descartes), restricting our attention to phenomena, that is, to the data of pure consciousness. 2

Translated into theology, and applied to the problem at hand, this means that we will not be concerned about what God does for man when he sanctifies him, but simply with man's perception of what he experiences in his own human subjectivity.

In theology, as in other areas, it is often difficult to see the proverbial forest for the trees. Worse yet, sometimes we cannot even see the trees for the underbrush that has grown up and obscured our view. By such a reductionism as here proposed. I would hope that we can clear the ground of some needless theological underbrush, so that the sturdy doctrinal trees of our Wesleyan faith may stand tall and unobstructed.

I will sketch my thoughts along this line by stating and briefly elaborating five theses. Martin Luther offered "Ninety-Five Theses" which sparked a Reformation. My list is more brief. I offer only five. And my goal is much more modest. No Refor-

mation is anticipated! I hope only to stimulate some thought regarding (if I might again press into use an admittedly tired term) the "contemporary relevance" of the Wesleyan message.

The "phenomenological analysis" I am suggesting centers in thesis number three. But first it is necessary to lay a foundation in theses one and two. Then theses four and five will follow through with some implications arising from such an analysis. Now to the matter at hand.

II. SUBSTANCE AND STRUCTURE

Thesis 1: In John Wesley's thought, there is a clearly discernible distinction between the "substance" of sanctification and the "structure" of sanctification- a distinction which later Wesleyanism has tended to obscure.

First some definitions are called for. By "substance, " I refer to the essential content of sanctification, the "what" of holiness. By "structure, " I refer to the "how" and the "when. " Substance refers to what holiness is, structure to the process involved in attaining it.

Admittedly these terms are not Wesley's own, but I am insisting that the concepts represented by the terms are his and that the distinction between them is crucial to an understanding of his doctrine. Perhaps other pairs of words could serve just as well-content and method, for instance, or end and means, or the Aristotelian terms matter and form. But I shall adhere to substance and structure if only for the convenience of alliteration .

Regarding the substance, Wesley always described the content of sanctification in terms of love. This has been documented many times. J. Ernest Rattenbury says:

The content of his (Wesley' s) doctrine, on the statement of which he always fell back when challenged, was very simple; it was to love God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength, and one's neighbour as oneself, with the implication that such as love involved deliverance from all sin. 3

From the time of his encounter with the writings of William Law around 1727,⁴ Wesley's descriptions of Christian perfection contained the idea of love to God and neighbor. ⁵ It was in terms of love that the idea of perfection first made its impact upon him, and through all the developing sequences of his thought it is this original emphasis of love which recurs unchanged. ⁶ In his Oxford sermon of 1733 entitled *The Circumcision of the Heart*, love is the dominant note. ⁷ And in 1775 he could still

write: "There is nothing deeper, there is nothing better in heaven or earth than love . . . Here is the height, here is the depth of Christian experience!" 8

In his sermon *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, Wesley says:

What is perfection? The word has various senses: here it means perfect love. It is love excluding sin; love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul. 9

Similarly, in a letter to Walter Churchey, he says: "Entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, is neither more nor less than pure love-love expelling sin and governing both the heart and life of a child of God. 11 10 Here is the most concise definition that Wesley ever gave of what we are here calling the substance of sanctification. It is love excluding, or expelling, sin.

Now let us consider Wesley's view of the structure of sanctification. Wesley had a great deal to say about states, stages, and degrees in religious experience. David L. Cubie has clearly shown how Wesley used these terms. 11 Under the category of states, Wesley compares men in different conditions of life, while stages and degrees occur within the life of grace. The three states are: (1) "the natural man, " (2) the man "under the law, " and (3) the man "under grace." 12

The stages are expressed in various ways by Wesley. With- in the Christian life there are stages of faith, of assurance, of sinlessness, and of love. 13 Like the stages, the degrees occur within the Christian life, but whereas the stages are perfectible, there is no "perfection of degrees. 1'14 Degrees express the gradual increase of God's work in the soul and increase throughout eternity.

The stages differ from the states in that they are stages of grace within the Christian life. They differ from degrees in that they represent recognizable levels of achievement within the Christian life. 15

We are interested primarily in the stages, particularly the stages of love within the total process of sanctification. In the sermon *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, Wesley gives a fairly detailed account of the stages of the Christian life. 16 From this and other sources it is obvious that Wesley viewed salvation as a teleological process comprising a series of stages and aiming at the perfection of man. 17 Sanctification is seen as a gradual process within which there is the supervention of two instantaneous events. In the sermon *Working Out Our Own Salvation*, Wes-

ley says that sanctification "begins the moment we are justified" and "gradually increases from that moment . . . till, in another instant the heart is cleansed from all sin, and filled with pure love to God and man. 1118 These two "moments" or "instants" are factors to which later Wesleyan theologians such as H. Orton Wiley refer as "initial sanctification" which is concomitant with justification, and "entire sanctification" which is subsequent to it. 19 These two "moments" are basic to what we have designated as the structure of sanctification.

Thesis number one contains the suggestion that later Wesleyanism hastened to obscure Wesley's distinction between substance and structure. To Wesley the structure was less important than the substance. Sometimes in our zeal for holiness evangelism we have inverted this emphasis almost to the point of making the substance incidental to the structure, and the structure, more than the substance, has been communicated to our people as being the Wesleyan "distinctive" and the test of Wesleyan "orthodoxy." To the extent that this is true, we have departed from Wesley's admonition: "Let this love be attained, by whatever means, and I am content; I desire no more. All is well, if we love the Lord our God with all our heart and our neighbour as ourselves." 20

III. SCRIPTURE AND EXPERIENCE

Thesis 2: For the "substance" of sanctification, Wesley's primary authority was Scripture, but for the "structure" of sanctification his primary authority was experience—a fact which later Wesleyanism has tended to ignore.

There can be little doubt about the first claim, namely that Wesley had scriptural authority for his idea of the goal of sanctification as "love excluding sin." From as early as 1730, when he began to be *homo unius libri*, love was accepted as the "one thing needful" and the goal of his religious quest. 21 Throughout his ministry, perfection was described as "the love of God and man producing all those fruits which are described in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, 1122 and First Corinthians 13 was thought to contain "the height and depth of genuine perfection . . . the love of our neighbour flowing from the love of God. 1123 He insisted that to define perfection as anything other than love was unscriptural. 24 "Pure love reigning alone in the heart and life" was "the whole of scriptural perfection, 1125 and "this perfection cannot be a delusion," he said, "unless the Bible be a delusion too." 26 The only way to avoid setting perfection too high or too low, Wesley was convinced, was "by keeping to the Bible, and setting it just as high as the Scripture does." 27 And the Scripture, he was equally convinced, stated perfection only in terms

of love. "It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this,-the pure love of God and man; the loving God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves." 28 Of course, in his examination of the religious experiences of many persons, Wesley found support for his concept of "love excluding sin." 129 But the testimonies of these "living witnesses" only confirmed what he had already found in Scripture.

But what about the claim that Wesley's chief authority for the structure of sanctification was experience rather than Scripture? It is significant that although as early as 1729 or 1730 Wesley had a clear idea of the substance, his understanding of the structure did not develop until sometime after the Aldersgate experience of 1738. In the latter part of 1738 Wesley began to collect accounts of the religious experiences of those whose testimony impressed him. This was the beginning of what John Peters calls "that clinical collection of personal testimony which with its emphasis on experience was increasingly to affect Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection." 30 This collecting of experiential evidence was to continue for over a quarter of a century, 31 during which time he was increasingly convinced of the validity of an instantaneous attainment of full sanctification. For twenty years after Aldersgate the ideas of gradual sanctification and instantaneous sanctification were held in tension, with the stress sometimes predominantly on the one and sometimes on the other. But after several revivals broke out in England and Ireland, in the years 1759 to 1762, in which many persons testified to having been filled with love and cleansed from sin, 32 Wesley began to construct a synthesis of the gradual and the instantaneous, after the analogy of physical death:

It is often difficult to perceive the instant when a man dies; yet there is an instant in which life ceases And if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it. 33

Thus the process of sanctification-or "love excluding sin"- which begins in the new birth is brought to completion in a second crisis moment which is "not so early as justification" and "not so late as death." 34 This is the structure of sanctification to which Wesley was impelled by the authority of experience.

But did Wesley find any scriptural authority for the structure? 35 For certain aspects of the structure, he did. First, he was certain that Scripture, as well as experience, taught that sin remains in believers after the new birth. 36 Secondly, he found support in Scripture, as well as in experience, for the possibility of entire sanctification in this present life. 37 Even here,

however, the weight Wesley gave to the authority of experience is seen in his willingness to stop preaching the possibility of perfection in this life if it could be shown that no one had attained it. In such a case he would assume that he had interpreted the Scriptures wrongly. 38 But when Wesley went to the Scriptures to determine if entire sanctification was given gradually or instantaneously, he came to a startling conclusion:

Does he work it gradually, by slow degrees; or instantaneously, in a moment? . . . The Scriptures are silent upon the subject; because the point is not determined, at least not in express terms, in any part of the oracles of God. Every man therefore may abound in his own sense, provided he will allow the same liberty to his neighbour. 39

Thesis number two, then, appears valid. Wesley's authority for the substance, "love excluding sin", was scriptural, but his authority for the structure (a process comprising two instantaneous crises: "initial" and "entire" sanctification) was primarily experiential, i.e. psychological.

IV. SANCTIFICATION AND SELFHOOD

Thesis 3: The twofold structure of sanctification arises out of, and is implicit in, a twofold structure which is inherent in normal personality development—a fact which Wesleyanism in general has seldom recognized.

What was there in "experience" that convinced Wesley? Did he rightly interpret the data of experience? Is there any way to test his interpretation? If, as he said, "the Scriptures are silent" regarding the structure of sanctification, does psychology have anything to say?

Here is where phenomenological analysis may help. In phenomenological analysis we look for meanings in the original utterances and experiences of man before they have become the building blocks of a dogmatic system. This is no criticism of dogmatics. Rather it is to recognize an elemental sequence, that life precedes logos, that experience precedes dogma. Before we plunge very far into the theology of the church it is well to tarry awhile in the sphere of the "profane" (*profanum*, outside the temple), where much of man's life is lived. In phenomenological analysis we seek to do just that. We look for man's understanding of himself in his firsthand expressions and aspirations, more than in the creeds he constructs at second or third hand. Metaphorical descriptions precede metaphysical definitions. "Man is a poet before he becomes a propagandist." 40

He lives life, before he writes theology.

As in phenomenological analysis we take this "profane" or "humanistic" view, and scrutinize man's "lived life." We put our doctrinal formulations to the test and invite others to see if our descriptions are true to the manner in which they see things. With reference to the Wesleyan message, if we state that sanctification involves two (i. e. a second in addition to conversion) instantaneous "works of grace," is there any point of contact in man's "profane" experience which enables him to understand this statement? If not, there is little point in making the statement. But our third thesis proposes that there is such a point of contact.

There is a twofold structure in normal personality development. There are two supreme "moments" in the journey toward selfhood; two stages in one's becoming a whole person. We may call the first stage personal identity. Before we can become a mature person, both the umbilical cord and the apron string must be cut, psychologically as well as physically. The key word here is freedom. The question, "Who am I?" must find some kind of answer. We see this in infancy, as the child gradually distinguishes the "me" from the "you" and the "it." It becomes crucial in adolescence, as the youth seeks to "do his own thing," singing "I've got to be me." This search for identity and freedom is fraught with danger, but it is a necessary step on the road to selfhood. Such freedom is never absolute, but it is nevertheless real. Freedom, self-identity, knowing what and who I am- these constitute the first essentials in becoming a person.

The second stage may be called interpersonal responsibility. Freedom and self-identity are ultimately meaningless apart from responsible interpersonal involvement with other selves. Self-identity is logically prior to the development of responsible relationships; one who has not become a true self will not be able to sustain meaningful interpersonal relationships. But freedom grows stale unless it is invested. True self-consciousness must eventuate in self-commitment and self-communication. The key word here is love. 41

These two movements (the first toward self-interest and the second toward other-interest) are both essential to mature personhood. Interestingly, the two key words freedom and love figure prominently in the vocabulary of today's youth. Moreover, men like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Buber have recognized these two phenomena in human existence and their significance in becoming a person. Two recurring phrases in Bonhoeffer's writings are "to be a man" and "a man for others." 42 Buber speaks of the "I-Thou relationship." He says: "Love is responsibility of an I for a Thou." 43 But, as he makes clear, one can- not say "Thou" until he is able to truly say "I." 44

If, using phenomenological analysis, we "bracket out" all the transcendent or "religious" factors in human experience, the residue that remains will include this twofold structure of personality-identity and responsibility, freedom and love. I am suggesting that it is precisely this that gives validity to John Wesley's twofold structure of sanctification. This is why experience was to him a valid criterion of truth. Wesley was no phenomenologist. But what phenomenology can uncover by means of an intricate reductionistic analysis of consciousness, Wesley "felt for" and found in his observations of the experiences of "living witnesses." The Scriptures were silent (so he thought) regarding the structure of sanctification, but God had written it large in the very nature of the being whom He created in His own image.

V. THE LITURGY OF SANCTIFICATION

Thesis 4: This twofold structure which is inherent in personality development is embodied in the central liturgy of holiness evangelism—a fact which gives the liturgy its value and validity.

The word "liturgy" comes from the Greek *leitōs* and *ergon*, and means literally "the people's work." It refers to the ceremonial rites, rituals, and exercises performed by the worshipping congregation in a church service. The liturgy is not an end in itself, but a means of bringing about the spiritual end that is sought. Liturgy may be an empty form; but it may also be a means of grace. Some liturgies are more elaborate than others but all churches have liturgy, and Wesleyan churches are no exception.

Here we are focusing on evangelistic liturgy, more particularly the liturgy of holiness evangelism. In most Wesleyan denominations this centers around the evangelistic invitation or the "altar call." Sinners are invited to come to the altar and pray for forgiveness. Believers are invited to come seeking entire sanctification. These "two trips to the altar" constitute the central evangelistic "liturgy" of Wesleyan churches. Like all liturgies, this one may be a dead and empty form. But on the other hand, like other liturgies, it may be a means of grace; through these "two trips to the altar" one may find spiritual reality or substance, namely "love excluding sin."

The writer does not know exactly how this liturgical form evolved in our history, but the important thing is to understand what it signifies. In thesis four, we are contending that the value and validity of this liturgy lies in the fact that it embodies the twofold structure of personality development, which, in turn, is the experiential (psychological) basis of Wesley's two fold structure of sanctification.

Two important consequences follow from viewing our liturgy in this light: First, since it is seen as mere liturgy, it will not be idolized as an end in itself. We will, without apology, practice what we know to be true- -that the Holy Spirit is not confined to any liturgical form. We will let the wind blow where it wishes, 45 remembering Wesley's words: "There is an irreconcilable variability in the operations of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men." 46 Secondly, we will not be inclined, on the other hand, to cast lightly this liturgy aside in favor of other forms which do not have such psychological authenticity.

VI. BACK TO THE SCRIPTURES

Thesis 5: The kind of analysis outlined above, if followed through, can clear the way for a genuinely biblical proclamation of the Wesleyan message, in which the structure of sanctification, as well as its substance, will have firm scriptural support.

In our opening remarks, we mentioned the need for clearing the ground of some needless theological "underbrush" in the Wesleyan proclamation. This underbrush includes much unsound exegesis, faulty logic, and inappropriate analogy, by which we have often tried to "prove" two works of grace. Non-Wesleyan evangelicals have often accused us of being unbiblical. And sometimes their accusations have been correct !

We have shown that Wesley found no scriptural support for the instantaneousness of entire sanctification. This does not mean that Wesley was right, or that his is the final word. Certainly later Wesleyanism had done much "proof-texting" of this aspect of the doctrine, sometimes going to greater lengths to find scriptural support for the structure of sanctification than for its substance. I am not suggesting that we try to read the Scriptures completely devoid of presuppositions. This is impossible. We all bring to the Scriptures some pre-understanding. But some of the traditional presuppositions with which Wesleyans have approached the Scriptures have been unproductive and misleading. Being uncomfortable with Wesley's failure to find biblical support for the instantaneous "secondness" of entire sanctification (whenever we have been aware of this failure) we have tried to close this gap. Some of the material with which we have tried to plug it is exegetically weak.

If there is any value to our claim that there is something authentic in Wesley's induction from experience of two fold structure in sanctification, and if it is correct that a similar twofold structure is inherent in normal personality development, then we have a valid presupposition with which to approach Scripture- - a presupposition that promises to be productive. This is true for the simple reason that the Bible was written for persons and

can be expected to speak authentically to man's personal needs.

Thus the Bible's picture of a Christian person will not differ greatly from the picture of a mature person presented by responsible psychologists. The only difference is that the Bible knows such personhood to be possible only by the grace of God. Still it is true that Christianity, and certainly holiness, does not make men non-human, sub-human or super-human. Sanctification, rightly understood, is a humanizing process, bringing us "to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" 47 who himself was the True Man. Wesley had a clear conception of the continuity between nature and grace. 48

Is there anything, then, in the biblical portrayal of mature manhood which corresponds with the two stages of personality development which our phenomenological analysis has revealed, namely, the stages of (1) personal identity or freedom, and (2) interpersonal responsibility or love? We believe there is. Space permits only one example. It is in the Apostle Paul's use of the Greek indicative and imperative moods. Richard E. Howard has written:

There is a distinction in Paul's thought that it is essential to recognize. It can be described as the contrast of the indicative and imperative. In the Greek of the New Testament it is graphically seen in the use of differing moods. The indicative mood depicts a simple assertion, in past, present, or future time- "this is, was or shall be. " The imperative mood depicts a commanding assertion- "this must be." 49

In his letters, Paul is writing to believers. When he speaks of what his converts "were" or "are" (even "shall be") it is the indicative; when he tells them what they "must do or be" it is the imperative. Moreover, the imperative is based on the indicative. Because of the indicative, Paul could command the imperative; because of what they were, he could point them to what they must be and do.

These two crises depicted by the indicative and the imperative may be called (1) self-emancipation and (2) self-presentation-terms which are both psychological and Pauline. In the first crisis, the self is set free from the old life of sin; in the second this free self is presented (i. e. committed, dedicated, consecrated) to God in a decisive act "resulting in sanctification" (v. 19). 52

In this passage from the pen of Paul, we see the identical twofold structure which Wesley found in the religious experiences of his converts, and which our "phenomenological analysis" has

found in the development of personality, i.e. personal identity (freedom) and interpersonal responsibility (love).

The objection could be raised that in Paul and Wesley there are clearly two crises indicated, but that in the phenomenology of personality there are only two "movements" or stages, which often overlap and both of which are usually long drawn out processes. But we must remember that in neither Wesley nor Paul are these crises isolated from all that goes before. To both, they are crises within a process, and apart from the whole process the crises would be meaningless. Conversely, even impersonality growth, progress is seldom at a smooth steady rate. Profound psychological experiences of all sorts commonly work up to a sudden climax, and the idea of crisis experience is not foreign to what we have called the "profane" sphere of normal personality development.

The point we are making in thesis five is that not only the substance of sanctification, but the structure as well, can be found in the Scriptures-providing we approach the Scriptures with an understanding of what it is we are seeking there. The Scriptures are not silent (as Wesley wrongly supposed) regarding the structure. On this point, biblical exegesis and "phenomenological analysis" concur.

These, then, are the writer's five theses. He posts them on no church door-at Wittenberg or elsewhere ! He only hopes that they may stimulate significant thought inside the doors.

Documentations

1. Rudolf Otto, more directly than the others, applied Phenomenology to religion. Cf. his *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. by John W. Harvey(London: Oxford University Press, 1923).
2. This Phenomenological method is briefly described in William S. Sahakian, *History of Philosophy* (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1968), pp. 327-341.
3. J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*(London: The Epworth Press, 1941), p. 501.
4. *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. 14 Vols.; Reprint edition), XI, 367. Cited hereafter as *Works*.
5. Cf. Harald Lindstrom, *Wesley and Sanctification* (London: The Epworth Press, 1950), pp. 129ff.

6. Cf. John Leland Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 54.
7. *Wesley's Standard Sermons*, ed. Edward H. Sugden (2 Vols.; London: The Epworth Press, 1921), I, 266-279. Cited hereafter as *Sermons*.
8. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.*, ed. John Telford (8 Vols.; London: The Epworth Press, 1951), VI, 136. Cited hereafter as *Letters*.
9. *Sermons*, II, 448; Cf. *Letters*, IV, 192.
10. *Letters*, V, 223; Cf. *Works*, XI, 418.
11. David Livingstone Cubie, "John Wesley's Concept of Perfect Love: A Motif Analysis." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, 1965, pp. 253-268.
12. Cf. the sermon, "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption," *Sermons*, 178-198.
13. Cubie, pp. 254ff.
14. *Works*, VI, 5.
15. Cubie, p. 257.
16. *Sermons*, II, 244-48.
17. Cf. Lindstrom. pp. 113-125.
18. *Works*, p. 509.
19. H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1940), II, 423.
20. *Letters*, II, 75.
21. *Letters*, IV, 299.
22. *Ibid.*, IV, 469-70.
23. *Ibid.*, V, 268; cf. VII, 120.
24. *Works*, XI, 401; cf. p. 430.
25. *Ibid.*, XI, 401.
26. *Letters*, V, 102-103.
27. *Works*, XI, 397.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Cf. *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.*, ed. Nehemiah Curnock (8 Vols.; New York: Eaton and Mains, 1909), II, 508, 530.
30. Peters, p. 28; cf. *Journal*, II, 108-111.
31. For a full account of Wesley's collection and evaluation of the testimonies of "living witnesses," see my "John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection: A Reinterpretation," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pacific School of Religion, 1963, pp. 165-180.

32. Cf. Journal, IV, 366, 370, 372, 480, 532; V, 66, 97, 143, 356; Letters, IV, 133, 466, 465; V, 102, 258-59.
33. Works, XI, 442; cf. 402, Sermons, II, 459; Letters, VII, 222.
34. Works, XI, 441-42.
35. For the material in this paragraph, I am indebted to David Kauffman, one of my graduate students, who wrote a research paper on "John Wesley's Authority for Christian Perfection" (May, 1970) to test the validity of my "thesis number two. "
36. Sermons, II, 370ff.
37. Works, VI, 415ff; VIII, 294-297.
38. Ibid., XI, 405-406.
39. Ibid., VI, 490; italics mine.
40. Carl E. Braaten, *The Future of God* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 34. I am indebted to Braaten for the ideas expressed in this paragraph. Cf. pp. 31-57 where he applies phenomenological analysis to a different problem.
41. Dr. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop has helped me to see the significance of these two stages in personal growth and their importance for theology. She must not be held responsible, however, for any deficiencies in the application I am here making.
42. Cf. *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967).
43. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 15. Cf. *Between Man and Man*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955).
44. *I and Thou*, p. 3.
45. Cf. John 3:8.
46. Letters, VII, 298.
47. Eph. 4:13, RSV.
48. Works, VI, 512.
49. Richard E. Howard, "The Epistle to the Galatians, " *Beacon Bible Commentary* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1965), IX, 23. It is Professor Howard, my esteemed colleague, who has taught me the significance of the Greek indicative and imperative for Wesleyan theology. Cf. also his comments on pp. 90, 93, 111.

50. Scripture quotations in this and the following paragraphs are from the NASB.
51. There is some question about the significance of the aorist *aktionsart* in the imperative mood; cf. C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), pp. 20, 135. But Blass and Debrunner state unequivocally: "The present and aorist imperatives differ in the same way as the imperfect and aorist indicatives; the present imperative is durative or iterative, the aorist imperative punctiliar." Cf. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, trans. by Robert W. Funk (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 172. Of greatest importance in Romans 6:13 and 6:19 is Paul's decisive change from the present to the aorist imperatives.
52. In Romans 12:1, Paul again brings up the idea of "self-presentation," using an aorist infinitive with imperative function.

ENGLISH SOCIAL REFORM FROM WESLEY TO THE VICTORIAN ERA

Edward Coleson, Ph. D.

Professor History and Social Science, Spring Arbor College

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Earle E. Cairns, 1 historian at Wheaton College, the Clapham Sect (the political arm of the Wesleyan revival) accomplished more of a constructive social nature than any reform movement in history. Other historians 2 with no pro-Christian bias have insisted that Wesley and his followers saved England from the equivalent of the French Revolution. Yet in our own time there has been bitter dissension in Christian circles over what the role of the church should be in politics and social reform. On the one hand Carl F. H. Henry warned us shortly after the Second World War in his *Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* that

. . . we have not applied the genius of our position constructively to those problems which press most for solution in a social way. Unless we do this, I am unsure that we shall get an other world hearing for the Gospel.... we have not as a movement faced up with the seriousness of our predicament. 3

Since then the call for "social involvement" has become a strident chorus from part of the evangelical camp, while others have resisted the fashion on the ground that it would take us away from our Christian assignment, the task of preaching the Word and saving souls. If one asks the next and obvious question of what we plan to do when we get involved, the battle between the "New Deal" liberals and the "Goldwater" conservatives becomes bitter indeed. A fairly large literature has already been produced by Christians of the "left" and "right" denouncing each other. The great mass of believers in the middle enjoy their affluence and ignore the problems, hoping they will go away. It is unfortunate that the Christian community is so divided and unsure of itself in this hour of global crisis. We are hardly in a position to supply the needed leadership when we are at war with ourselves. Perhaps a study of the way Wesley and his followers

met the problems of their day may be a guide to us as we confront those of our own time.

II. CONDITIONS OF WESLEY'S YOUTH

As many of us were growing up between the two great wars, we were told endlessly that there had never been such apostasy, wickedness and violence on the earth since the days of Noah or thereabouts. Anyone familiar with conditions in Western Europe and England three or four centuries ago may well question such statements.

Slavery, an ancient evil which had become nearly extinct since the Roman era, had been revived with the discovery and settlement of the Americas and now spread its blight over the New World and the Old. The Reformation had spawned an epidemic of ghastly and destructive religious wars. Today we whimper that we can destroy ourselves, but that has been an obvious option since Cain slew his brother Abel. During the Thirty Years ' War (1618-1648) perhaps a third to a half of the German population and a multitude of the neighboring peoples were swept away, and with very crude weapons at that. Evidently they didn't need the bomb -- just the will to kill.

Among the casualties of the religious wars were the Christian Faith and the moral standards of Western Europe. England, for instance, sank to the depths. With the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, after the brief period of Puritan rule, there came a flood of vice and corruption. The literature of the era lacks originality but, worse still, "is the unblushing immorality of Restoration drama, which constantly pictures vice triumphant, which 'laughs not merely indulgently at vice, but harshly at the semblance of virtue.'" 4 The aristocrats who ran both State and Church were cultured and corrupt: they set the fashion for the nation. The lower classes were vile and degraded, a gin-soaked mass of depravity and despair. "Economists at the end of the seventeenth century like Petty and Gregory King gave it as their considered estimate that more than half of the entire population were a liability on the nation." 5

All classes were given to drunkenness. The consumption of distilled spirits rose from 527,000 gallons in 1684 to eleven million gallons at the peak of production in 1750, 6 or an increase of more than twenty fold. The "fox-hunting" parsons of the time caroused with the local squires and were hardly a force for reform, although, of course, there was a saving remnant of righteous people. They even had a major financial disaster, the bursting of the "South Sea Bubble" in 1720, an event reminiscent of the "Crash of '29" in our own time. This was the consequence of a mania for easy riches, a national swindle. And one could

continue the catalog of evil almost endlessly. Perhaps the conditions of Wesley's youth may best be summarized in the words of the famous French political philosopher, Montesquieu, who wrote in 1728: "In England there is no religion and the subject, if mentioned in society, evokes nothing but laughter." 7

III. "THE BIG CHANGE"

The late Mary Alice Tenney 8 of Greenville College made much of the dramatic change in England during what one might call the half century of Wesley (1740-1790). This was a great and glorious beginning, but an even more striking contrast is to be found in comparing conditions in England in Wesley's youth and those during the flowering of British greatness in the late Victorian era, a century and a half later. In 1882 The Spectator, a "sedate, middle-of-the-road" British magazine could with considerable truth describe conditions there in the following glowing terms:

Britain as a whole was never more tranquil and happy. No class is at war with society or the government; there is no disaffection anywhere, the Treasury is fairly full, the accumulations of capital are vast. 9

By way of another contrast, substitute today and the U. S. A. for Britain and 1882. Clearly something has gone wrong with America and England too in the last century. Although the outlook is dark today, the British optimist in the latter part of the last century found a multitude of encouraging trends all about him: in addition to a scientific, medical and technological revolution which was making life longer and more pleasant, there were a number of reforms that had already been achieved or were well on their way to accomplishment. The gross immorality of the previous century was giving way to Victorian respectability. Human slavery was, hopefully, a thing of the past, and the government was growing more democratic decade by decade: freedom was becoming the fashion. Revolting factory and slum conditions were being improved. The standard of living for ordinary people was rising. Life was no longer "nasty, brutish and short" for the masses.

Perhaps the greatest contrast between the last century and our present era is the one we forget most completely. Peace, that "consummation devoutly to be wished for" by modern man, seemed well within the grasp of the Victorians. Believe it or not, there were no great wars in Europe in the last century after the defeat of Napoleon. An Austrian army officer of World War

I wrote a book a few years ago with the introductory chapter entitled "The Hundred Years' Peace," 10 the century between Waterloo and the "Guns of August" (1815-1914). The American Civil War was the only long and destructive one in the West during that period but, of course, it was not in Europe. Little wonder that even Evangelicals, caught up with the enthusiastic optimism of the era, decided that the triumph of righteousness was at hand, as is evident from the following quotation, written by Rev. B. Carradine as he was watching some young Scottish soldiers, drilling near Stirling Castle back in the 1890's:

. . . hear me, young Highlander: long before you will ever have the opportunity of sheathing your bayonet in human flesh, the Gospel of our blessed Lord will have spread, and will have such a grip on men's hearts, and consciences, and judgments, that war will cease, and that sword of thine will be come a pruning - hook. 11

Such optimism would have seemed like heresy in my youth, but Wesley had written a similar hopeful comment himself when he and his congregation moved into the first headquarters of Methodism near London on November 11, 1739:

I preached at eight o'clock to five or six thousand..., and at five in the evening in the place which had been the king's foundry for cannon. O hasten Thou the time when nation shall not rise up against nation neither shall learn war anymore. 12

November 11 was also to be the close of a global war in our time, the first of those mighty conflicts which have made the modern era a hell of ghastly wars. What happened to the bright hopes of yesterday? Was the Twentieth Century predestined to be what it has become or did we lose our way some where back in the Victorian era?

IV. EVANGELICAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

If a tree is to be judged by its fruits, we have done well in some areas and very badly in too many others. Modern man, by any fair standard, is a clever engineer who is quite incompetent at ordering his social, political and economic life. We have got- ten to the moon but have done a wretched job down here below, so let us with humility attempt to learn from our betters, recognizing, of course, the obvious fact that they made mistakes too. Let us list their accomplishments. Wesley did not consider him-

self a success as a minister prior to his "Aldersgate experience" in May of 1738. In the next year he began his "field preaching, " and continued to minister to the multitudes until the end of his life, but it was not long before Evangelicals began doing more than preaching. The first dramatic social reform to grow out of the quickening of the national conscience was the freeing of the slaves in England in 1772, which was almost wholly the work of Granville Sharp (Sharp pressured the English "Supreme Court" into liberating about 15,000 slaves then residing in England).

Wesley himself wrote extensively on about every social and political question that arose in his time, including the American Revolution but, of course, his main thrust was evangelism. This did not prevent him, however, from carrying on an active charitable program in connection with his ministry. He maintained a book room, a free school, a refuge for widows and children, and a free medical clinic and dispensary in connection with the "First Church" of Methodism, the renovated cannon foundry which served as the headquarters of the movement for the first forty years. Although it has been claimed by J. C. Furnas, 13 for instance, that Wesley discouraged political action (a logical conclusion from Wesley's protest 14 against slavery), it also is a fact that he encouraged young William Wilberforce to pursue the abolition cause in Parliament. Indeed, Wesley's last letter 15 was to Wilberforce, telling him to keep up the good fight until "even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away.... " Wilberforce did succeed in getting the slave trade (the transportation of slaves in British ships) stopped in 1808, right in the midst of the Napoleonic Wars.

Slavery within the British Empire was abolished in 1834 and the Royal Navy policed the Atlantic until the American Civil War, to prevent the importation of additional slaves into our South, the West Indies, etc. These early reform efforts were largely the work of Wilberforce and his neighbors, Christian gentlemen who lived about Clapham Common, a suburb of London in those days. Success came slowly and at tremendous cost Their enemies derided them as the "Saints" of the "Clapham Sect, " but they accomplished much for humanity. The great reform leader in the next generation was Lord Ashley, the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, and also a devout Christian. He agitated for reform of mental institutions and working conditions in factories, particularly for children. He later supported Florence Nightingale's attempts to bring relief to the Crimean soldiers. John Bright, a Quaker, pushed the "Repeal of the Corn Laws" in 1846 to secure cheaper bread for the working poor. The importation of foreign (much of it American) grain had been limited by protective tariffs to maintain artificial scarcity and hence a higher price in England. Bright and others campaigned success-

fully for the abolition of the "British farm program. " Bright, a factory owner, was accused of doing this to give his workers the equivalent of a pay raise, since their bread would now be cheaper, but the Earl of Shaftesbury voted with Bright, although the Earl was a land-owning Tory and would be hurt by the new legislation. Bright also could take a stand which was disastrous to himself as he did during the Crimean War and the American Civil War. According to Bright, 16 "In working out our political problem, we should take for our foundation that which recommends itself to our conscience as just and moral. " This statement might well be the motto of two or three generations of stalwart Christians who bridged the gap between Wesley and Victoria, and laid the foundations for a better world which has since seriously decayed.

V. DEFEATING VOLTAIRE AND MARX

Back during the Depression I heard a representative of the State Department of Health compare the medical victories of the last century or so with what I shall call the moral decline of the same period. She showed by graphs on large wall charts how the ancient scourges of mankind (small pox, typhoid, diphtheria and many others) had yielded to science. She then pointed out how crime, divorce, insanity, war and all the other evidences of what we call social maladjustment were on the increase. The graphs showing the triumphs of medicine were pointed downward as dramatically as the "statistical serpents" illustrating the increase of iniquity were headed upward. Since then polio has been added to the long list of medical victories and another global war plus a long list of other evils have been added to the debit side of the ledger. The corruption in life, politics and literature so prevalent today is clearly reminiscent of the Restoration and Wesley's youth. That the situation is out of hand is obvious to the man in the street. Everywhere people are groping for answers—and answers of sorts there will be. The late Whittaker Chambers 17 wrote a few years ago that men become Communists as the answer to the crisis of our time and he who breaks with that diabolical system "must break in the full knowledge that he will find himself facing the crisis of history, but this time without even that solution which Communism presents.... " Halevy, 18 the French historian, challenges us at this point: "A century earlier, " he writes, "John Wesley had defeated Voltaire. Would he defeat Karl Marx ? " Yet the average Christian knows little of the Methodist accomplishments and less of their ideas. Although I attended a Wesleyan church all my life, graduated from one of their colleges and also took most of their ministerial course, I did not know this dramatic story myself until I stumbled on to it in

connection with my doctoral dissertation on Sierra Leone. If the Blacks have been kept in ignorance of their great achievements because of a white conspiracy, who is keeping us from knowing our own history? Also, if they have suffered severe psychological deprivation because of this omission, what about the young Christian who has been taught that the church never did anything over the ages but get in the way and hold back progress ? It is about time we corrected this serious distortion. Modern man has repeatedly demonstrated his inability to cope with what men once called "the sin problem, " although he has been quite successful in other areas. Wesley and his followers succeeded where we have failed.

The contrast between the accomplishments of the English Evangelicals from the time of Wesley to the Victorian era and the frustrations of today is most fascinating. Actually, we have not neglected our social problems in the modern era, but they have not yielded to the remedy. For decades the governments of the Western nations have poured untold billions into programs to promote the "good life, " but with little to show for their expense and effort. Conditions steadily worsen. This is, indeed, a paradox. The historian of the future-if there is a future- will have to write of us and our attempts at reform: "Never have so many accomplished so little with so much"-multiplied billions of dollars and an army of bureaucrats to make the desired changes. Of the Clapham Sect and their Christian supporters, it can be said: "Never did so few accomplish so much with so little. " But with God all things are possible. Since their thinking is so different from ours and their accomplishments were so outstanding, it would be abundantly worth our while to try to understand their "World View" and their methods. Perhaps this brief paper may serve as an introduction to this study.

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JOHN WESLEY'S VIEW OF MAN: VERSUS FREE WILL

Irwin W. Reist, Th. M., S. T. D. (candidate)
Associate Professor, Bible and Theology, Houghton College

I. INTRODUCTION: THE IMPORTANCE OF MAN FOR THEOLOGY

The role one gives to man will in no small measure determine the nature of the theology he confesses. The variations range from that of Feuerbach with his teaching that theology is anthropology ("God is man's highest feeling of self. . . So much as a man can feel so much is his God")¹ to Karl Barth who, even with his emphasis upon the transcendence of God and the discontinuity between God and man, still agrees that to believe in Christianity is to believe in man since Jesus Christ is the God-man and God's revelation to man. "Barth and those who think as he does. . . are humanists though the affirmation of man is not something they make, but only accept as it is made in Jesus Christ."²

John Wesley has been interpreted a forerunner of modern religious liberalism because of his extensive concern for man's salvation and his ability in the salvation relationship. Wesley believed in experiential religion as "the inmost nature of things, the nature of God and man and the immutable relations between them."³ However, the position of this paper is that soteriology is prior to anthropology in Wesley. The Holy Spirit is central and takes the initiative at every point in the Christian life. Wesley is concerned with man, but with man as sinner in need of God's grace which he cannot earn.

It may well be that in Wesley's emphasis on the fact that God gives us the freedom to respond in grace, and in his 'optimism of grace,' we are given the theological basis for a greater emphasis on transformation without running into the danger of collapsing the Christian hope into a moralistic concern for human achievement⁴

Wesley's fundamental truth was the possible salvation of all men, who are totally depraved sinners, by the all-embracing grace of God in Christ. The classical interpretation of him at this point

as summarized by H. O. Wiley from Richard Watson, seems then to miss this emphasis.

The Spirit of God leads the sinner from one step to another, in proportion as he finds response in the heart of the sinner and a disposition to obedience. . . there is a human cooperation with the divine Spirit working with the free-will of man. 5

For Wesley there is no neutrality or natural ability to respond to God's grace, but this response is created by God himself in grace. Man then as object of God's grace is at the center of Wesley's theology of Grace.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF GOD AS INDEPENDENT, SOVEREIGN ANTECEDENT BEING TO WESLEY'S THEOLOGY OF GRACE

When Wesley argues for God's grace upon man enabling a gracious response, he does not do so at the expense of God's aseity. The God who is gracious to all men is the sovereign Creator .

The eternal, almighty, all-gracious God is the Creator of heaven and earth. He called out of nothing, by his all-powerful word, the whole universe, all that is. 6

As a Creator, He has acted, in all things, according to His own sovereign will. Justice has not, cannot have, any place here; for nothing is due to what has no being.

Here, therefore, he may, in the most absolute sense, do what he will with his own. 7

Wesley teaches then that there is one Supreme Creator of all that is, who at one time was the only self-existent one. There is no necessity with Him; God in a free act calls created being into existence. Man, as a part of this creation, is made in the image and likeness of God.

III. THE PLACE OF MAN IN WESLEY'S THEOLOGY OF CREATION

A. The Image of God in Man

The image of God in man, who is freely created by God, is

three-fold: The natural, political, and moral. The natural image consists of immortality, spirituality, understanding, freedom of the will, and the affections. The principle of self-motion is equated with will which governs the affections. Liberty is not a property of the will, but of the soul; liberty includes the will in its province, God produces the power to do sinful acts and the nature which becomes sinful, but the sin is not His. "Yet am I conscious my understanding can no more fathom this deep. . ." 8

The political image is the dominion given to Adam as God's governor of the world. It is a function of the natural image since it is an exercise of the free will existing within the limits of a soul possessing liberty. 9

The chief part of the image however is the moral, which is composed of righteousness and true holiness.

God created man, not only in his natural, but like- wise in his moral image. He created him not only in knowledge, but also in righteousness and true holiness. As His understanding was without blemish, perfect in its kind; so were all his affections. They were all set right and duly exercised in their proper objects, and as a free agent, he steadily chose whatever was good... 10

Adam, as he came forth from the hand of his Creator, then, was a free, rational, holy, righteous, steward, but not immutable.

B. The Covenant of Works

In order to assert Adam's moral rectitude God instituted the covenant of works as a testing ground whereby Adam's entrance into an eternal state of holiness would be solidified. 11

This law or covenant (usually called the covenant of works), given by God to man in paradise, required an obedience, perfect in all its parts, entire and wanting nothing, as the condition of his eternal continuance in the holiness and happiness wherein he was created. 12

The covenant demanded an uninterrupted obedience and Adam was able to keep the covenant. He was free either to chose good or evil. The will of God was that Adam obey the command; but He permitted the fall so that man would be a creature of virtue. 13 Adam chose to sin and broke the covenant of works. Wesley never pursues to any great length a solution to the problem of how a man who is holy and free can chose to perform evil. He simply asserts,

I can account for one man's sinning, or a hundred, or even half mankind, supposing that they were evenly poised between vice and virtue from their own choice which might turn one way or the other... 14

If later, in the economy of redemptive grace, Wesley asserts the givenness of God's grace to fallen man bound in sin, here he simply declares that man did so choose and so act. Yet God is still sovereign and man holy and free.

IV. THE PLACE OF MAN AS A FALLEN CREATURE

When Adam fell, his body became mortal, subject to death. "Since he sinned, he is not only dust, but mortal, corrupt dust. "15 He also lost the purity of the natural image, but it was not totally destroyed. Man remains man.

May not men have some reason left, which in some measure discerns good from evil and yet be deeply fallen, even as to their understanding, as well as their will and affections ? 16

Also, since the political image is a function of the natural image he also lost to some degree the former, i.e., his function as God's ruler on earth. "Since man rebelled against his Maker, in what a state is all animated nature!" 17 The instrumentality of man as steward of God's creation offering it up to God is distorted and perverted.

More basic is the fact that Adam and all men in him have lost the moral image of God, the whole moral image of righteousness and true holiness. Original sin or inbred sin is "the proneness to evil which is found in every child of man. "18 This evil is a depravity which is total.

Know that corruption of thy inmost nature Know that thou art corrupted in every power, in every faculty of thy soul; that thou art totally corrupted in every one of these, all the other foundations being out of course. The eyes of thine understanding are darkened clouds of ignorance and error rest upon thee. Thy will is no longer the will of God, but is utterly perverse Thy affections are alienated from God All thy passions... are out of frame, are either undue in their degree, or placed on undue objects. So that there is no soundness in thy soul... 19

The classical Calvinist systematic theologian, Charles Hodge, recognizes this when he writes that Wesley admits

that man since the fall is in a state of absolute or entire pollution and depravity. Original sin is not a mere physical deterioration of our nature, but entire moral depravity. 20

Wesley's distinctive contribution to evangelical anthropology is, then, not his view of man's depravity, but his view of the prevenient grace of God to all men as totally depraved sinners.

V. THE PREVENIENT GRACE OF GOD IN CHRIST TO ALL MEN AS TOTALLY DEPRAVED SINNERS

The controlling factor in Wesley's theology is a soteriological, anthropological emphasis upon God's grace to all men as dead sinners. The first element involved here is conscience. When Adam fell his reason became corrupt. The grace of God enlightens the mind and enables a man to think morally and be conscious of good or evil. This enlightened element Wesley calls conscience.

Can it be denied that something of this is found in every man born into the world? And does it not appear as soon as the understanding opens, as soon as the reason begins to dawn?... This faculty seems to be what is usually meant by those who speak of natural conscience...though in one sense it may be natural, because it is found in all men; yet,...it is not natural, but a supernatural gift of God above all His natural endowments. No; it is not natural, but the Son of God that is the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. 21

The light which lightens every man is capable of increase if man does not hinder it and is incapable of functioning without the Holy Spirit. 22 If graciously responded to, it leads to the moment of salvation under the gospel.

This quality of prevenient grace is not a meritorious element in man which deserves God's grace, but is a capacity for spiritual life received through Christ's death. 23 Because of the atonement of Christ, God grants prevenient grace, which goes before man's response, to all men. Hence Wesley's black description of man in his fallen state above, while true in theory, is not true in fact because of the grace of God which immediately moved upon man

after the fall. No man, who is alive, is without prevenient grace and every degree of grace is a degree of spiritual life. The purely natural man does not exist. 24

For allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin by nature this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called natural conscience. But this is not natural. It is more properly termed preventing grace. Everyone has sooner or later good desires; although the generality of men stifle them before they can strike deep root. . . So that no man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath.
25

All of God's blessings that he gives to men are of his own grace, bounty, mercy, and favor. 26 All of man's abilities are gifts of grace and are powerful only by the Spirit. Man's use of these gifts are possible only with the Holy Spirit. "All our natural faculties are God's gifts, nor can the meanest be executed with- out the assistance of His Spirit. " 27

The second element in Wesley's concept of prevenient grace is the graciously enabled will of man. Free will is not natural to man as a remnant of the pre-fall state. "Natural free-will

in the present state of mankind I do not understand. ~28 Free- will and liberty are matters of grace bestowed on all men.

And although I have not an absolute power over my own mind, because of the corruption of my own nature; yet through the grace of God assisting me, I have a power to choose and do good, as well as evil.
29

I only assert, that there is a measure of free-will supernaturally restored to every man, together with that supernatural light which 'lightens every man that cometh into the world'. 30

The third element in Wesley's view of prevenient grace is the three stages of man. The first stage is that of the natural man. He is without the Spirit of God. He does not fear God or serve Him. The natural man is

every man who hath not the 'Spirit, ' who has no other way of obtaining knowledge, but by his senses and natural understanding. 31

We have seen above that this distinction is only theoretical for Wesley. The second stage is that of the legal man who has been awakened to his sins but not released from them in pardon and the new birth

Now he truly desires to break loose from sin and begins to struggle with it. But though he strives with all his might, he cannot conquer... 32

The legal man is in an intermediate stage between being a child of God and a child of the devil. The third stage is the evangelical man who has his eyes opened to a loving God. He believes personally in the love of God for him in Christ and is freed from the guilt and power of sin. This man is a Christian. 33

Wesley is not a systematic theologian at this point, rather he sees the three stages as often mixed and portraying the existential relation between God and the soul in prevenient grace.

These several states of soul are often mingled together, and in some measure meet in one and the same person. . . 34

His purpose is to show how the grace of God leads men by degrees and steps to embrace His full salvation in Jesus Christ. He summarizes this as follows:

The natural man neither fears nor loves God, one under the law fears, one under grace loves Him. The first has no light in the things of God; the second sees the painful light of hell; the third, the joyous light of heaven. 35

The fourth element in Wesley's view of man is repentance which is not a natural work of man as a ground for merit, but is a gift of grace to the graciously freed man. The first steps of prevenient grace are for Wesley a sort of repentance. "The very first motion of the soul towards God is a kind of repentance."36 Yet because repentance is a gift of grace, it is a condition the graciously freed man must meet. "It is true repentance and faith are privileges and free gifts. But this does not hinder their being conditions too."37 Repentance is the gift of God's grace as a condition of justification by faith. Man's grace-given free will :an either respond to it or avoid it.

The fifth element in Wesley's view of prevenient grace is faith. Faith is involved in prevenient grace because of the degrees of faith

To believe the being and attributes of God is the faith of an heathen. To believe the Old Testament and trust in Him that was to come is the faith of a Jew. To believe Christ gave Himself for me is the faith of a Christian. 38

"All faith is the gift of God. "39 Saving faith is a gift and work of God's omnipotence, but this excludes no man; every man may believe if he will because of prevenient grace, Faith is the work of God and the duty of man. 40 It is not

the effort of any or all of our natural faculties, but is wrought in us (be it swiftly or slowly) by the Spirit of God. 4

And because of this, salvation or forgiveness or deliverance is based on the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

We do assuredly hold. . . that there is no justification in your sense either by faith or works or both together-that is, that we are not pardoned and accepted with God for the merit of either or both but only by the grace of the free love of God. 42

VII. CONCLUSION: THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S FREE-GRACE REVEALED THROUGH CHRIST AS HE IS OFFERED TO US IN THE GOSPEL

The import of the preceding is that the deciding factor in the order of Christian salvation is the decision of God to before men in Jesus Christ, i. e., in the incarnation, An implied question of Paul in Romans 8:31 "If God before us, who can be against us?" is answered in the event of the cross of Christ. "He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" (Rom 8:32 RSV.). How do we know God is for us and for all men? We know so because of God's giving himself to us through His crucified Son. The question of election or God's decision for men is not to be decided apart from the incarnate, crucified, Son of God- Election must be understood Christologically and Christocentrically. To attempt to get around, over, under, or by Christ crucified to an abstract decree is a-biblical. If men will look at Jesus Christ they will find the essential focus of election displayed; more than that, they shall

find themselves forgiven and pardoned because they have already been graciously freed and enabled to come to Christ but not saved except by personal appropriating faith.

Wesley knew this and proclaimed the prevenient grace of God in and through Jesus Christ. Conscience, will, repentance, the act of justification, faith—all spring from the grace of God as their source. They are always, everywhere preceded by and surrounded by God's grace, giving, enabling, empowering. Man is a free creature, but only because he is a sinful creature under the grace of God which enables him to respond within the sphere of grace. The psychology, the anthropology, the theology of grace is never completely and systematically spelled out. To do so is inevitably and finally to lose some facet of the revealed mystery of God's grace in Christ and man's reflexive response. The grace of God is free; the will of man is bound. God's mercy comes upon all, freeing and liberating their wills from slavery to sin to freedom unto righteousness within grace. At what better place can we end the study than where Wesley begins his sermons.

All the blessings which God hath bestowed upon man, are of his mere grace, bounty, or favour; his free, undeserved favour; favour altogether undeserved; man having no claim to the least of his mercies. . . For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God's hand...And whatever righteousness maybe found in man, this is also the gift of God.⁴

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JOHN WESLEY'S CONCEPT OF LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

Leon O. Hynson, Ph. D.

Professor of Theology, Spring Arbor College

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to provide an analysis of the explicit and implicit arguments in John Wesley's discussion of conscience and the liberty which must be guaranteed to it. It proceeds, first, with an elucidation of Wesley's concept of conscience, how it is defined, and what are its major motifs. Second, it examines the writings of Wesley which specifically emphasize the concept of liberty of conscience. Finally, it applies the concept of liberty of conscience to the major functions of conscience, as Wesley spelled them out, in an interpretive discussion.

The position of the present writer, as elsewhere officially expressed, is that the concern for liberty, civil and religious, is the central interpretive motif in Wesley's churchstate views. Dedication to liberty of conscience is certainly an integral facet of that central commitment. Liberty of conscience is not, however, applied solely to churchstate issues but for Wesley involves the theological, the social, the ethical, the cognitive, and the evangelical. Important to this discussion will be consideration of the boundaries or limiting principles in Wesley's use of the concept of liberty of conscience, and the way the principle operates within these bounds.

The concept and function of conscience was a significant personal and theological concern of Wesley. It is possible to generally define the pre and postAldersgate years in terms of the orientation of conscience. The preAldersgate years may be termed the years of the "anguished conscience, and the post- Aldersgate, the years of the "social conscience. " It is recognized that this is a broad generalization.

The powerful influence of an extensive "conscience literature"² led Wesley to think deeply about conscience and to sensitize his own life. Thus, he became an exemplar of that religious man who maximizes the interior life. His own religious quest became an anguishladen venture, a veritable implosion of spiritual force.

II. CONSCIENCE PER SE

Wesley systematically spelled out his concept of conscience in his sermon on "Conscience." ³ Here he indicated his indebtedness to his grandfather, Samuel Annesley, for his views on conscience, and here, too, he reacted negatively to the concept of conscience which the Scottish philosopher Francis Hutcheson had elucidated in his notion of the "moral sense."

In the Notes Upon the New Testament (1755), Wesley's understanding of conscience is also clearly delineated. The comments provide a spectrum of Wesleyan reflections on conscience.

Analysis of Wesley's writings indicates an authentic concern for a clear view of conscience. These writings show at least five major functions and/or aspects in Wesley's interpretation of conscience

A. Theologically Considered

Wesley interprets conscience and its origin in a theological framework. Against Hutcheson, who argued that the moral sense is a natural endowment, Wesley argues that this is correct only in the sense that every man possesses the faculty of conscience. Conscience, however, "properly speaking, . . . is not natural, but a supernatural gift of God, above all his natural endowments." ⁴ The etiology of conscience, for Wesley, has a Christological referent, being equated in a vague sense with the light which enlightens every man, that is, Jesus Christ.

Wesley is ambiguous in his efforts to explain the origin of conscience. At one point he seems to be uncertain whether man "in a state of innocence" possessed the moral sense or conscience. At another time his theology of creation incorporates the position that liberty of conscience is grounded in God's creative gift. It would seem correct to say that Wesley believed in the presence of conscience in Adam's nature. Conscience is ordinarily described by Wesley as "a branch of that supernatural gift of God which we usually style, preventing grace" ⁵ Preventing grace (the negative aspect of prevenient grace) is a broader concept which includes the concept of conscience. Conscience is found in every man, awakening with the dawn of rationality.

B. Cognitively Considered

Conscience, for Wesley, includes the cognitive element. It is defined as "knowing with another," the conscience and God witnessing the same. Again, conscience is considered "the knowledge of two or more things together," that is, the knowledge of words or actions and their moral quality. The cognitive capacity of conscience may evidently be shaped by "the prejudices of education," ⁶ an idea Wesley does not spell out.

Conscience implies selfknowledge, a discernment of thoughts, words, and actions. It implies knowledge of the rule, the written word of God, which directs the Christian man in his life, and, finally, the knowledge that thoughts, words, and actions are conformable to that word. Conscience, Wesley insists, always has reference to God, His will and word. All consciousness of right and wrong is founded in the will and purpose of God.

In summary, Wesley sees several distinct elements in the knowledge capacity of conscience: discernment, understanding, judgment. "It is a kind of silent reasoning of the mind, whereby those things which are judged to be right are approved of with pleasure...."7 Wesley intimates that knowledge received by the function of conscience is partial or incomplete. The Christian needs the operation of the Holy Spirit and the word of God in order to receive a clear "reading of himself. The unction of the Holy Spirit, and the Bible, are necessary complements of conscience. The nonChristian seems able only to recognize "the general lines of good and evil."8

C. Ethically Considered

Closely related to the above is the ethical. Conscience discerns the moral quality of words, thoughts, and actions, distinguishing good from evil, and kindness from cruelty. Wesley here unites the theological and the ethical. Conscience is never simply natural, but is a branch of preventing grace; it makes moral judgments as a graced faculty.

Wesley disagreed with Francis Hutcheson at this point. Hutcheson saw conscience as a natural faculty, an essential capacity of man as a human being. Wesley, while uncertain about the temporal origin of conscience, was certain that the ethical function of conscience is operative under grace. There is clear evidence that Wesley misunderstood Hutcheson at certain points, but not apparently on this point. 9

D. Socially Considered

Wesley particularly structured his concept of conscience as socially oriented in his analysis of Hutcheson's Essay on the Passions.10 Hutcheson had described the "moral sense" and the "public sense" as facets of the humanity common to man. Both of these senses are included in conscience. The public sense involves the sense of pain or pleasure one experiences upon seeing the misery or deliverance of a fellow creature. Conscience informs every man that it is right to do unto others as he would that they do unto him. The moral sense affirms benevolence and condemns cruelty, whether performed by ourselves or others.

Conscience, then, has a clear social reference. It informs concerning the quality of our actions toward others. It rewards benevolent behavior and punishes cruel or ungenerous action. It suffers with the suffering and rejoices with those who are freed from trouble.

Important as this maybe, Wesley is unprepared to admit that this "social conscience" means the power to act benevolently or generously, even though one possesses the power to discern the quality of actions. Hutcheson had a benign conception of man, affirming that most men are essentially benevolent. Wesley disagreed with Hutcheson's conception.

I know both from Scripture, reason and experience that his picture of man is not drawn from the life. It is not true that no man is capable of malice or delight in giving pain, much less that every man is virtuous, and remains so as long as he lives. . 11

Conscience provides sanctions for the structuring of a right relationship with others, but it does not provide the positive power which creates the benevolent spirit. This is given by the grace of God through faith, which expresses itself in love. It is that faith which works through love which is the dynamic of the Thou-directed life.

E. Evangelically Considered

Wesley, like the major reformers before him, saw one of the marks of the church as the preaching of the pure word of God. Preaching that pure word was for him a question of conscience which impelled him to adopt field preaching and the use of lay preachers. His evangelical concern bade him heed at certain points the obligation to God above the conflicting restrictions of men.

Wesley's primary commitment, as a conscientious servant of Jesus Christ, was consistently evangelical and shaped his relationship to his own Church. He counselled loyalty to, not separation from, his Church, but always emphasized the priority of God's will over a merely human will, even the will of the hierarchy. This persuasion is seen early in his pastAldersgate development during his confrontation with Joseph Butler, Bishop of Bristol.¹²

His highly significant letter of 1761 to the Earl of Dartmouth contains a synopsis of most of the issues with which Wesley wrestled in conscience, including preaching of justification by faith, and gathering congregations or societies. Wesley asserted that laws enacted by the Church under the authority of the state could not supersede conscience.

If a dispensation of the gospel is committed to me, no church has power to enjoin me silence. Neither has the State; though it may abuse its power and enact laws whereby I suffer for preaching the gospel. 13

III. LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

Wesley's understanding of conscience provides the basic foundation for an explication of his view of liberty of conscience. There are in Wesley's tracts, occasional writings and sermons, many indications of his dedication to liberty of conscience. He applied the claim of liberty of conscience both to religious belief and exercise and to the civil sphere. Religious liberty is grounded in the demands of conscience and in man's natural endowment.

No man or institution may intrude upon this intensely personal sphere of life. Liberty of conscience is "an indefeasible right; it is inseparable from humanity."¹⁴ It is most personal because conscience is the ultimate source of direction for each person who "must judge for himself because every man must give an account of himself to God."¹⁵ Since conscience indicates right and wrong, pointing out the character of actions and attitudes, to usurp the power of liberty of conscience is to deprive man of his right to personal judgment and to live as he knows he must before God. To deprive a man of liberty is to deny his humanity, and to contradict his nature.

In a historical analysis, Wesley points out the repressive measures in England, which denied the right of liberty of conscience, creating adversity and suffering for hundreds of people, guilty of no crime. Property had been seized, even in England whose concern for the rights of property was universally recognized. Why the persecution? "Because they did not dare to worship God according to other men's consciences."¹⁶

Wesley, however, was not arguing that such conditions existed in his own era. He was fearful that the civil turmoil of his day, especially in the revolutionary fervor of the sixties and seventies, would bring back into English life the old intolerance characteristic of England before the Glorious Revolution.¹⁷ (He was persuaded that English liberties dated from the Revolution, that prerevolutionary England had often been arbitrary and intolerant.) Therefore, he employed his writing skills to persuade Englishmen that they possessed an enviable, perhaps even maximal, degree of liberty, both civil and religious.

Wesley insisted that the English Civil War was fought because Charles I encroached on liberty of conscience "not in one trifling instance only, but in a thousand instances of the highest importance."¹⁸

A. The Argument from Natural Law

For Wesley, liberty of conscience is an essential facet of humanity. It is inalienable from mankind, from the rational creation, a kind of natural instinct. "The love of liberty is, then, the glory of rational beings. . . , " the gift of the Creator, a right every man possesses, for the use of which he alone, finally, must answer to God.

The concept of natural law was a familiar idea in eighteenth-century England. Natural law arguments were employed to buttress English constitutional order, 19 to fight slavery, and to undergird religious liberty.

Wesley's concept of natural law is understood properly when interpreted theologically, that is, in the light of his theology of creation. Religious liberty or liberty of conscience (these concepts seem to be equated) is integral to human existence, inalienable, inseparable from man. However, this is the gift of God in creation. "The Creator gave him this right (liberty of conscience) when he endowed him with understanding; and every man must judge for himself, because every man must give an account of himself to God."²⁰ Wesley's theology of creation interprets and qualifies the natural law theory.

Wesley used the argument of the superiority of natural over human law to support his attack on slavery and his belief in liberty of conscience. Human laws, he declared, cannot change the nature of things. ²¹

B. The Political Argument

Wesley also employed a political argument for liberty of conscience, appealing to the English system as the guarantor of religious freedom. To Wilberforce, he appealed for relief from the Act of Toleration, which did not give reforming movements like the Methodist societies the freedom to function: "Where then is English liberty? yea, of every rational creature, who, as such has a right to worship God according to his own conscience?"²² Every Englishman had the right of liberty of conscience given by the laws of the nation. ²³

C. The Right of Private Judgment

Standing in the Protestant tradition, Wesley was dedicated to the right of private judgment. The rationale employed by proponents of private judgment is that every man must have liberty of conscience for every man is responsible to God and must judge what is God's will.

The annual conference wrestled with the issue of private

judgment and what dependence each member should place on another's judgment. It was agreed in 1744 that in speculative matters, rational arguments must be employed to convince, but that in practical questions the integrity of conscience should prevail. In 1747, after reference to 1744, it was asked, "Can a Christian submit any farther than this to any man, or number of men, upon earth?" The answer was:

It is undeniably plain he cannot: either to pope, council, bishop or convocation. And this is the grand principle of every man's right to private judgment...on which Calvin, Luther, Melanchthon and all the ancient Reformers. . . proceeded: 'Every man must think for himself, since every man must give an account for himself to God.²⁴

Wesley asserted the right of private judgment to resist Roman Catholic arguments that Scripture cannot be the sole rule of faith; at least not interpreted by private judgment, which has no place in religion.²⁵ The Scriptures are of higher authority than the pope or Church of Rome, and liberty must be given to the conscience in interpretation. ²⁶

Wesley recognized the cruciality of the private judgment argument, its potential distortion, and the inherent possibility of chaos if pressed beyond bounds. Wesley appealed for toleration showing that all Christians must follow the light they have received. In his societies he challenged those whose consciences appeared to conflict with his. He argued that they should indeed have liberty of conscience but not within the context of Methodism since he as leader must act according to his conscience.

The private judgment argument surely implies the tolerance of the judgments of other men since it recognizes that those judgments are made before God, accepting His prior claim upon the person involved.

Is there a relationship between the concept of liberty of conscience and that of the right of private judgment? Are they synonymous? Wesley seems to use private judgment as a technical idea applied to specifically Christian judgments, while liberty of conscience, per se, has a general application. Evidently they are corollary ideas.

IV. SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

What are the implications we may legitimately draw from this analysis of conscience and liberty of conscience? How does Wesley's principle of liberty of conscience operate within, or with respect to, the cognitive, ethical, or social functions of

conscience ?

First, an implication emerges from the perception of conscience as the moral sense. Conscience must be unfettered in its ethical function, remaining as open and unclouded by external restrictions as possible, whether social, ecclesiastical, or political. Liberty, Wesley insisted, is "essential to a moral agent."²⁷

As a facet of the natural image of God, which includes understanding and will, the conscience is an integral part of the process of decision. To deny liberty of conscience means in effect to alter the decisions made by incorporating alien patterns in the act of decision. As Wesley taught, this means prevention of the exercise of man's humanity.

The same argument applies to the social orientation which is always present in the perceptions of conscience. Liberty of conscience here implies clear perception of the social import and impact of one's choices, acts, and attitudes, indicating the quality and consequences of such choices as they relate to society. An unfettered conscience is imperative in assisting the Christian toward appropriate social action or else distortion occurs leading to confusion and error. Crucial to this awareness of right and wrong, of benevolence or inhumanity, is the way conscience is informed by growth in knowledge.

This growth renders possible a maturation in the rational capacity, and, thereby, in the conscientious capacity. Conscience, in other words, may be informed by new insights.

This leads us to the cognitive sphere. What does liberty of conscience mean for us in the sphere of knowing? Wesley pointed up three primary factors integral to the knowledge function of conscience, insisting that conscience implies all three. These three are related to the Christian life, for Wesley specifically asks, "What is conscience, in the Christian sense?"²⁸ There is a knowledge capacity in the faculty of conscience, corrected and informed by the Holy Spirit, and spelled out in adequate particularity in the written word of God.

Conscience implies this complementarity of conscience, Spirit, and written word in the knowing process for the Christian. How, then, does the principle of liberty of conscience operate with respect to the knowledge discoverable through conscience, Spirit and word? It means liberty to hear and heed the voice of conscience; the freedom to study the word of Scripture which in forms conscience, to engage in the entire hermeneutical task so that Scripture may be opened; and to be taught by the Spirit of truth. In a word, it implies liberty to follow where conscience, word, and Spirit lead.

We must assert the necessity of openness to the Spirit, who corrects and clarifies the indications of conscience. Without the Spirit, writes Wesley, "Selflove. . . would disguise and wholly

conceal him (man) from himself." The Spirit must also equip us to "judge of the rule whereby we are to walk."²⁹, which is the word of Scripture.

We recognize the special responsibility which the Christian, and especially the Christian theologian, bears to know what Scripture includes, what it means, what it teaches, what are its vehicles of truth and what is the truth borne in these vehicles. Liberty of conscience is crucial to such examination, lest truth be obscured or hidden. Without the knowledge of the truth discovered by such free inquiry conscience is deprived of truthknowledge which it must possess to remain free.

The theologian's conscience must remain unfettered by alien influences, or the will of men in civil, social, or ecclesiastical spheres, which would still the insistent voice of conscience, Scripture, and the Holy Spirit, which calls the theologian to a quest for the knowledge that enlightens and informs the Christian conscience. Real liberty of conscience requires openness to truthknowledge or our liberty becomes wrapped about with the binding grave clothes of ignorance.

Wesley suggests rather explicitly the necessity of such an open quest for truth in his discussion of heresy in the Christian church. Insisting that the Roman Catholic Church had fostered the notion that heresy is a perversion of fundamental doctrines, instead of the biblical view of heresy as division, Wesley charged that the Roman concept of heresy was formed in order to deny to Christians some basic rights. He declared:

Heresy is not, in all the Bible, taken for 'an error in fundamentals, ' or in anything else Therefore, both heresy and schism, in the modern sense of the words, are sins that the Scripture knows nothing of; but were invented merely to deprive mankind of the benefit of private judgment, and liberty of conscience. 30

Wesley's Advice to the People Called Methodists, written in 1745, contained the appeal for tolerance and liberty of conscience in the search for that truthknowledge which comes through conscience, Scripture, and the Spirit:

Conform yourself to those modes of worship which you approve; yet love as brethren those who cannot conform.... Condemn no man for not thinking as you think: Let every one enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself Abhor every approach, in any kind or degree, to the spirit of persecution. 31

What, however, is the limiting principle in the exercise of liberty of conscience in this search for knowledge? Is any restraint placed upon the theologian, the Christian? The answer seems to lie in the concept of accountability. Primarily, it is accountability to God. Liberty of conscience or private judgment can never mean irresponsibility or arbitrariness. It requires recognition of obligation to God whose will is expressed in creation and redemption; it means social obligation; responsiveness to truth as Scripture reveals it; and the evangelical obligation to proclaim Jesus Christ as the Savior whose purpose is ultimately to bring man and creation back into union with Him who first sent it forth by His word and will.

This limiting principle is, it seems to me, as strong a restraint as ought to be imposed. It does not require uniformity of interpretation or conclusion, unless truth is conceived only as discoverable from a single vantage point, onedimensioned. If the truth of Scripture is larger than any particular ecclesiastical interpretation, then there is room for variant conclusions which in the day of Christ may be discovered to be valued, if partial, reflections of the light which shines in and from the face of Jesus Christ.

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SANCTIFICATION AND THE CHRISTUS VICTOR MOTIF IN WESLEYAN THEOLOGY

William M. Greathouse, Ph. D.
President, Nazarene Theological Seminary

I. INTRODUCTION

Gustaf Aulen's Christus Victor¹ is one of the most influential treatments of the atonement to appear in our time. Aulen calls for a thorough revision of the traditional account of the history of the idea of the atonement to give fresh emphasis to a view of Christ's work which he describes as the "dramatic." Its central theme is the idea of the atonement as a divine conflict and victory in which Christ Christos Victorenlists and vanquishes Satan, sin and death. ² He insists that this dramatic understanding of Christ's work is a true doctrine of atonement because in this act God reconciles the world to himself. ³ Although Christ's death is at the heart of this view, the Cross presupposes the incarnation; for it was the Son of God in flesh who met and defeated evil. ⁴ It also embraces the resurrection and ascension, for by raising His Son from the dead and to His own right hand God fulfilled the conditions of the promised gift of the Spirit by which Christ's historic victory is mediated to believers. ⁵ The Cross also envisions the consummation of our salvation when God shall send His Son a second time to raise and glorify us with Him. ⁶

This view of Christ's work Aulen calls "the classic idea" of the atonement. He sees it as the dominant idea of the New Testament. ⁷ Thus it did not spring into being in the early church or arrive as an importation from some outside source.

It was, in fact, the ruling idea of the atonement for the first thousand years of Christian history. In the Middle Ages it was gradually ousted from its place in the theological teaching of the church, but it survived still in her devotional language and in her art. It confronts us again, more vigorously and profoundly expressed than ever before, in Martin Luther, and it constituted an important part of his expression of the Christian faith. It has therefore every right to claim the title of the classic idea of the atonement. ⁸

Aulen has done the church a service in rescuing the dramatic view of Christ's work and restoring it to its rightful place as a New Testament representation of the atonement. In the traditional account of the history of the idea of the atonement the Christus Victor teaching has been slighted, if not rejected outright, along with the ransom theory which developed out of it. 9 Aulen shows how the New Testament does indeed view Christ's work as a divine conquest of evil. Moreover, Aulen seems to have successfully demonstrated that this is a view of atonement and not merely a doctrine of salvation. Furthermore, this representation of Christ's redemptive work preserves the biblical teaching that the atonement is from beginning to end the work of God 10; it also dynamically fuses the objective and subjective features of this work. Such a viewpoint provides a sound basis for pointing up weaknesses in both the Anselmic and Abelardian theories.

It may be questioned, however, whether any one view of the atonement can rightly be titled "classic." The New Testament regards Christ's work in at least three ways as a propitiation, a redemption, and a reconciliation. The sinner is guilty and exposed to the wrath of God; in Christ God propitiates His wrath and expiates the sinner's guilt. The sinner is under the bondage of Satan and sin; Christ's redemptive act delivers man from bondage and sets him at liberty. The sinner is estranged from God: he is reconciled to God by the death of His Son. 11 The Christus Victor motif elucidates the second representation of the atonement. While Aulen maintains that the other two ideas may be fully subsumed under this one view, 12 is the dramatic motif in fact adequate to embrace the notions of propitiation and reconciliation? Strong biblical and experiential reasons seem to have given rise to the emphases of Anselm and Abelard. A really classic doctrine of atonement must include both the idea of satisfaction and of revelation as well as that of redemption. Whatever weaknesses we may find in the Anselmic and Abelardian theories, we cannot deny that they voice two distinct scriptural perspectives regarding the atonement. It is a question whether these viewpoints can be clearly and fully expressed in the Christus Victor doctrine.

In spite of these questions, here is one view which highlights Christ's atonement as the destruction of sin making possible man's true sanctification. While it is too much to claim that it provides the entire framework for explaining Christ's work, it does give Wesleyan theology a significant biblical and historical basis for developing a thoroughgoing Christological doctrine of sanctification. The Christus Victor idea "directs attention not primarily to the punishment and other consequences of sin, but to sin itself. It is sin itself which is overcome by Christ, and annihilated; it is from the power of sin itself that man is set free. 13 In Christ

God has sanctified humankind; this sanctification is accomplished within us as Christ comes to indwell us by the Spirit. "The classic idea of salvation is that the victory which Christ gained once for all is continued in the work of the Holy Spirit, and its fruits reaped ~ 14

II. CHRIST'S VICTORY FOR US

The atonement has several facets. Viewed from the standpoint of man's guilt and his deep need for pardon and acceptance, "Christ crucified" is God's perfect oblation making possible our justification before him (Romans 3:21-26). Seen from the perspective of man's enmity toward God and his profound yearning for restored fellowship, Christ provides reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:14-21; Ephesians 2:11-22). Again, perceived from the angle of man's bondage to evil, Christ crucified is the conqueror of Satan, sin and death. It is this third point of view, *Christus Victor*, which Aulen sees as dominant until Anselm, and it is this understanding of Christ's work which furnishes the most solid basis for a dynamic biblical doctrine of sanctification.

This view presupposes that it was only by meeting the forces of evil on their own ground, only, that is, by getting into history where they were entrenched, that Christ could break their power. 15 He partook of flesh and blood that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, i.e. the devil (Hebrews 2:13-14). In his final effort to destroy the Prince of Life (Jesus Christ) the devil overextended and thus defeated himself (John 12:31; cf. I Corinthians 2:8). God the Father "disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him (Christ)." (Colossians 2:15, RSV.)

Christus Victor, however, not only defeated Satan; He destroyed sin itself. "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8, RSV). John means Christ came to destroy the principle of lawlessness (*anomia* I John 3:4), which was the devil's chief work in man.

Paul gives the fullest treatment of sanctification within this context in Romans 5:12-8:39. Particularly critical to this idea are Romans 6:6 and 8:3.

First, Romans 6:6-"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." "Knowing what? This, that in and with the death of Jesus on Calvary we were provisionally crucified also, so that we might be set free from sin for a life of love service to God. Paul puts the same idea slightly differently in II Corinthians "For the love of Christ' controls us, because we are convinced that one died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer

for themselves, but for him who for their sakes died and was raised" (5:14_15, RSV).

Two definitions are in order with reference to Romans 6:6: "our old man" (ho palaios hemen anthropos) and "the body of sin" (to soma tes hamartias). The first expression must be understood in the light of Romans 5:12-14; the second, of Romans 7: 14-25. Both must be defined in terms of these two contexts. Here are two concepts which describe different aspects of the problem of human sinfulness.

"Our old man", means our existence in Adam. "Adam, the type of Christ" (Romans 5:14), is more than the first man; he is the head and representative of fallen humanity. In Adam humanity is bound together in a solidarity of sin and death. "Our old man" is therefore ~Adam, or rather ourselves in union with Adam. ~16

"The body of sin" should be taken as the possessive genitive: "Sin's body, " or "the body of which sin has taken possession, 'the body which is so apt to be the instrument of its own carnal impulses'"¹⁷ Indwelt by sin (he hamartia)¹⁸ I am hopelessly divided against myself and reduced to moral impotence (Romans 7:14-25). Paul's other term for this sin-dominated body is "flesh" (sarx-Romans 7:18; cf. 8:8).¹⁹

Now, Paul says, "Our old man was crucified with Christ so that sin's body (I. e. the flesh) might be destroyed, that hence forth we might not be enslaved by sin." Karl Barth has vividly paraphrased Paul

This is our knowledge of Jesus Christ on which our faith is founded that the "old man," I. e. we ourselves as God's enemies, have been crucified and killed in and with the crucifixion of the man Jesus at Golgotha, so that the "body" (I. e. the subject, the person needed for the doing) of sin, the man who can sin and will sin and shall sin has been removed, destroyed, done away with, is simply no longer there (and has therefore not merely been "made powerless").²⁰

Whatever Barth may allow by this, his words give true expression of Paul's declaration. As a new man in Christ I am to hear the gospel saying to me that my old self in Adam has died with Christ in order that my very person may be liberated from sin, so that I may now serve God in "righteousness for sanctification" (Romans 6:19, RSV). This is the whole meaning of Romans 6.

Romans 8:3 relates this to the incarnation. Christ's victory could be won only in the flesh. But there, where sin had established its rule, Christus Victor routed it decisively. "What the

law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (sarkos hamartias "sin's flesh" or "sin-dominated flesh") and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. " "Condemned" means more than to register disapproval; the law does that. Christ "pronounced the doom of sin. ' Sin was hence forth deposed from its autocratic power."21 In the flesh and blood body of a man on the very territory where it had established its reign God doomed sin. "By His life of perfect obedience, and His victorious death and resurrection, " C. H. Dodd comments, "the reign of sin over human nature has been broken."22

III. CHRIST'S VICTORY IN US

Christ's victory for us in the atonement becomes Christ's victory in us by the indwelling Spirit (Romans 8:11 1). Christ's victory is reproduced in us. In the Holy Spirit, Christ for us becomes Christ in us, recapitulating in our history His triumph over sin. This is the meaning of Christus Victor for sanctification.

Every demon we meet is foredoomed in Christ. Sin itself has lost its power for the believer in whom Christ lives. "Little children, you are of God, and have overcome them; for he who is in the world.... And this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith.... We know that any one born of God does not sin, but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch" (I John 4:4; 5:4, 18, RSV).

This victory is given to us in three stages in conversion, in entire sanctification, and in glorification.

This victory begins in conversion. This is the clear meaning of Romans 6:11. This is our knowledge of the gospel that we ourselves have been crucified in the person of Christ crucified. And Paul insists we grasp the truth that this has already happened to us "in principle" in our justification and regeneration. "For he who has died is freed from sin" (Romans 6:7, RSV). But in order to reap the full benefits of God's provision we must furnish "moral cooperation. " "The believer understands that the final object which God has in view in crucifying the old man (v. 6) is to realize the life of the Risen One (vv. 8, 9), and he enters actively into the divine thought."23

To "enter actively into the divine thought" and thereby realize true sanctification involves:

1. A faith knowledge that God has actually accomplished the destruction of sin in Christ crucified and resurrected and that in my conversion I have died with Him and have been raised with Him to newness of life in which I am no longer sin's slave, and

- 2. A complete break with sin (Romans 6:12-13a) and a putting of myself absolutely at God's disposal in a critical act of consecration (Romans 6:13a, 19-aorist tense both places), so that I may begin to realize the full life of Christ in me.

We have already died provisionally with Christ through our participation in Christ crucified; now we must permit that death to reach to the very depths of our being as we cease from self and begin to live wholly to God. The death of the "old man" is thus a process initiated by conversion and realized in sanctification. "In principle" we die with Christ in justification; in full reality we die with Him when we yield up ourselves to God as Jesus gave up His spirit to the Father on the Cross. Here Wesley has a guiding word:

A man may be dying for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, die, till the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant, he lives the life of eternity. In like manner, he may be dying to sin for some time; yet he is not dead to sin till sin is separated from his soul; and in that instant, he lives the full life of love.... So the change wrought when the soul died to sin is of a different kind and infinitely greater than any before, and than any he can conceive, till he experiences it. Yet he still grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and image of God; and will do so, not only till death, but to all eternity~ 24

Christ's victory thus becomes blessed reality in entire sanctification. This separation of the soul from sin to God is "the final object God has in mind in crucifying the old man" (Romans 6). Viewed positively, this act of God is life in the Spirit (Romans 8). Christ reenacts in us the sanctification He accomplished in the atonement. By His perfect obedience and victorious death and resurrection He provisionally expelled sin from human experience; now He comes by the Spirit to dwell and reign in us and thus work in us that loving obedience which fulfills the law. Thus Christ himself becomes our sanctification (I Corinthians 1:30). "For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in Him" (Colossians 2:9-10, RSV). This fullness, however, is not a private, mystical, quietistic union with Christ. It is social; it is life in the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:21-2:7; 4:4-16; Colossians 3:14; cf. Hebrews 2:10-13) In the Body of Christ-the koinonia of the Spirit we discover the full meaning of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27-29).

To put the matter in fullest perspective we must add one further word. Christ's victory is complete but not final. We have been "saved by hope" the hope of resurrection and glorification with Christ (Romans 8: 1725; I Corinthians 15:2228; Philemon 3:1221; etc.). Meanwhile our sanctification has the character of a spiritual warfare in which our victory over sin is assured as we permit Christ to live moment by moment in us (John 15:16; Ephesians 6:1018; Philemon 1:6; Colossians 1:18 23; Romans 8:1213, 2639; Romans 13:1114; Hebrews 7:25). This is the practical meaning of Christus Victor for a theology of holiness. "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" over the dominion of sin in conversion, over sin itself in sanctification, over the racial consequences of sin in glorification.

IV. WESLEY AND CHRISTUS VICTOR

John Deschner has pointed out the relevance of Christus Victor for Wesley's doctrine of sanctification.

The grand theme of Wesleyan Atonement is Christ's bearing of our guilt and punishment on the cross. This atonement is Wesley's ground for man's entire salvation, his sanctification as well as his justification. But alongside this judicial scheme of thought there is also in Wesley a pervasive tendency to view Christ's work on Good Friday and Easter, but also today and in the future, in terms of a military victory for us over sin and evil. Much attention has been given to the power of the Holy Spirit in Wesley's doctrine of sanctification. It needs to be more clearly recognized that the sanctifying spirit is the spirit of the victorious as well as the suffering Christ. 26

Wesley's Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament make it abundantly clear that he both knew and appreciated the Christus Victor idea, and three of his Standard Sermons deal with this theme. 27 However, Wesley does not take full advantage of the implications of this view for his doctrine of holiness. "It may well be that this is a weakness in his doctrine of sanctification," Colin Williams observes. "There the stress is on a conscious individual relationship with Christ, and little emphasis is given to the need for the repetition of Christ's victory in us." 28 Such a view of sanctification, however, is present in Wesley, although it is not consistently pressed. Other elements of Wesley's thought rival this idea and thereby rob Wesley's doctrine of the Christ-

ocentricity which marks the New Testament teaching of sanctification. A clarification of Wesleyan theology at this point should give new power and relevance to its holiness teaching.

In his Notes upon the New Testament Wesley affirms that God has given sentence "that sin should be destroyed, and believers delivered from it" (Romans 8:3). 29 "The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil all sin. And will he not perform this in all who trust in Him?" (I John 3:8.) In his sermon on this latter text, however, he limits the manifestation of Christ to the "inward manifestation of himself." 30 Not once in the entire sermon does he refer to Christ's objective victory on the Cross, although he makes passing reference to Christ's final victory in the last day. By ignoring the objective victory of Christ, Wesley opens the door to a subjective, individualistic type of holiness. His message of sanctification would have been more vigorously positive and biblical if he had sounded with clarity the note of Christ's historic conquest of sin.

Moreover, because Wesley does not seem to see clearly that sanctification is the repetition of Christ's victory in us, it is "not primarily a participation in Christ who, as Paul says, is also our sanctification (I Corinthians 1:30), but rather such a relation to Christ as allows His Spirit to establish in us a 'temper,' a more abstract stylized kind of holiness." 31 This defect appears to grow out of Wesley's exaggerated view of the moral law as "the immediate offspring of God, . . . God manifest in the flesh." He virtually hypostasizes it when he says: "Yea, in some sense, we may apply to this law what the Apostle says of His Son; it is apaugasma tes doxes kai karakter tes hypostaseos autou, the streaming forth, or out beaming of His glory, the express image of His person." 32 His intent is clear: to avoid the antinomianism which says, "It (the moral law) has been fulfilled by Christ, and therefore must pass, for the gospel to be established." 33 He will brook no suggestion that Christ's active obedience is imputed to the Christian. But does antinomianism necessarily follow the teaching that Christ fulfilled the moral law? Did He not in fact fulfill it by His holy obedience and victorious death and resurrection? Was not the incarnate Son the revelation of God's holiness as well as His grace?

Is it not possible that the moral law, like the ceremonial law, is a 'type of Christ' (cf. Hebrews 10:1, Matthew 11:13, Romans 10:4, II Corinthians 3:6), i. e. leads to and is fulfilled in Him with the consequence that the believer finds not only atonement but also the concrete form which his sanctification is to take 'in Christ,' and not in some moral law abstracted from Him? 34

And does not the New Testament teach that Christ actually indwells believers, so that one who has truly died with Christ can say, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"? (Galatians 2:20.) And is there any other righteousness than this?

Wesley, however, does glimpse the full Christocentricity of holiness when he defines sanctification as the renewal of our mind in the Imago Dei. "And what is 'righteousness', " he asks, "But the life of God in the soul; the mind which was in Christ Jesus; the image of God stamped upon the heart, now renewed after the image of him that created it?"³⁵ He then proceeds to describe inward sanctification as the "return" of Christ in the person of the Comforter ³⁶

In several places in his Plain Account Wesley seems to see that the sanctifying Spirit is the Spirit of the victorious as well as of the suffering Christ. ³⁷ Once he writes:

The holiest of men still need Christ, as their Prophet, as 'the light of the world.' For he does not give them light, but from moment to moment; the instant he withdraws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their King; for God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain. They still need Christ as their Priest, to make atonement for their holy things. Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ....The best of men say, 'Thou art my light, my holiness, my heaven. Through my union with Thee, I am full of light, of holiness, and happiness. But if I were left to myself, I should be nothing but sin, darkness, hell.' ³⁸

This is Wesley at his best. Here he means by perfection, not any "temper, " "intention, " or "affection" inherent in man himself, but a participation in the being of Christ's love. Christ is both the content and source of this perfection. On the ground of Christ's priestly work, the prophetic and kingly offices can also be understood as grace.

We can only regret that Wesley, having suggested such an exalted view of Christ's intercession, would make so little of this in his doctrine of sanctification. We are not "holy in Christ" (as Wesley abhorred), but "in Christ" we are actually made holy. Here he could have found his soundest defense against antinomianism (Hebrews 7:25). And it can be argued that this was, in the band societies, Wesley's pastoral answer to antinomianism. There his Methodists found their place in the Body of Christ with its worship, mutual exhortation, admonition, encouragement and

service. There they experienced the presence and power of the Christ who had won for them the victory. Though Wesley did not do so, must we not develop this doctrine's implication that we participate in Christ's active righteousness of obedience and love as well as His passive righteousness, through the Holy Spirit, in the church which is His Body?

Called unto holiness, Church of our God, Purchased of Jesus, redeemed by His Blood; Called from the world and its idols to flee, Called from the bondage of sin to be free.

Called unto holiness, praise His dear name ! This blessed secret to faith now made plain; Not our own righteousness, but Christ within, Living and reigning and saving from sin.

--Mrs. C. H. Morris

Documentations

1. Gustaf Aulen, Christus Victor (New York: Macmillan Co., 1951), Translated by A. G. Hebert.
2. Ibid., pp. 14.
3. Ibid., p. 5.; yet see Alan Richardson, Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1958), pp. 204-206. Richardson admits the truth of Aulen's dramatic representation of Christ's work but understands this as "a presentation of the fact of salvation rather than of atonement" (p. 205, italics his).
4. Aulen, pp. 2021, 4144. 5. Ibid., pp. 22, 3132, 44.
6. Ibid., p. 22. 7. Ibid., pp. 6180, 8. Ibid., pp. 67.
9. It was Origen (185-254 A. D.) who converted the Christus Victor idea into the theory of a ransom paid to Satan.
10. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 5:18).
11. H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1952), II, 229-232.

12. Op. cit., pp. 7173. 13. Ibid., fn. p. 148; cf. pp. 2225.
14. Ibid., p. 150.
15. James S. Stewart, A Faith to Proclaim (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 94.
16. C. K. Barrett, The Epistle to the Romans (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 125.
17. Sandy and Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1929), p. 125.
18. The key term for sin itself in Romans 5:128:10, literally, "the sin" principle. The term occurs 28 times in these chapters.
19. As body (soma) is my total self concretely expressed, so flesh (sarx) is my whole person alienated from God and subjected to my creature hood and sin.
20. Karl Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959), p. 69.
21. C. Anderson Scott, "Romans," The Abingdon Bible Commentary (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1929), p. 1153.
22. C. H. Dodd, The Epistle to the Romans (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), p. 93.
23. F. Godet, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883), p. 244.
24. John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, reprint), p. 62.
25. Romans 58 must not be read to discover any "order of salvation. " Paul is rather contrasting two ways of life: Adam and Christ, Law and Gospel, sin and grace, flesh and Spirit.
26. John Deschner, Wesley's Christology (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1960), p. 116.
27. He spoke of the devil as "the first sinner in the universe" (Notes, I John 3:8), who "transfused" his own selfwill and pride into our parents (Sermon CSSIII, I. 2; Sermon LXX, I. 910), thus be coming the "origin of evil" in the world

(Notes, Matt. 13:28; John8:44; Sermon LXII, I. 8). By sin and death Satan gained possession of the world, so that when Christ came it was "Satan's house" (Notes, Matt. 12:29; John 12:31). Man's guilt gave him over to Satan's power, and man's corruption took Satan's side in temptation. Satan thus enjoyed a right, a claim, and a power over man (Notes, John 13:30; Rom. 6: 14). Christ's ministry was an assault upon Satan (Notes, Matt. 12:29), but His decisive encounter with Satan, sin and death was in the cross and resurrection (Notes, Matt. 27:5253; Luke 12:50; I Cor. 15:26; Eph. 4:8; Heb. 2:14). The resurrection, which is victory over death, is the inauguration of Christ's kingdom(Notes, Luke22:16; Acts2:31; I Cor. 15:26), and its power will raise men to new life in regeneration and to eternal life in the general resurrection (Notes, Rom. 6:5; Eph. 1:19; I Cor. 15:20). The ascension signifies Christ's exaltation to the Father's right hand (Notes, Acts 2:33; Eph. 1:2122)until Here turns to judge the world (Notes, Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:28). After the judgment Christ will return the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, but will continue to reign eternally with Him (Notes, I Cor. 15:24). Here indeed are all the essential elements of a full Christus Victor doctrine. See Deschner, Wesley's Christology, Ch. V, "The Kin"lv Work of Christ. "

28. Colin Williams, John Wesley's Theology Today (Nashville: The Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 88.
29. Scripture references hereafter are all to Wesley's Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament.
30. Sermon LXX, "The End of Christ's Coming, " (II. 7; III. 1, 1).
31. Deschner, op. cit., p. 105.
32. Sermon XXXIV, "The Origin, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law" (II. 3,4, 5, 6; III. 3); SermonXXIV, Discourse IV, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount" (Intro. 1).
33. Sermon XXXV, Discourse V, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount" (II. 1).
34. Deschner, op. cit., p. 115. Scripture references in quotes are to Wesley's Notes.
35. Sermon XXI, Discourse I, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount" (I. 11). 36. Ibid., II. 5, 6: cf. Sermon XXII, I. 1.

37. Ibid. , II. 5, 6: cf. Sermon XXII, I. 1.

37. Plain Account of Christian Perfection p. 53.

38. Ibid., pp. 8283.

JOHN WESLEY'S VIEW ON BAPTISM

John Chongnahm, Cho, Ph. D.

President OMS Theological Seminary, Seoul, Korea

I. INTRODUCTION

"There is no doubt, " as D. M. Baillie points out, "that from very diverse quarters, from high Anglicanism to continental Protestantism, there has in recent years been a new consciousness of the problem surrounding this sacrament (or baptism) ."1 Such a revival of the interest in Christian baptism in recent years opens the possible Wesleyan contribution to this study. But it is perhaps obvious that this task will not succeed unless one refers to, and clarifies the teaching on the subject in the theology of John Wesley, for various Wesley scholars differ in interpreting the subject. 2

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to analyze and clarify the teaching of baptism in the writings of John Wesley, and review it in the light of Wesleyan theological structure with a hope to find some constructive direction in formulating the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian baptism.

II. THE DEFINITION AND MEANING OF BAPTISM

Wesley regarded baptism as a means of grace obligatory upon all Christians, as Jesus himself showed by example. 3 Baptism according to Wesley, is included in the whole design of Christ's great commission, and it must, therefore, remain in Christ's church until the end of the world. 4

Wesley believed that baptism, as an initiatory sacrament, is in the ordinary way "the only means of entering into the Church or into heaven. "5 That is to say, Wesley believed that the free gift and merit of the atonement is applied to men in baptism, 6 through the work of the Holy Spirit. As to the benefits of baptism, he said that through baptism we are engrafted into Christ the Word, that is, into the new covenant of God, being admitted into the Body of Christ. 7 Also, the guilt of original sin is washed away from us, by the application of the merits of Christ's death. 8 He further says that through baptism we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, 9 through whom we begin a new life and grow throughout Christian life to maturity. These benefits, moreover, may

be expressed in the words, "baptismal regeneration. " He writes,

By water then as a mean, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again: Whence it is also called by the Apostle; 'the washing of regeneration.'¹⁰

III. JOHN WESLEY'S CONCEPT OF THE MEANING OF BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

Did Wesley then really believe the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as appears to be required by the Prayer Book of the Church of England? At this point, we face some different interpretations among Wesley scholars. By way of the traditional antiAnglican view, for example, T. G. Williams maintains that Wesley did not, but opposed the doctrine of baptismal regeneration with all his power. ¹¹ Williams argues that Wesley's new emphasis, after his own evangelical experience in 1738, upon living faith and direct encounter with God tended to turn him from a high church view of baptism to a low view, that is, to a denial of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration He says,

In his ministration he (I. e., Wesley) did not tell the sinner that he had received the new birth, and had been regenerated, and made a member of Christ when the baptismal waters, from the sacred hand of the priest. . . had touched his brow; but he did say to such as trusted in his outward ceremony, 'Baptized or unbaptized you must be born again.'¹²

Did Wesley then, as Williams interprets the matter, come to reject baptismal regeneration?

Here attention may be drawn to the alterations to his father's discourse which Wesley made in his Treatise on Baptism. Wesley's treatise is an abridgment of his father's discourse on baptism published a half century before. In this Wesley omitted terms such as "baptismal regeneration," and words which might refer to the idea of baptismal regeneration.¹³ He also deleted the words, "sacramental, " or "sacramentally."¹⁴ Are these alterations then sufficient to indicate that Wesley now came to reject baptismal regeneration ? On the contrary, the treatise still maintains that we are made children of God in baptism, inward grace being infused into our souls, and the guilt of original sin being washed away in baptism. In other words, Wesley continued to acknowledge that "the new birth within is recognized as simultaneous with the sacramental washing without."¹⁵ Therefore, it may be safe to affirm with Parris that Wesley was still

"in the line with the general Anglican position."¹⁶

Some however have sought to minimize this by asserting in the first place that this treatise on baptism was only Samuel Wesley's antiquated discourse, and not Wesley's own teaching,¹⁷ and that his own ideas must be seen in his sermons. They presuppose that his sermons present a different point of view on baptism from that of the treatise. ¹⁸ Such arguments however, seem to be without ground. For as Tyerman points out,¹⁹ we find in his sermons stronger language by which Wesley forcefully confirms his belief on baptismal regeneration. In his sermon on "The New Birth, " he declares,

It is certain our church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole Office for the Baptism of Infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants. For neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in a person of riper years ²⁰

He described his own baptism as one in which he received the "washing of the Holy Ghost."²¹

Thus we may not regard his Treatise on Baptism merely as a production of "old Samuel's discourse" abridged.²² We must not overlook the fact that this treatise was published quite a number of years after his evangelical experience at Aldersgate Street, and when his sermons had become informed by an evangelical tone. Moreover this treatise was published for circulation among the Methodists. By these facts, this treatise seems to be intended publicly to announce Wesley's view of the subject. Therefore, we must also regard the changes from his father's discourse which he made in the treatise as having significance in his theological development.

Such alterations in the treatise reflect his concern lest his high church view on baptism should imply an ex opere operato view of the sacrament. ²³ His strong protest is shown again in his Popery Calmly Considered. ²⁴ He writes:

The grace does not spring merely ex opere operato: It does not proceed from the mere elements, or the words spoken; but from the blessing of God, in consequence of his promise to such as are qualified for it.²⁵

Wesley, by thus separating the sign of baptism from the thing

Signified the inward grace of regeneration, is carefully guarding against any interpretation of ex opere operato, which savors of magic, whereas he still holds the sacrament of baptism as a means of grace.²⁶ To put this in another way, he means that though on a superficial view we are saved by the water, in truth we are saved not by water, but by the inward grace wrought by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the water. For the operation of the Holy Spirit is to be understood rather in terms of interpersonal relationship than of automatic mechanism. Baptismal grace is not something mechanically mediated by the water, but operated by God through His chosen means.²⁷

Such understanding of the sacrament of baptism accords with Wesley's view of the means of grace, in which he makes clear that the means of grace do not have any power apart from the operation of God. He reminds us that we must always "retain a lively sense that God is above all means."²⁸ "Remember also," continued Wesley, "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."²⁹ For they are sacramental instruments, yet they are not ends in themselves.

How then can we reconcile his belief of baptismal regeneration with his careful distinction between the outward sign from the inward grace itself? Cannon thought that by distinguishing between baptism, the outward sign, and regeneration, an inward grace wrought by the Holy Spirit, Wesley "denies that the Church of England teaches baptismal regeneration."³⁰ It, however, seems to this writer that Wesley, on the contrary, intended to defend her position, by thus qualifying the definition of her doctrine of baptismal regeneration: "though baptism and regeneration are distinguishable perhaps, and water is not the same as the Spirit, yet, both are united in one act and stand together."³¹ That is to say, baptismal regeneration is to be understood in the sense that regeneration is a simultaneous occurrence with baptism, and worked through the baptism. It is not to be taken as though the water itself mystically washes away the sins of the recipient. In this way only does Wesley accept the doctrine of baptismal regeneration of infants, and he does not question Anglican doctrine at this point. He believes that "all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again."³² At this point, "Wesley is less uncertain."³³

Because of Wesley's great emphasis to his people (who had already been baptized in their infancy) on faith and the necessity of "being born again," some scholars suspect that Wesley came to reject the doctrine of baptismal regeneration in his later years. Such suspicion also inclines us to think that his revision of the Offices and Articles on baptism in the 1784 Sunday Service, and the subsequent editions, indicates the change of his view with

regard to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. However, if we observe carefully, we would learn that what Wesley intended in his sermons (in which the necessity of conversion was emphasized),³⁴ and in his revision of the baptismal Offices and Articles in the 1784 Sunday Service, was not to reject the value of infant baptism.³⁵ Rather, it was his pastoral safeguard against a wrong implication of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

He warned against the idle notion that since one was born again in baptism, he does not need to be converted, although "he is now manifestly a child of the devil."³⁶ What he pointed out here about regeneration at baptism was that baptism (that is to say, the new birth at baptism) is the beginning of a new life, and that its maintenance and growth depend, after baptism, on the responsible life of the baptized person in his living relation with God. Therefore, if the baptized person by living in sin now follows the devil, he comes virtually to deny his own baptism. Baptism then becomes "the broken staff of that ye were born again in baptism."³⁷ Thus, the grace of God (baptismal grace) is not understood in impersonal terms as though it were a quasimaterial substance which is given at baptism and remains forever within man's soul. But it is understood in terms of an interpersonal relationship between God and man through the work of the Holy Spirit.³⁸

The implication here may thus be that in the understanding of Wesley, baptism has an inclusive nature which covers both that which happens at the moment of baptism (regeneration) and the whole of the baptized person's life (sanctification). And baptism also has an eschatological dimension in the sense that the inward grace given at the moment of baptism is to be expected to grow through a constant and living relationship of man with God towards its fulfillment. His central concern and emphasis was, in consequence, on this dimension of progress, and on the responsible life of the baptized person here and now, no matter at what point in his life he was baptized. ³⁹ Therefore, it is to be recommended that the thought of Wesley on the meaning of baptism needs to be approached through his concluding sentence of his *Treatise of Baptism*.

Baptism doth save us, if we live answerable there to; if we repent, believe, and obey the gospel: Supposing this, as it admits us into the Church here, so into glory hereafter. ⁴⁰

Wesley, however, takes a somewhat different view with regard to the case of adult baptism. In his writings, especially his sermons, he is found drawing a distinction between the case of infant and adult baptism. ⁴¹ That is to say, in the case of adult baptism, Wesley maintains that regeneration does not always

simultaneously occur with the baptism as it does in infant baptism; namely, "they do not constantly go together."⁴² He clearly states,

Whatever be the case with infants, it is sure all of riper years who are baptized are not at the same time born again.... A man may possibly be 'born of the water, ' and yet not be 'born of the spirit. '43

In his tract entitled, "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, " he states that infants are justified in baptism "although they cannot then either believe or repent, "44 as far as adults are concerned they must, in baptism, repent and believe if the new birth is to be given to them. 45

From these observations it seems to be clear that there are two different ways of understanding of baptism in Wesley's thought, namely, one for infants and another for adults. Infant baptism, for Wesley, is "a justifying and regenerating sacrament. ~46 Yet, not all adults who are baptized are regenerated. If the new birth is simultaneously to be given, they must repent and believe. 47

Therefore, it seems not to do justice to Wesley's own understanding when one simply claims that Wesley was a High Church man on the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Nor is it fair to him when one merely says that Wesley opposed the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. For, so far as Wesley's writings show, his baptismal doctrine never went higher than acknowledging baptismal regeneration in infant baptism. Perhaps then, it may be said that Wesley held both a Catholic element (baptismal regeneration in infants) and an evangelical apprehension (emphasis on "living faith" for evangelical conversion in adults). To disregard either of them seems to do injustice to his own standing on the matter .

IV. INFANT BAPTISM AND THE RELATION OF FAITH TO BAPTISM

Faith and baptism are thus inseparably joined in Wesley's understanding of baptismal regeneration. Faith is the sine qua non of the promise of inward grace on the one hand, and on the other hand grace is associated with baptism. Therefore, faith is demanded from a man who is capable of it both before and after baptism. 48

However, we observed that the case is somewhat different in the baptism of infants, although afterwards they are capable of it. Wesley's emphasis on faith (on the part of the recipient) is therefore applied only to faith after baptism, for which alone baptized infants can be responsible. Thus faith in baptism is, in

the case of infant baptism, more explicitly interpreted primarily as a response to baptism.⁴⁹ Baptism demands faith, rather than faith does baptism. In this sense, baptism is the very starting point of faith. He emphasized the necessity of faith whenever the baptized are capable and responsible. For he understands faith in terms of a living relation of man with God, without which a man cannot continue in baptismal grace

The precondition of faith which Wesley required for an infant to be baptized was instead sought in the faith of the parents who present the infant to the Church through baptism.⁵⁰ Here the stress was on the corporate faith of the believing community which was represented in such a particular way by the faith of parents, although this faith cannot be presented as vicarious faith on behalf of the infant.

Despite such a difference, Wesley appears to be convinced of the validity of baptizing (the) infants in the Church. Part of his certainty that infants are capable of baptism was drawn from the significant parallel between circumcision and baptism. For Wesley believed that baptism came in the place of circumcision.⁵¹ He also believed that the baptism of infants was commanded by the Lord.⁵² And, he believed its practice was demonstrated by Jesus, in that He suffered children to come to Him who were brought by others. "Therefore," he said, "his disciples or ministers are still to suffer infants to come, that is, to be brought, unto Christ," by baptism.⁵³ Thus it appears that Wesley believed that the baptism of infants is possible because it is not only commanded by the Lord, but also because the initiative in it is with the Lord himself.⁵⁴ This would imply that baptism is an ordinance of divine, not human, inception. It is a movement from God toward man. Therefore, in the thought of Wesley, the baptism of infants cannot be interpreted in terms alone of dedication by men.

V. BAPTISM IN THE SCHEME OF WESLEY'S THEOLOGY OF SALVATION

Now we turn to review Wesley's doctrine of baptism in the light of his theological structure. We pointed out that for Wesley, baptism is understood both as event (in which regeneration occurs⁵⁵) and as process (in which the growth of a new life is emphasized: sanctification). Thus baptism covers the whole of the Christian life: justification, regeneration, and sanctification. Yet, his keen concern was in the dimension of process in baptism, and for Wesley, baptism is only completed when the believer is wholly conformed to the image of Christ.⁵⁶

In conceiving of baptism in this way, it seems that on the one hand his main interest in sanctification was rightly reflected

in his understanding of baptism, and on the other hand, he was able to keep the teaching of baptism in close parallel with his theological structure of "evangelical synergism." That is to say, he preserved both God's continuing work of grace and man's standing responsibility.

God's operation of grace in man, for Wesley, is understood in terms of what Starkey has called "evangelical synergism."⁵⁷ In truth, it is characteristic of every phase of salvation in Wesley's theological structure. Wesley was able to maintain this by his doctrine of grace, especially of prevenient grace.

However, when his teaching of baptism is reviewed in light of this structure of theology, it seems that his teaching of baptism faces the problem. First of all, a problem is raised as to how his understanding of baptism is to be related to the doctrine of prevenient grace. For his teaching of the baptismal cleansing of the guilt of original sin can hardly be understood, if one asserts that by prevenient grace the guilt of original sin "is cancelled by the righteousness of Christ as soon as they (I. e., the people) are sent into the world."⁵⁸ It seems that Wesley himself did not see through the implication of this theological position for his teaching of baptism, and failed to bring the doctrine of baptism into a logical consistency with this part of his theological structure. In his sermon on "The Means of Grace," he defined the sacraments as "the ordinary channels whereby He might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace."⁵⁹ However, it appears that nowhere has he considered the relationship of baptism to prevenient grace.

Secondly, Wesley has not considered the relation of his teaching of baptism to the doctrine of assurance, which is associated with his understanding of Christian life. The doctrine of assurance is a distinctive element in his teaching concerning Christian life. "Wesley affirms that what the Spirit hath wrought, the Spirit will confirm."⁶⁰ But instead of relating the doctrine of assurance, "with Luther, to the 'I am baptized,' as well as to the present witness of the Holy Spirit, Wesley related it only to the latter."⁶¹ In this matter, it would seem that Wesley did not relate the objective significance of baptism to every phase of Christian life, although he maintained that baptism covered the whole of Christian life.⁶²

Third, a problem is raised as to the way the baptismal grace of regeneration can be conveyed to infants irresistibly, when they cannot either repent or believe. Is this not inconsistent with his theological structure, namely, "evangelical synergism"? For Wesley firmly maintained that "it (I. e., faith) was necessary in order to receive forgiveness or salvation."⁶³ As we already pointed out, in safe guarding the Church's doctrine against a magical view of the sacrament, Wesley maintained that baptism can be effectual means for salvation,

not from any virtue in them, or in him that administers them, but only by the blessing of CHRIST, and the work in go of his SPIRIT in them that by faith receive them.⁶⁴

In view of such a situation, it would seem that Wesley is not wholly consistent at every point. What he has to say about the meaning of baptism as incorporation into the Body of Christ is more consistent with his general theological structure, but he did not go on to develop this train of argument. That is to say, his teaching of baptismal regeneration would be chiefly of a change of relation by which infants (or adults) are translated into the kingdom of grace, the Church, ⁶⁵ meaning adoption (baptism into Christ or into the name of Christ) rather than "being born again" in baptism. In one place, Wesley indicated that regeneration which is ascribed to baptism is that "being 'grafted into the body of Christ's Church, we are made the children of God by adoption and grace'."⁶⁶ This writer feels that this idea in Wesley, when fully amplified, may furnish a clue to the direction in which the main meaning of baptism might have been explained in a more consistent way. ⁶⁷

Wesley was an evangelist, yet he was always a Churchman. He never underestimated the importance of the Church. For Wesley, the Church is regarded as the Body of Christ, and he had a high regard for the Body of believers, in the covenant of grace. In view of such a high view of the Church, the incorporation into the Church through baptism is very significant and meaningful. For where baptism is under taken there is an anticipation that the baptized person will grow, in the environment of faith where the Holy Spirit is promised to work, to the appropriation of the free gift of God's grace, and in consequence, to the final salvation of the soul.

In understanding the meaning of baptism in this way, it comes to be regarded chiefly as a corporate act of the Church, action pro Deo to witness the objective givingness of the gospel of redemption (prevenient grace given already, and justifying, sanctifying grace, promised to faith), by setting the one to be baptized apart within the kingdom of grace, the Body of Christ. In this sense, baptism may be said as "kerygma in action"⁶⁸ or "a Sacrament of the Gospel."⁶⁹ And also the role of faith in baptism is significantly understood as man's response to baptism (God's action), whereby the baptized persons appropriate and grow in the grace which is proclaimed and promised in baptism. ⁷⁰ If, as Wesley himself understood, in baptism some were "born again in the higher sense of the word, " and some, "in a lower sense, " and also some "neither in one sense nor the other, ⁷¹ this would be related to the degree of faith (understood as response

to God's grace in its nature) on the part of the baptized persons. Thus, by this reinterpretation of the meaning of baptism by Wesley, it may be possible that the doctrine of baptism will be found to be in harmony with the scheme of his theology of salvation. For the scheme of salvation which Wesley explains maybe found in his own words as follows:

Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) Preventing grace; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning His will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against Him. All these imply some tendency toward life; some degree of salvation; . . .

Salvation is carried on by convincing grace, usually in Scripture termed repentance; . . . Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation; whereby, 'through grace, we are saved by faith;' consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God.⁷³

Documentations

1. Donald M. Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 72.
2. J. E. Rattenbury says, "the Methodist beliefs about baptism have always been varied. They certainly are today. " He illustrates this: "I once heard baptism discusse data gathering of eight or nine Wesleyan ministers, and there were eight of nine different doctrines pronounced at that meeting!" (*Wesley's Legacy to the World* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1928), p. 193.
3. See Notes on Matt. 3:15, 16, Works x, 188.
4. Works, x, 193.
5. Works, x, 19Z.
6. Ibid., 191.
7. Works, x, 191. 8. Works, x, 190.
9. Notes on I Cor. 12:13; cf. Works, x, 19Z.

10. Works, x, 192.
11. T. G. Williams, *Methodist and Anglicanism in the Light of Scripture and History*, (Toronto, 1888), p. 42.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
13. See Works, x, 192 in comparison with Samuel Wesley, Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
14. cf. Samuel Wesley, *The Pious Communicant Rightly Prepared* p. 203, 191; Works, x, 191.
15. Lycurgus M. Starkey, *The Work of the Holy Spirit: A Study in Wesleyan Theology* (New York & Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 91.
16. John R. Parris, *John Wesley's Doctrine of the Sacraments* (London: The Epworth Press, 1963), p. 40.
17. James H. Rigg, *The Churchmanship of John Wesley and the Relation of Wesleyan Methodism to the Church of England* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1878), p. 42.
18. *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, xxxii, p. 121; *Sermons I*, p. 281.
19. Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1872), Vol. II, p. 265.
20. *Sermons, I*, p. 238 (The New Birth). T.G. Williams argues that this passage does not indicate that Wesley held this view, but that he only mentioned the supposition of the Church of England which he did not approve. (Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 45). The context of his whole sermon on the contrary implies that Wesley accepted the doctrine. Paul Sanders concurs with the latter view (Sanders, *An Appraisal of John Wesley's Sacramentalism in the Evolution of Early American Methodism*, Unpublished dissertation at Union Theological Seminary. New York, 1954, p. 95).
21. *Journal I*, p. 465 (for May 24, 1738).
22. Cf. Rigg, *op. cit.*, p. 42. 23. See Parris, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
24. Published in 1779, see Works x, 149ff.

25. Works, x, p. 149.
26. Sermons, II, p. 238, Letters, iv, p. 38. See also Notes on I Peter 3:21.
27. See Sermons, I, p. 300.
28. Sermons, I, p. 259 (The Means of Grace). 29. Ibid., 260.
30. William R. Cannon, *Theology of John Wesley* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1946), p. 126.
31. Ibid. 32. Sermons, II, 238 (The New Birth).
33. Starkey, op. cit., p. 92; see Parris, op. cit., p. 42. Philip Watson, "Wesley and Luther on Christian Perfection," *Ecumenical Review*, xv (April, 1963), p. 291.
34. See Chongnam Cho, "A Study in John Wesley's Doctrine of Baptism. .," (Unpublished dissertation at Emory University, 1966), pp. 136 156.
35. It appears that Wesley did not raise any serious question at the effect of infant baptism. He still thought that baptism, instead of confirmation, is a sufficient qualification for the admission to the Lord's Supper.
36. Works, viii, 48. cf. Sermons II, p. 241 (The New Birth).
37. Sermons, I, p. 296 (The Marks of the New Birth).
38. See Sermons, I, pp. 310312. Cf. Starkey, op. cit., p. 56.
39. It maybe worth mentioning here that this inclusive and eschatological dimension of baptism parallels the nature of the baptism of Jesus, which is the foundation of our baptism (Notes on I John 5:6, Rom. 6:3, 4) and the intention of Christ's institution of baptism (Notes on Col. 2:12).
40. Works, x, 192.
41. His distinction between the case of infant and adult baptism is less unclear in his sermons and other writings, but it seems to be somewhat obscure in his *Treatise on Baptism*.
42. Sermons, II, 238. 43. Ibid. see also Works, viii, 52, 48. *Journal II*, 135 (for Jan. 25, 1739).

44. Works, viii 52. 45. Ibid. 47.
46. Watson, op. cit., p. 29 1.
47. Notes on Acts 22:16. See also Works, viii, p. 52.
48. Notes on Acts 2:38, I Cor. 12:13, Gal. 3:27. See Cho, op. Cit., pp. 161163.
49. See the prayers in the baptismal offices in the Sunday Service
50. Thoughts upon Infant Baptism, p. 5.
51. Works, x, 195, 188, 194 195. See also, Thoughts upon Infant Baptism, p. 5. Notes on Col. 2:1113. As they were not circumcised on the basis of their own faith but on the ground of birth into the covenant communitythe 'visible church, ' so, the condition which Wesley required for an infant to be baptized seems to have been that the infant was within the community of believers, and under the care of the community. Wesley believed that "infants were and still are under the evangelical covenant" (Works, x, 193) God made with Abraham .
52. Works, x, 193, 195f.
53. Works, x, 195. Wesley also believed that the Apostles and the Church in all ages practiced infant baptism. (See Works, x, 196ff, 201, Thoughts upon Infant Baptism, 12ff.
54. Works, x, 195f.
55. Wesley held that in the moment of baptism, the guilt of original sin is washed away from the baptized person, he being grafted into the Body of Christ. He also received the Holy Spirit in baptism.
56. Notes on Col. 2:12.
57. Starkey, op. cit., p. 116. See also Sermon "On Working out our own salvation" (Works, vi, 506ff).
58. Letters, vi, p. 240. 59. Sermons, I, p. 242 (The Means of Grace).

- 59 Sermons, I, p. 242 (The Means of Grace).
60. Starkey, op. cit., p. 60. cf. Sermons, I, p. 209.
61. Colin W. Williams, John Wesley's Theology Today (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 120.
62. Some would perhaps wish that Wesley had related baptism with his doctrine of assurance so as to provide for the baptized person the assurance of the fact that God had promised saving grace for him, declared in baptism, on which he could rely.
63. Works, x, 279.
64. A Christian Library, xiv, 409, Sermons, I, 259.
65. See Notes on Matt. 4:17. Wesley observes that the business of Christ was not only to establish the kingdom of grace in individuals, but also in the church, the whole body of believers.
66. Works, x, 191192, See also Notes in Rom. 6:3.
67. We observe that by way of evangelical safeguarding of the doctrine of baptism, in his revision of the Sunday Service, the idea of incorporation into the Church in baptism appeared in some sense to the fore in his teaching of baptism. Nevertheless, he never thoroughly worked it out.
68. W. F. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism (London: S. P. C. K., 1964), p. 123.
69. Ibid., p. 124.
70. Such understanding could be applied to the case of both infant and adult baptism. Therefore, baptism cannot be regarded as a mere token of men's faith; in consequence, this view would not concur with the position of the advocacy of the believer's baptism only.
71. Journal, II, p. 135.
72. For Wesley's understanding of the degree of faith, see Journal, II, p. 328. For some different effects occurred in baptism, see Journal, III, p. 180, 189. Ibid., IV, p. 189. Ibid., VII, p. 132. 73. Works, vi, p. 509.