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# ***Wesleyan Theological Journal***

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## INTEGRATION OF TRUTH IN JOHN WESLEY

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A biblical exhortation which has special significance for theologians is one which is given to Timothy by his fatherly mentor, the Apostle Paul. It is this: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15).

The word "divide", as it is used in the authorized version is subject to some serious distortions. In twentieth century parlance, this word has in it some dangerous overtones. It was certainly not Paul's intention that the Word of God be destructively broken up into pieces. Fragmentation is hardly a fruitful exercise when arrival at truth is the supreme objective.

The English word "divide" as used in this text comes from the Greek word *orthotomeô* which means to cut straight without deviating to the right or left. Arndt and Gingrich's *Greek-English Lexicon* defines the text to mean "guide the word of truth along a straight path (like a road that goes straight to its goal), without being turned aside by wordy debates or impious talk."

The writer to the Hebrews expresses the same idea with these words: "And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed" (Heb. 12:13).

It has been suggested that the historical meaning of *orthotomeô* might very well stem from the Old Testament practice of the priest correctly cutting up the Levitical victim or a father or steward cutting portions for the food of the household.

When Paul dramatizes the party spirit in Corinth by reciting the loyalty oaths, "I belong to Paul, or I belong to Apollos, or I belong to Cephas, or I belong to Christ," he asks the pointed question, "Is Christ divided?" (I Cor. 1:12-13). In this particular text the English word "divide" comes from the Greek word, *disunite* which does mean to disunite and fragment.

Consequently, when Paul talks about "dividing the word of truth" the whole thrust of his exhortation exhibits a great concern lest the unity of the Word be destroyed. Not only is Paul alert to the fact that the Word of God can be handled deceitfully (II Cor. 4:2), but he also fears lest it be handled carelessly and thereby be distorted.

The Greek word *orthopomew* is the very basis of all that we mean when we speak of orthodoxy. It is evident that such a position cannot be achieved without diligent study and conscientious work. Without this disciplined thinking we are prone to wander from the truth.

## Defining the Problem

As we view the theological scene today it would appear that in some areas at least we have bits and pieces of truth scattered everywhere. We have a great variety of biblical interests and emphases. In all too many cases these biblically oriented ideas are competing one with another for recognition and for supremacy.

From a theological point of view, I believe we can see as Ezekiel saw a valley very full of dry and disconnected bones.<sup>4</sup> Our parochial interests have in many cases blinded us to the full-orbed revelation of God in Christ Jesus. At times we have not studied our philosophical presuppositions and as a result we have made some very faulty, unwise and unbiblical claims for Christian experience. It is a subtle temptation to take one strand from the braided rope of biblical revelation and, by disengaging it from the other strands, come up with some kind of distortion.

We can hardly excuse ourselves when our forefathers advised us to be aware that a text taken out of a context was a pretext.

If this is really an accurate description of the situation as it exists, my solution is expressed in contemporary terms, "let us put it all together." My plea is for a hermeneutic which recognizes and respects the wholeness and the completeness of God's revelation. John Wesley understood Paul's exhortation in II Timothy 2:15 to mean "duly explaining and applying the whole Scripture..."<sup>6</sup>

The mood of our times stimulates us to make careful and well documented analyses, but as theologians this is only the beginning of our task. Seemingly the syntheses is harder to come by. It is this aspect of our calling which is easiest to neglect. I find it terribly easy at times to be satisfied with a few random thoughts. When it comes to biblical truth, I am certain that I share with you the discovery that random thoughts can be devastating. We cannot afford in this day or in any day a theology of the miscellaneous.

Heterodoxy is an ancient foe in the Christian Church, and it would appear that this persistent enemy makes its entrance in a very customary way. A century ago John Godfrey Saxe very vividly described this faulty methodology by writing a poem entitled, "The Blind Men and The Elephant." It reads as follows:

It was six men of Indostan to learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(though all of them were blind)  
That each by observation might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant, and happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy  
side, at once began to bawl: "God bless me! but the Elephant  
is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk cried, "Ho! what have we here So very round and smooth and sharp? To me 'tis mighty clear This wonder of an Elephant is very like a spear!"

The Third approached the animal, and happening to take The squirming trunk within his hands, thus boldly up and spake: "I see," quoth he, "the Elephant is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out an eager hand, and felt about the knee. "What most this wondrous beast is like is mighty plain," quoth he; "Tis clear enough the Elephant is very like a tree!"

The Fifth who chanced to touch the ear, said: "E'en the blindest man Can tell what this resembles most; deny the fact who can, This marvel of an Elephant is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun about the beast to grope, Than, seizing on the swinging tail that fell within his scope, "I see," quoth he, "the Elephant is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan disputed loud and long, Each in his own opinion exceeding stiff and strong, Though each was partly in the right, and all were in the wrong!

### **Moral**

So oft in theologic wars, the disputants, I ween, rail on in utter ignorance of what each other mean, And prate about an Elephant not one of them has seen!<sup>7</sup> John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887)

Men and women whom we esteem have likewise underscored this whole idea of "putting it all together" and doing it right. John Fletcher said:

Mankind are prone to run into extremes. The world is full of men who always overdo or underdo. Few people ever find the line of moderation, the golden mean; and of those who do, few stay long upon it. One blast or another of vain doctrine soon drives them east or west from the meridian of pure truth.<sup>8</sup>

These are the words of a man who made a valiant effort to "divide" the word of truth so as not to make shipwreck of faith on either the rock of

antinomianism or the rock of legalism. His monumental *Checks to Anti-nomianism* are not only valuable for historical data, but even more important, they demonstrate a hermeneutic "that puts it all together." Paul S. Rees commends Thomas Carlyle by saying that

Carlyle could see the complementary opposites to be found in the realm~ of reality. He discerned that in much of life it is dangerous to settle for an either/or position. It is the insight of both/and that is authentic. To exclude one or the other is to miss the wholeness of things.<sup>9</sup>

Another Wesleyan author who has helped me to see the necessity of keeping the partial in proper relationship to the whole is Mildred Bangs Wynkoop. She writes concerning Wesleyans and says:

We do have a specific emphasis, but not to the neglect of the full scope of Christian truth. Wesleyans emphasize the crisis experiences, not to isolate these from the full scope of theology, but to point out the rather obvious fact that in order to get into the house one must go through the entrance. But Wesleyanism in its best expression does not stop at the door. Forgiveness and entire sanctification do not exhaust the biblical message. These essential moments are the remedial steps which begin a life of fulfillment.<sup>10</sup>

It is painful to recall those instances in history and in our personal experience when we stood only in the door. As a blind man we felt the elephant's tusk, or trunk, or tail and very easily and quickly we came to our conclusions; and valid conclusions we thought them to be because we had engaged in so-called research. It is somewhat frightening to realize that theologians are not exempt from the temptation to allow haphazardness to become a way of life. Our young people are not far from the truth when they speak of men and movements becoming "unglued".

### **Identifying the Problem in Church History**

A careful examination of the Church's history reveals the tragedy of stopping short of doctrinal wholeness. Incompleted and unbalanced emphases have caused great havoc in the Church and in the fulfillment of its mission.

The Gnostics failed in being able to put knowledge and faith together. They likewise left the material world and the spiritual world miles apart. They could not resist believing, however, that these things belonged together and as a consequence they turned to emanations and to intermediate agents.

They were not prepared to make Christ preeminent in the sense that "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17, 18 RSV). In their theology, Christ was but one of the emanations and so it ought not to surprise us that their theology fell apart.

Arianism is another heresy which plagued the early Church and it is quite evident that Lucian, Arius and many others failed to find that essential unity which characterized the Godhead. In seeking to reconcile that unity with the Sonship of Christ, the Son was subordinated to a position where He was deprived of His divinity. The intervention of Constantine only complicated the problem.

The Council of Nicaea, which was called to mediate the problem sought to reconcile the factions by suggesting the Latin term "consubstantial". With the best of intentions the Council failed to bring Latins and Greeks together and a great gulf remains to this day between East and West.

The Fifth Century is remembered for the Pelagian-Augustinian controversy. While this may have been a continuation of the East-West controversy, the fact remains that the ideas of original sin and natural human ability came into conflict. The great question was how to put them together. Augustine's genius for apologetics is widely appreciated. Permit me to quote one assessment of his efforts: "He was influenced by so many currents of thought which he failed to synthesize into one harmonious whole that contradictions are frequently met."<sup>11</sup> Consensus would indicate that Augustine was forever plagued by his neo-Platonic dualism and thus was not able to achieve the consistency he quested.

It is an accepted fact that by the Sixteenth Century the equilibrium of the Gospel had again been lost. Martin Luther came forth with a renewed emphases upon justification by faith. Not wanting to detract from Luther's courageous performance in the Reformation, John Fletcher ventured to say:

He was so busy in opposing the pope of Rome, his indulgences, Latin masses, and other monastic fooleries, that he did not find time to oppose the Augustinian fooleries of fatalism, Manichean necessity, lawless grace, and free wrath.<sup>12</sup>

When John Calvin arrived on the Reformation scene, he likewise failed to find a mediating position with regard to the "holy doctrines of grace and the gracious doctrines of justice."<sup>13</sup> The first reformer to balance the "Gospel axioms" was, according to the viewpoint of John Fletcher, the English reformer, Thomas Cranmer, who had written these lines:

All men be also to be monished and chiefly preachers, that, in this high matter, they, looking on both sides, (i.e. looking

both to the doctrines of grace and the doctrines of justice) so attemper and moderate themselves, that neither they so preach the grace of God, (with heated Augustine) that they take away thereby freewill, nor on the other side so extol freewill, (with heated Pelagius) that injury be done to the grace of God.<sup>14</sup>

Fletcher's exegesis of Scripture and his knowledge of history convinced him that Antinomianism became a threat to sound evangelical doctrine whenever the polarity between divine sovereignty and human responsibility was neutralized. He, therefore, proceeded to develop a theological methodology which would adequately cope with what appears to be a scriptural paradox.

When faced with a paradox, David Shipley observes that the usual method is to take one truth and explain it "in terms of the other so that the dialectical tension is lost or lessened sufficiently to make possible popular uncritical perversion."<sup>15</sup>

Fletcher was quick to recognize that this was not the biblical method of reconciling or putting together what appeared to be paradoxical truths. He proceeded to develop a methodology which has been called the "via media", or "the middle way". In his words he called it, "the harmonious opposition of the Scriptures."

The extent to which Fletcher took seriously Paul's admonition to Timothy as expressed in II Timothy 2:15 is evident when he writes: "Truth is confined within her firm bounds; nay, there is a middle line equally distant from all extremes; on that line she stands, and to miss her, you need only step over it to the right hand or to the left."<sup>16</sup>

### **Recognizing the Problem in Contemporary Wesleyan/Arminianism**

In the two hundred years that have elapsed since the days of John Wesley and John Fletcher, Wesleyan-Arminianism has had its share of conflicting tensions. In some cases it would appear that our sincere efforts did more to enhance the conflict than to alleviate it. Whenever we failed to integrate the minutiae of biblical truth into the total message of the Gospel we somehow did an injustice to our task.

By way of review, I would refer to the points of stress and strain, the polarities which have characterized the following Wesleyan concepts:

1. The relationship of sanctification to justification.
2. The crisis and the process in entire sanctification.
3. Christian perfection as a goal and entire sanctification as a means.
4. Purity of heart and spiritual maturity.

5. The carnal nature and man's humanity.
6. The adorning of the outward person and the inner adorning of the heart.
7. The gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit.
8. What abides and what fluctuates in Christian experience.
9. A state of grace and a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.
10. Personal soul winning and social responsibility.

This, of course, is only a partial list of the issues with which the person who takes the Bible seriously must wrestle. I am encouraged to believe, however, that some real gains are being made in our theological endeavors.

I believe that there is a growing desire to be biblical in a new way. For years we have heard that the Bible is its own best interpreter. While this slogan has merit, it has not always caused us to integrate biblical truth in a biblical way. To put it in Paul's words, we have not always "rightly divided the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). Peter seems to be aware that in Paul's Epistles there "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter 3:16).

Could this be the reason why biblical theology seems to be preferred today over what has been traditionally called systematic theology? From certain vantage points it would seem that a growing tension is developing at this point.

If systematic theology concerns timeless knowledge or absolute truth without direct reference to the circumstances of its communication, it too, can be biblical. J. Barton Payne says of systematic theology: "It contains the same facts as biblical theology, for good systematic theology is biblical."<sup>17</sup>

For systematic theology to be authentic and appealing in our Wesleyan context, it must be free of any gaping holes. It must be characterized by the kind of unity, wholeness and completeness which characterizes the Bible itself. In a recent editorial published in the *Asbury Seminarian*, Harold B. Kuhn stated that he welcomed a new "emphasis upon the need for a more careful arrangement of scriptural materials . . . which does justice to the historically progressive nature of their content." He likewise made a plea, not "for a dissective dispensationalism, but for a hermeneutic which stresses the organic unity of the several stages in the Church's grasp and elaboration of the message committed to her trust."<sup>18</sup>

Closer to our own time are some critical theological needs which are requiring the attention of studious workmen. Circumstances will allow me to list only a very few areas of urgent concern:

1. Theology needs to be respected again as the queen of the sciences.

This was the burden of Harold Lindsell's presidential message to the Evangelical Theological Society in its annual meeting of 1971.<sup>19</sup> In a recent brochure from Creation House publishers I read with interest these words: "Theological structures have collapsed three times in this century, leaving behind a debris of shattered convictions. Firm conviction has been replaced by radical doubt, hope by despair, affirmation by repudiation." This unfortunate situation needs the correction of the whole corpus of Christian truth.

2. The question of biblical authority continues to be debated vigorously. Much of the tension seems to spring from the fact that the Bible is a divine human book. Our position with regard to Scripture needs to be arrived at without minimizing the Bible's divinity or excusing its humanity. We need not look too far back to see what happens to theology when the Scriptures are fragmented. We need to be cautious lest the authority of Scripture be slowly eroded and we end up without a "sure word of prophecy" (II Peter 1:19).

3. In the behavioural sciences, especially as they are represented by such men as Talcott Parsons and Harvard's B. F. Skinner, we need to be alerted to an insidious humanism. Stanislav Andreski, professor of sociology at England's Reading University writes

When the psychologists refuse to study anything but the most mechanical forms of behavior often so mechanical that even rats have no chance to show their higher faculties and then present their trivial findings as the true picture of the human mind, they prompt people to regard themselves as automata, devoid of responsibility or worth, which can hardly remain without effect upon the tenor of social life.<sup>20</sup>

While modern man's search for self-identity and for his self-image is commendable, it is tragic that a biblical anthropology is not being seriously considered.

4. The charismatic revival is bringing not only into the tributaries of the Church but also into its very main stream a long neglected emphasis upon the Holy Spirit. With this emphasis has come a concern for the whole man in terms of divine healing for the body. In order to salvage the benefits of this revival the Word of God needs to be "rightly divided". The extremes which are already evident need to be tempered by John Fletcher's "middle way."

5. Our contemporary society is faced with some great moral issues which have been raised by the Vietnam War, racism, amnesty, abortion -- to name a few sources. Here again, sentimental humanism is masking itself under the guise of biblical love. The real issue is not whether to love or not

to love but whether righteousness is to be upheld and social sin punished. If Thomas Cranmer lived today, he would say: "look both to the doctrines of grace and the doctrines of justice."

6. With varying degrees of appreciation the world has witnessed the rise of the Jesus Movement. Generally speaking this movement does not have any deep theological commitment. The same might also be said of many ministerial students in Wesleyan-Arminian colleges and seminaries. It would appear that a very erroneous supposition has been accepted and it is this: It is possible to commit oneself to Jesus without a corresponding commitment to a careful study of the Word of God.

In speaking of these "unaligned" youth Paul Rees says: "They are open to a summons that is authentically contemporary. They are weary of controversies that are academic, taboos that are legalistic, and structure tinkering that is merely institutional. They are tired of pleas for the status quo."<sup>21</sup> However, this plea has grave perils when it is a plea for that which is unstructured and poorly based.

7. Within the limits of this paper, my final concern has to do with the perennial problem of bridging the chasm which so often exists between theology and life; the academic and the practical. Portrayed in the extreme we have the symbols of the ivory tower on the one hand and the market place on the other. John Wesley moved easily between these two points. His reputation is that of an Oxford scholar and yet he is widely known as a practical theologian. G. C. Berkouwer offers good counsel when he writes:

It is possible that in our struggles over methodology, we may neglect the mystery of the Scriptures while we lose ourselves in details; we can keep looking at the trees of problematics and never see the forest of the Gospel. Karl Barth warned against this danger in his Roman's commentary; he complained that scholars have often buried themselves in textual problems so deeply that they never heard the message Paul was preaching.<sup>22</sup>

As students of the Word, let us not be hearers only but likewise doers of the Word.<sup>23</sup>

### **Putting Our Historical and Theological Assets to Work**

In suggesting a hermeneutic that "puts it all together", I am wanting to underscore some historical and theological assets which we as Wesleyans have working for us. George Cell points out that the central ideas of Christianity justification by faith and holiness are "joined together again in Wesleyanism in a well-balanced synthesis."<sup>24</sup>

In following this suggestion, it will become very evident that I am not pleading for a theological pluralism. Neither do I wish to suggest that our theological work involve a revived syncretism or collectivism.

What I am really suggesting is not addition but division in the sense that Paul uses the word "Divide" in II Timothy 2:15. If we "divide" the word of truth aright we will discover Him who said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending" (Rev. 1:8).

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# A STUDY IN JOHN WESLEY'S EXPLANATORY NOTES UPON THE OLD TESTAMENT\*

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[\*Documentation will be in the body of the paper. The three volumes comprising the Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament will be referred to as I.&II.&III. ]

## INTRODUCTION

One of the least known, and therefore most neglected, of John Wesley's writings is his Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament. It is rarely, if ever, included in the primary sources in doctoral dissertations or other writings relating to John Wesley's interpretation of the Christian faith. The General Index to the "Proceedings" of the Wesley Historical Society, covering a period of sixty years of that publication from 1897 to 1956, has two references to "Notes on OT" (p.40). There is no reference to it in Thomas Walter Herbert's doctoral dissertation at Princeton University, John Wesley as Editor and Author (1940). In fact, there are only a few references to it in the definitive writings of John Wesley. The Thomas Jackson edition of Wesley's Works in fourteen volumes has three references to it in the index (XIV, pp. 4923) and two of these relate to the same thing. There are three references in the index of Nehemiah Curnock's Standard Edition of Wesley's Journal in eight volumes (VIII, p. 435). John Telford's Standard Edition of Wesley's Letters in eight volumes has seven references in the index (VIII, p. 355), and one of these is incorrect (IV, p. 118there is no reference to the Notes on this page).

There are some rather obvious reasons for the neglect of Wesley's most prodigious literary effort. The rarity, and therefore inaccessibility of Wesley's Notes on the Old Testament, is perhaps the most obvious one. Unlike his Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, published in 1755 and still in print at the present time, the Old Testament Notes did not go beyond the first printing (Cf. Richard Green The Works of John and Charles Wesley, p. 133). It contained 2,613 pages, numbered consecutively, plus nine pages of the "Preface" although actually there is a total of 2,626 pages because

pages 76-77 are followed by 76-77, and 1715,1716 are followed by 1715, 1716. Both the size, and perhaps the cost of the notes when finally bound in three volumes, containing a total of 2,622 pages were additional factors which hindered their availability. The work, though generally helpful, did not have the popular acclaim or usefulness of his *Explanatory Notes Upon the. New Testament*.

## **LITERARY HISTORY OF THE EXPLANATORY NOTES UPON THE OLD TESTAMENT**

There are some interesting facts concerning the writing and publication of the Old Testament Notes. In the June 5, 1765, edition of Lloyd 's Evening Post the following advertisement appeared.

On Thursday the 1st of August will be published, price 6d., Number 1. of Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament. By John Wesley, M.A., late fellow of Lincoln college, Oxford. Conditions. 1. That this work will be printed in quarto, on a superfine paper. 2. That it will be comprised in about 60 numbers (as near as can be computed) making two handsome volumes. 3. That each number will contain three sheets of letterpress, printed on a new type. 4. That the first number will be considered as a specimen, and, if not approved of, the money paid for it shall be returned. 5. That the work will be delivered weekly to the subscribers, without interruption, after the publication of the first number. 6. That the whole will be printed in an elegant manner, no way inferior to the very best work of the kind ever offered to the public. Bristol: Printed by William Pine. Sold by J. Fletcher & Co., in St. Paul's Church yard, London; and by the Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland. (Tyerman, II, pp. 55253).

Such was the advertisement, anticipating approximately sixty numbers appearing weekly with the obvious Intention of binding the whole work in two volumes, the second beginning with the Book of Ezra. Actually there were 110 numbers instead of the intended sixty, generally of twentyfour pages each, and though intended for two volumes, it was generally bound in three (yet not always. Green, p. 132). The first number is dated April 25, 1765, which appears at the end of the preface, written before the body of the work, as was Wesley's practice. The final number is dated December 24, 1766, giving the time of the completion of the manuscript.

The writing of the *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament* was a task that Wesley undertook with a great deal of reluctance. He explains

his reluctance at the beginning of the preface.

About ten years ago I was prevailed upon to publish Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament. When that work was begun, and indeed when it was finished, I had no design to attempt any thing farther of the kind. Nay I had a full determination, Not to do it, being throughly [sic.] fatigued with the immense labour. . . of writing twice over a Quarto book containing seven or eight hundred pages.

But this was scarce published before I was importuned to write Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament. This importunity I have withstood for many years. Over and above the deep conviction I had of my insufficiency for such a work, of my want of learning, of understanding, of spiritual experiences, for an undertaking more difficult by many degrees, than even writing on the New Testament, I objected, that there were many passages in the Old, which I did not understand myself, and consequently could not explain to others, either to their satisfaction, or my own. Above all, I objected the want of time: not only as I have a thousand other employments, but as my day is near spent, as I am declined into the vale of years. And to this day it appears to me as a dream, a thing almost incredible, that I should be entering upon a work of this kind, when I am entering into the sixtythird year of my age (I, p. iii).

On account of these considerations, he stated that he could not "entertain a thought of composing a body of Notes on the whole Old Testament" (I, p. iii). His only alternative was to abridge the work of another if there was such an exposition worth abridging. As Lecky has stated, "Wesley was a voluminous writer, and a still more voluminous editor" (quoted by John S. Simon in his article on "Mr. Wesley's Notes Upon the New Testament" in *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society IX*, pp. 97-105, 1914). Just as he had turned to John Albert Bengel (and Drs. Heylyn, Guyse, and Doddridge) for help in his Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, Wesley selected two writers for assistance on the Old Testament. The first was Matthew Henry's wellknown Exposition of the Old and New Testament; the second was Matthew Poole's Annotations upon the Holy Bible. Henry's work was particularly acceptable to those who believed the doctrine of absolute irrespective "unconditional Predestination," though Wesley is careful to tell his readers that he omitted completely all that Henry wrote in favor of "Particular Redemption" (I, p.v). Poole (1624-1679) was a non conformist who wrote a massive five volume publication in Latin, *Synopsis*

*Criticorum Biblicorum*, intended primarily for scholars. Poole's Annotations was published posthumously in two folio volumes (1683-5), Jeremiah to Revelation being completed by other scholars. They relied, however, on Poole's Latin work so that really all of it is Poole's writings. The Annotations was reprinted in London in 1962 in three volumes with the title, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*. Actually, Wesley used Henry's Exposition as a basis for his own work as far as the beginning of Exodus, after which Poole's Annotations formed the foundation, with Henry's work being used to fill up any gaps (I, p. viii).

The task of completing the Notes on the Old Testament became a very laborious, burdensome undertaking for Wesley. He was engaged in an extensive itinerant ministry that was sufficient to employ all of his time and energy. It was while he was preaching in Northern Ireland in May, 1765, that he wrote in his Journal, "Monday, 13, and the following days, I had leisure to go on with the Notes on the Old Testament." But it is on the very same page of his printed Journal that he wrote on the following day in a letter to a friend, "I preach about eight hundred sermons in a year" (Jackson 111, p. 211). If Richard Green was greatly amazed how such a work as Wesley's Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament "could be written amidst so much labour and distraction" (p. 91), it is even a greater marvel that he was able to write his Notes on the Old Testament under even more intense circumstances. His work on the New Testament was begun when he was too ill to travel or preach, but his labor on the Old Testament was done while his itinerant ministry was in full swing. Tyerman describes the situation.

His societies were now so numerous and important, that it was a gigantic task to visit them, and regulate their multifarious affairs once a year. In addition, he was bringing out his Notes on the Old Testament, a work, in itself, quite sufficient for the time and energies of any ordinary man; and further, he had to enforce and to defend his doctrine of Christian perfection, a doctrine im perfectly understood, and bitterly assailed. Hence the publication of a small 12mo volume of 162 pages, entitled, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, as believed and taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, from the year 1725 to the year 1765" (II, p. 593).

Then too, there were the jibes and jeers that were being heaped upon Wesley at this period of his career (Tyerman, II, p. 593).

In a letter to Thomas Rankin on September 11, 1765, Wesley gave these instructions:

Recommend the Notes on the Old Testament in good earnest.

Every Society as a Society should subscribe. Remind them every where that two, four, or six might join together for a copy, and bring the money to their leader weekly (Telford IV, p. 312).

A very practical matter concerned Wesley in letter written on January 23, 1766, again to Thomas Rankin.

Suppose the numbers swell to an hundred (as probably they will), consider what it would amount to give seventy persons 50s. apiece before I am reimbursed for the expense of the edition! Indeed, I did not think of this till my brother mentioned it. But all the preachers shall, if they desire it, have them at half price. (Telford IV, p. 320)

In his Journal on Sunday, February 23, 1766, he wrote, "In the evening I went to Lewisham, and finished the notes on the book of Job" (Journal, Nehemiah Curnock ed., V, p. 155). As Richard Green observes, "the Notes were composed wherever he could put down the ponderous tomes which must have accompanied him in his widespread journeys" (p. 133).

A circular letter written by Wesley on June 20, 1766, "To the Subscribers" to "Notes upon the Old Testament" indicates how difficult his task of completing the work had become. The letter was found by the Rev. Wilfrid J. Moulton in his copy of Wesley's Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament and forwarded to Richard Green. It was printed in the Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society in 1900 (II:219221; cf. Telford V, pp. 1214). "The letter is characteristic and interesting." It was written a little more than a year after he began writing the Notes while he was itinerating in Scotland.

From the time that I published the Notes on the New Testament [1751] I was importuned to publish Notes on the Old. I long resisted that importunity, but at length yielded and began the Work, supposing that it need not be above twice as long as the former: otherwise all the importunity in the world would not have prevailed on me to undertake it. But I had not gone through the book of Exodus, before I began to find my mistake. I perceived the work would be considerably longer than I expected, if I designed to make it intelligible to Commonreaders, and therefore immediately consulted with my friends, What was best to be done? Here was a difficulty on each hand, If I had went on as I had begun, and explained every text, so as to be understood by every reader, then the work would swell to 100,

perhaps 110 or 112 numbers. This it was easily foreseen, many *would complain* of; especially those who did not observe, that it was not possible to make the notes shorter, without making them almost useless. On the other hand, if I left many texts unexplained, they would have reason to complain. This was judged the greater evil of the two: so that every one, to whom I spoke, earnestly desired me, To go on as I had begun, and not to cramp the work. Several of them added, That even if the work should swell to 120 numbers, it would be far better than by labouring to shorten the Notes to make them unintelligible to ordinary readers. In the meantime, I myself have far the worst of it: the great burden falls upon me. A burden which, if I had seen before, all the world would not have perswaded [sic.] me to take up. I am employed day and night, and must go on, whether I will or no, lest the printer should stand still. All my time is swallowed up, and I can hardly catch a few hours, to answer the letters that are sent to me. Does any one who knows anything of me suppose that I would drudge thus for money? What is money to me? Dung and dross. I love it as I do the mire in the streets. But I find enough that want it: and among these I disperse it with both hands: being careful only to owe no man anything, to "wind my bottom round the year." For my own sake I care not how short the work is; for I am heartily tired of it. It is for the reader's sake, that I say as much on each verse as I think will make it intelligible. And there is no fear, I should say any more: for I am not a dealer in many words.

There was a note appended to the letter which is obviously the printers, as Richard Green points out (*Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society II*, p. 219 and pp. 22021 under "Notes and Queries" No. 131).

As it cannot be exactly ascertained in how many Numbers the Work will be completed, [sic.] it is judged most necessary (for the sake of uniformity) with the last Number to give the Title pages and likewise directions to the Binder to divide the volumes; by which means it will be done with greater exactness than other wise it possibly can be. And as the Work unavoidably exceeds what was at first intended the subscribers shall receive GRATIS, A Print of Mr. Wesley, with each of the Volumes to serve as a Frontispiece.

In the "General Preface" to his *Commentary* (I, p. 8) Adam Clarke

makes an evaluation and offers an explanation concerning Wesley's Notes.

The notes on the Old Testament are allowed, on all hands, to be meagre and unsatisfactory; this is owing to a circumstance with which few are acquainted. Mr. Pine, the printer, having set up and printed off several sheets in a type much larger than was intended, it was found impossible to get the work within the prescribed limits of four volumes, without retrenching the notes, or cancelling what was already printed. The former measure was unfortunately adopted, and the work fell far short of the expectations of the public. This account I had from the excellent author himself (I, p. 8).

It is difficult to reconcile Clarke's explanation with Wesley's letter "To the Subscribers." Clarke speaks about "retrenching the notes," while Wesley tells the subscribers that the Notes would not be shortened or curtailed. On December 26, 1788, Wesley informed Sarah Mallet in a letter that he "could not so well send the Notes on the Old Testament, as the edition is nearly sold off, and we have very few of them left, which are reserved to make up full sets" (Telford, VIII, p. 108). From an inventory of the books in stock in the Methodist Bookroom, taken immediately after Wesley's death in 1791, "it appears that there were 750 copies of each volume still unsold" (Green, p. 133).

It has been the concern of this first section of the paper to set forth some of the pertinent facts regarding the literary history of the Old Testament *Notes*. Since so little has been known about the *Notes*, and information concerning them has been terse and scattered, our preoccupation in this area seems to be justified.

### **SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

There are some preliminary, as well as overall observations and impressions, that should be noted. Certain phases of the study are still in process, but at this stage some facts and general ideas have been formed.

**The purpose for which Wesley wrote.** In the preface Wesley states very clearly his purpose in writing the Notes.

Every thinking man will now easily discern my design in the following sheets. It is not, to write sermons, essays or set discourses upon any part of Scripture. It is not to draw inferences from the text, or to shew what doctrines may be proved thereby. It is this: To give the direct, literal meaning, of every verse, of every sentence, and as far as I am able, of every

word in the oracles of God. I design only like the hand of a dial, to point every man to This: not to take up his mind with some thing else, how excellent soever: but to keep his eye fixt upon the naked Bible, that he may read and hear it with understanding. I say again, (and desire it may be well observed, that none may expect what they will not find) It is not my design to write a book which a man may read separate from the Bible: but barely to assist those who fear God, in hearing and reading the bible itself, by shewing the natural sense of every part, in as few and plain words as I can (I, p. viii).

**The people for whom Wesley wrote.** In Wesley's letter "To the Subscribers" of the Notes he expresses his concern for "Commonreaders" and "ordinary readers." He was motivated primarily by his sense of obligation to them. Similarly, his Notes on the New Testament were written, not for men of learning, but first and foremost for "plain, unlettered men, who understand only their mothertongue, and yet reverence and love the Word of God, and have a desire to save their soul" (Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament Preface, p. 6). He considered himself "an apostle to the common man," and it was his set purpose to help "unlettered and ignorant men," though he expressed the hope that the Notes on the Old Testament would be beneficial to "men of education and learning.... to make them think, and assist them in thinking" (I, pp. viiiix).

**The Person about whom Wesley wrote.** Wesley's vision was filled with Jesus Christ, the eternal, incarnate, crucified, and risen Saviour. He sees his form and hears his voice from beginning to end in the Old Testament. Christ is "the spring, the soul, and center of revealed religion" (II, p. 1516 Introduction to the Book of Job). Wesley can write as strongly as John Calvin about a Sovereign, Holy God in the Old Testament, but it is Jesus Christ who fills his vision. Again and again he calls attention to the Messianic element. Thus he sees Christ in Old Testament predictions and promises, types and appearances; he exalts the Deity of Christ, he recognizes his offices, he proclaims his atoning work, he rejoices in the hope of his return and reign. For Wesley, Jesus Christ is the very center of God's revelation and man's salvation.

**The burden with which Wesley wrote.** Wesley was concerned that there should be an exposition of Scripture more closely practical as well as more spiritual (I, p. vi). It was in this area that he sensed a deficiency in Matthew Henry. He could not remember that Henry had anywhere given "a satisfactory account of Spiritual Religion, of the kingdom of God within us, the fruit of Christ dwelling and reigning in the heart" (I, pp. vi-vii). In Wesley's helpful suggestions relating to the manner in which the Scriptures could be

used most profitably, he insists that it should be read "with a single eye, to know the whole will of God, and a fixt resolution to do it." Serious and earnest prayer should be made before consulting the oracles of God, and "our reading should likewise be closed with prayer, that what we read may be written on our hearts" (I p. ix). And further, "whatever light you then receive, should be used to the uttermost, and that immediately" (I, p. ix).

**The manner in which Wesley wrote.** Wesley was primarily an evangelist. For him, the best knowledge is "to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent"(I, p. ix). He sounds the note of the evangel throughout his comments on the text. He sees the provisions of salvation as being universal in scope and that God is no respecter of persons. "There is not a damned sinner in hell, but if he had done well, as he might have done, had been a glorified saint in heaven" (I, p. 21Note on Genesis4:7). His intensely practical suggestions on the use of the Scriptures are cumulative: "So shall you find this word to be indeed the power of God unto present and eternal salvation" (I, p. ix).

### **SOME MAJOR THEMES IN WESLEY'S OLD TESTAMENT NOTES**

In stating his purpose for writing the Notes, Wesley said it was not his intent to see what doctrines may be "proved" by the text. And certainly this is not our present intention as we come to examine some of the major themes that are observable in his Notes. In Wesley's view, one of the effectual ways of reading the Scripture was to "have a constant eye to the analogy of *faith*; the connexion and harmony there is between those grand, fundamental doctrines, Original Sin, Justification by Faith, the New Birth, Inward and Outward Holiness"(I, p. ix). Our present purpose could be profitably served by tracing these themes in the Notes. At best, the collation of materials must be characterized by brevity, though with a view to some measure of comprehensiveness, it is hoped. With this in mind, perhaps those "grand, fundamental doctrines" suggested by Wesley can be encompassed in a little larger framework. My method has been to select relevant passages from the Notes, using almost entirely Wesley's own words, and present them under certain topical or doctrinal themes in relation to Scripture, God, Man, Jesus Christ, Salvation, the Church, and Last Things.

#### **The Authority of Scripture**

The Holy Bible, or Book is so called by way of eminency as it is the best book that was ever written (I, p. 1 Introduction to the Book of Genesis). The Scriptures were written, not to describe to us the works of nature, but "to acquaint us with the methods of grace, and those things which are purely matters of revelation" (I, p. 285Note on Exodus 25:9). The great things of God's law and gospel were recorded in the Bible in order that they might

be reduced to a greater certainty, might spread further, remain longer, and be transmitted to distant places and ages, more pure and entire than possibly they could be by tradition" (I, p. 11Introduction to Genesis). Wesley had a very high view of the Bible and regarded the Scriptures as the divinely inspired oracles of God. On several occasions he refers to the human authors as inspired men, and at times refers directly to the Holy Spirit as the author of particular narratives in the Scriptures (e.g., I, p. 11Note on Genesis 2:815; I, p. 26Note on Genesis 5:619; I, p. 50Note on Genesis 11:10). Even the inspiration of the Song of Solomon "is so clear" for Wesley.

And the same arguments which prove the divinity of other books, are found here, such as the quality of the penman, who was confessedly a man inspired by God; the excellency and usefulness of the matter; the sacred and sublime majesty of the style; and the singular efficacy of it upon the hearts of sober and serious persons (III, p. 1925Introduction to the Song of Solomon).

Attention should be called to the close correlation and interrelatedness of the Word of Scripture and the Holy Spirit in Wesley's thought. Commenting on Isaiah 59:21, he says the Word of God uttered by the prophet has been by virtue of God's Spirit, and he sees in God's covenant "a promise of the perpetual presence of his word and spirit with the prophets, apostles, and teachers of the church to all ages" (II, p. 2103). "The voice of my beloved" in Solomon's Song is Christ's voice, "the word of grace revealed outwardly in the gospel, and inwardly by the Spirit of God" (III, p. 1931 Note on the Song of Solomon 2:8). In the same chapter, verse 10, "My beloved spake...." is an invitation "outwardly by his word, and inwardly by his Spirit."

In his comment on Deuteronomy 11:18, Wesley gives "three rules" or guiding principles for an effective use of the Scriptures: (1) Let our hearts be filled with the word of God. Lay up these words in your hearts, as in a storehouse, to be used upon all occasions. (2) Let our eyes be fixed upon the word of God: Bind them for a sign upon your hand, which is always in view, and as frontlets between your eyes, which you cannot avoid the sight of. (3) Let your tongues be employed about the word of God, especially with our children, who must be taught this, as far more needful than the rules of decency, or the calling they are to live by (I, p. 620).

### **The Sovereignty of God**

By the parable of a potter in Jeremiah XVIII, "God's absolute power and disposal of nations is set forth" (III, p. 2175Introductory comment). The implication of God's question to Jeremiah (Jer. 18:6) "Cannot I do with

you as this potter?" is "that God has an absolute sovereign power to do what he pleases with the work of his hands, though he acts as a just judge, rendering to every man according to his works" (Ibid) God is his own cause, his own rule, and his own end (111, p. 2283Note on Ezekiel I :4). The phrase concerning Ezekiel's wheels, "they turned ['returned' in Wesley's text] not when they went," is a clear indication that "so firm and sure are the methods, so unalterable and constant the purposes of God, and so invariable the obedience and observance of holy angels. So subject to the sovereign will of God are all second causes" (111, pp. 228485Note on Ezekiel 1:17). Divine sovereignty extends not only to natural but also to the voluntary actions of men. "A season" and "purpose" in Ecclesiastes 3: 1 indicate that sovereignty.

*A season*-a certain time appointed by God for its being and continuance, which no human wit or providence can alter. And by virtue of this appointment of God, all vicissitudes which happen in the world, whether comforts or calamities, come to pass. Which is here added to prove the principal proposition, That all things below are vain, and happiness is not to be found in them, because of their great uncertainty, and mutability, and transitoriness, and because they are so much out of the reach and power of men, and wholly in the disposal of God. Purpose not only natural, but even the voluntary actions of men, are ordered and disposed by God. But it must be considered, that he does not here speak of a time allowed by God, wherein all the following things may lawfully be done, but only of a time fixed by God, in which they are actually done (111, p. 1901).

This sovereign God is holy in his essence and in all his laws which are just and good (1, p. 408Note on Leviticus 19:2). There is no one holy besides God, namely, entirely or independently, but only by participation from him (11, p. 894Note on I Samuel 2:2). God is the creator who inhabits eternity. "Time began with the production of those beings that are measured by time. Before the beginning of time there was none but that Infinite Being that inhabits eternity" (1, p. 2Note on Genesis 1: 1). The great Creator was and is also the great Redeemer. The Angel of the Lord who called Abraham out of heaven in Genesis 22: 11 was "God himself, the eternal Word, the Angel of the covenant, who was to be the great Redeemer and Comforter" (1, p. 86).

### **The Depravity of Man**

Man is the unique creation of God, created pure and upright, and was entrusted with the government of himself by the freedom of his will

(I, p. 7Note on Genesis 1 :26, 27, 28). But man is deeply fallen. His sin in the Garden "implied the unbelief of God's word, and confidence in the devil's; discontent with his present state, and an ambition of the honour which comes not from God.... his sin was in one word disobedience" (I, p. 15Note on Genesis 3:6, 7, 8). As a result man became mortal, and spiritual death and the forerunners of temporal death immediately seized him (I,p.12NoteonGenesis2:16,17; cf.I,p.16Note on Genesis 3:6, 7, 8). When he was fallen and corrupted he begat a son in his own image and likeness (Genesis 5:3) who was "sinful and defiled, frail and mortal, and miserable like himself; not only a man like himself, consisting of body and soul; but a sinner like himself, guilty, and obnoxious, degenerate and corrupt" (I, p. 26Note on Genesis 5:3). Though man is fallen he is not abandoned by God. The promise of Genesis 3:15 pointed to Christ for man's redemption and recovery, so that God's thoughts of love designed for our first parents a second state of probation upon new terms (I, pp. 17, 20Notes on Genesis 3:15, 24).

### **The Centrality of Christ**

Wesley speaks of Jesus Christ as "the foundation, corner and topstone of all religion" (II, p. 1626Introduction to the Psalms). He was "constituted to be the person by whom the Father resolved to do all his works, to create, to uphold and govern and judge, to redeem and save the world" (II, p. 1845Note on Proverbs 8:23). In Wesley's comments regarding true worship on Leviticus 27:34, Christ is seen as "our priest, temple, altar, sacrifice, purification and all" (I, p. 448). Indeed, "Christ is the great blessing of the world" (I, p. 88Note on Genesis 22:27, 18).

From beginning to end Messianic promises and predictions are found in the Old Testament. The gracious promise in Genesis 3:15 concerning "Christ as the deliverer of fallen man from the power of Satan" speaks of three things concerning Christ: (1) His incarnation, that he should be the seed of the woman; (2) His sufferings and death, pointed to in Satan's brusing his heel, that is, his human nature; (3) His victory over Satan, "to trample upon him, to spoil him, to lead him captive, and to triumph over him, Col. 2:15" (I, pp. 1718). Wesley sees several promises concerning the Redeemer in Genesis 22:17 and 18 (I, pp. 8788), and there is nothing in Psalm 2 which is not applicable to Christ (II, pp. 162728). Isaiah "so evidently and fully describes the person, and offices, and sufferings, and Kingdom of Christ, that some of the ancients called him the fifth Evangelist" (III, p. 1947).

In addition to Old Testament promises and predictions, Wesley sees Christ in many typologies of the Old Testament. For example, Joseph was a type of Christ (I, p. 147Note on Genesis 37:21), as was Aaron also (I, p. 298Note on Exodus 28:38). The serpent of brass raised in the

wilderness signified Christ (I, p. 531Note on Numbers 21 :8), and the Cities of Refuge also pointed to Christ and typified the relief which the Gospel provides for poor, penitent sinners and their protection from the curse of the law and the wrath of God (I, p. 773Note on Joshua 20:2). The concept or office of the kinsmanredeemer "properly agrees to Jesus Christ" as our great KinsmanRedeemer (II, p. 1566Note on Job 19:25). Wesley sees much of the gospel in the ordinance of the Passover where four types are observed: (1) The paschal lamb was typical; (2) the sprinkling of the blood was typical; (3) the solemn eating of the lamb was typical of our gospel duty to Christ; and (4) the feast of unleavened bread was typical of the Christian life (I, p. 23233Note on Exodus 12:3).

These references to Christ in the Old Testament are only examples of many more. For Wesley, Jesus Christ is indeed the indispensable and in escapable One in Holy Writ.

### **The Reality of Salvation**

In Wesley's conception of salvation there is combined a sense of complete dependence on God with a sense of man's complete responsibility. He thereby makes intelligible the universality of God's redemptive plan over against the apparently limited number of the redeemed. Wesley illustrates the interplay of dependence and responsibility in the account of Noah. God could have saved Noah from the flood by the ministration of angels without putting him to "any care or pains," but to the contrary he chose to employ Noah in making the ark which was to be the means of his preservation. This scheme was

. . .for the trial of his faith and obedience and to teach us that none shall be saved by Christ, but only those that work out their salvation; we cannot do it without God, and he will not without us: both the providence of God and the grace of God crown the endeavours of the obedient and diligent (I, p. 32Note on Genesis 6:14).

Here is a principle that applies throughout our Christian lives in the working out of our salvation continuously. It is illustrated in the case of Joshua to whom God had promised that he would deliver the enemies of Israel into his hands (Joshua 10:8). But the verse that follows immediately informs us that Joshua carried out his strategy to the enemy throughout the night. Thus "God's promises are intended, not to slacken, but to quicken our endeavours" (I, p. 738Note on Joshua 10:9). "We must go forth on our Christian war fare and then God will go before us" (I, p. 751Note on Joshua 13:6).

The basis of our salvation, of course, is the atoning work of Christ. "Thus Christ was made sin and a curse for us, and it pleased the Lord

to bruise him, that through him God might be to us not a consuming fire, but a reconciled father" (II, p. 1320 Note on I Chronicles 21:26). But it is repentance and confession and faith that appropriate to ourselves the merits of Christ's atonement. For example, the jubilee trumpet was sounded on the day of atonement, the day when the people fasted and prayed for God's mercy to them in the pardon of their sins. Thereby we are taught that "the foundation of all solid comfort must be laid in repentance and atonement for our sins through Christ" (I, p. 432 Note on Leviticus 25:9). Justification is by faith, which, as a foundational truth, can be traced back to the Book of Genesis. Through "the seed of the woman" in Genesis 3:15, God made a "gracious promise" concerning Christ as the deliverer of fallen man from the power of Satan. "By faith in this promise, our first parents, and the patriarchs before the flood, were justified and saved," and to this promise and the benefit of it they hoped to come (I, p. 17 Note on Genesis 3:15). In Genesis 15:6 we are told that Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness. In other words, Abraham believed the truth of that promise which God had made in Genesis 15: 5, "resting upon the power, and faithfulness of him that made it" (I, p. 61 Note on Genesis 15:6). Wesley then makes this further emphasis:

See how the apostle magnifies this faith of Abram, and make it a standing example, Rom. iv. 19, 20, 21. . . This is urged in the New Testament to prove, that we are justified by faith without works of the law, Rom. iv. 3. Gal. iii. 6. for Abram was so justified, while he was yet uncircumcised If Abram, that was so rich in good works, was not justified by them, but by his faith, much less can we (I, p. 61).

Wesley observes that the term "sanctify" in the Old Testament has different meanings at different places. For example, in Exodus 19:10 it means a calling off from worldly business and a call to religious exercises, such as meditation and prayer (I, p. 261); in Numbers 11:18 it means to prepare (I, p. 490) in Joshua 7:13 it suggests purification from defilement and preparation to appear before the Lord (I, p. 725) in Joel 1:14, .o set apart (III, p. 2496), and so on. In such cases the people are called to sanctify themselves, or to sanctify something to the Lord.

In other instances God is said to have sanctified or set apart some person or people for particular service. For example, Jeremiah is said to have been sanctified by the Lord in the sense of being ordained for public service (III, p. 2125 Note on Jeremiah 1 :5). In Isaiah 13 :3 the Medes and Persians are called the "sanctified ones" because "they were set apart by God, for his holy work of executing his just vengeance" (III, p. 1981).

It is also Wesley's conviction that the Old Testament speaks concerning

the inner purification and transformation of human hearts and lives, effected from God's side, thereby sanctifying them in this sense by his grace and Spirit. For example, in Daniel 9:24, the expression

"to bring in everlasting righteousness" means to bring in justification by the free grace of God in Christ, and sanctification by his spirit: called everlasting, because Christ is eternal, and so are the acceptance and holiness purchased for us. Christ brings this in, 1. By his merit. 2. By his gospel declaring it. 3. By faith applying, and sealing it by the Holy Ghost (III, p. 2456).

The "fountain" in Joel 3:18 "no doubt is a shadow of the purifying blood of Christ, and his sanctifying spirit and word" (III, p. 2503). In Ezekiel 36 :25 God promises to "sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean."

This signifies both the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our conscience, to take away their guilt....and the grace of the Spirit sprinkle en [sic.] the whole soul, to purify it from all corrupt inclinations and dispositions" (III, p. 2385).

In Ezekiel 36:26 the promise of "a new heart" means

a new frame of soul, a mind changed, from sinful to holy, from carnal to spiritual. A heart in which the law of God is written, Jer. xxxi. 33. A sanctified heart, in which the almighty grace of God is victorious, and turns it from all sin to God (III, p. 2385).

And "a new spirit" promised in the same verse means "a new, holy frame in the spirit of man; which is given to him, not wrought by his own power" (III, p. 2385).

David recognized the need for this inner cleansing when he acknowledged that God requires truth ("uprightness of heart") in the inward parts, "as an aggravation of the sinfulness of original corruption, because it is contrary to the holy nature and will of God, which requires rectitude of heart: and, as an aggravation of his actual sin, that it was committed against that knowledge, which God had wrote in his heart" ([1, p. 1703] Note on Psalm 51 :6). So David prays earnestly for the purging by hyssop and the washing that will make him whiter than snow. He implores God to "work in me an holy frame of heart, whereby my inward filth may be purged away," and for "a right spirit," which, in Hebrew, can be translated as firm or constant spirit (ibid. Note on Psalm 51:10), that is, "my resolution may be fixed and unmoveable" as a temper or disposition of soul.

In Daniel 9:24 the angel describes the disease of sin in three words, namely, "transgression," "sin," and "iniquity," "which contain all sorts of sin, which the Messiah should free us from by his full redemption. He shews the cure of this disease in three words. 1. To finish transgression. 2. To make an end of sin. 3. To make reconciliation: all which words are very expressive in the original, and signify to pardon, to blot out, to destroy" (III, p. 2456). Thus, a basis is found in the Old Testament for a free salvation for all men, and a full salvation from all sin.

To this salvation divinely wrought in the heart and life, the Spirit of God bears witness. In Joshua 14:8 there is recorded Joshua's testimony that he wholly followed the Lord, and Wesley remarks that selfcommendation was justifiable because it was necessary as being the ground of his petition.

Therefore it was not vain glory in him to speak it: no more than it is for those who have *God's Spirit witnessing with their spirits, that they are the children of God*, humbly and thankfully to tell others, for their encouragement, what God hath done for their souls (I, pp. 75556).

Wesley also insists that "God can give undeniable demonstrations of his presence, such as give abundant satisfaction to the souls of the faithful, that God is with them of a truth." This "abundant satisfaction" may not be communicable to others but it is surely convincing to themselves (I, p. 112 Note on Genesis 28:16).

### **The Antiquity of the Church**

It is Wesley's view that the church is one and the same in all ages. He uses the term "Church" in its most comprehensive sense. For example, in his comments on the Song of Solomon 8:8, he speaks of "the present church," or the Old Testament Church as the church of the Jews, and "a future church," or the New Testament Church as the church of the Gentiles (III, p . 1945).

In his introduction to the Book of Genesis, Wesley says the name of the book, which signifies the original or generation, is very appropriate since it is "a history of originals": "the creation of the world, the entrance of sin and death into it, the invention of arts, the rise of nations, and especially the planting of the church, and the state of it in its early days, p. 1). In fact, the Old Testament

contains the acts and monuments of the church from the creatlon, almost to the coming of Christ in the flesh, which is about four thousand years: the truths then revealed, the laws enacted, the prophecies given, and the chief events that concerned the church (ibid ).

There is further elaboration about his notion of the church in the introductory notes on the book of Exodus. Here it is stated that Moses preserved the records of the church in the book of Genesis while it existed in private families, and in the book of Exodus he gives an account of its growth into a great nation (I, p. 195). Later he stresses his conviction that

the church in all ages is one and the same, and there is but one way for the substance, in which all the saints from the beginning of the world walk, Christ being the same yesterday, today, and forever. (111, p. 192) Note on the Song of Solo mon 1:8).

Wesley had a great deal to say about the worship and ordinances of the Church in his Old Testament Notes, particularly in his comments on the Ten Commandments in relation to the object, way, manner, and time of worship (I, pp. 264-67) Notes on Exodus 20:31). It clearly indicates that he had a very high regard for the worship and ordinances of the Church.

### **The Certainty of Judgment**

Since Wesley sees the judgment of God as an intrinsic, inescapable part of life after death, human existence for him has an everpresent eternal dimension. There is an apocalyptic strain in his Old Testament Notes. "Certainly," he affirms, "there must be a judgment to come, when these things shall be called over again, and when those who sinned most and suffered least in this world, will receive according to their works" (II, p. 113) Note on I Kings 13: 22).

In Joshua's carrying out of the Lord's command to utterly destroy the sinful nations of Canaan, Wesley sees a type of ". . . the final destruction of all the impenitent enemies of the Lord Jesus, who having slighted the riches of his grace, must forever feel the weight of his wrath" (I, p. 743) Note on Joshua 10:40).

There are eschatological factors in Wesley's view to which we can only allude, such as human destiny and the hope of life after death (e.g., II, p. 155) Note on Job 12:6; II, p. 115) Note on I Kings 17:22; 11, p. 118) Note on II Kings 2:1; I, pp. 144-45) Note on Genesis 36:31; etc.); Christ's return and his millennial reign (e.g. III, p. 210) Note on Isaiah 60:18; 111:23) Note on Ezekiel 21:27; 111:20) Note on Isaiah 24:23 *ibid.*, Note on Isaiah 24:22; 111, p. 210) Note on Isaiah 60:6; 1, p. 690) Note on Deuteronomy 32:43; etc.); and the resurrection of the dead (e.g., III, p. 238) Note on Ezekiel 37:1; 1, pp. 464-65) Note on Numbers 4:32; III, p. 249) Note on Hosea 13:14, etc.).

## CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this brief study in Wesley's Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament will stimulate further research in his monumental work. Actually, the present study opens only a few doors into a veritable treasure house. I can only wish that it was more available and accessible to a larger number. For me there are insights and gems in the Notes that are enlightening and enriching. I have found John Wesley's writings to be a continual source of inspiration. Nehemiah Curnock observed many years ago that one never saw a Wesley autograph without wanting to know what it said. I gladly confess that I share his enthusiasm. "Invariably and inevitably it says something that is worth reading. The manuscript or letter or memorandum is sure to be short, clear, neat, orderly, pithy, in pure English, containing something practical put into vigorous form, and not without a dash of imperiousness, lovingkindness, or raciness" (The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., John Telford, ed., I, p. xv. Quoted by Telford in his "Introduction" to the Letters). Wesley's Old Testament Notes are worth reading! I tell my students that they can well afford to get close to John Wesley, for he loved God with a holy passion; he bowed in adoring wonder before a Redeeming Saviour who died for him and who had strangely warmed his heart; and he loved the souls and bodies of all men, and especially the common man to whom his lifework was given. I can well imagine that some presentday scholars who are preoccupied with critical problems would be impatient with Wesley's efforts on the Old Testament. But if there are such who hear or read these lines and are tempted to undue impatience, I beg you to remember the purpose for which Wesley wrote and the people for whom he wrote. Really, I stand in awe before the monumental labors of this man, and particularly his *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament* when I recall the abundance of his travel and preaching in the months in which he produced it. It is amazing grace and an amazing achievement!

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## **THE BALANCE IN CHRISTIAN HOLINESS BETWEEN LIKENESS AND UNLIKENESS TO GOD**

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When the catechism answers the question, "What is the chief end of man? " by the proposition, "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever," we may rightfully ask: Glorify Him by what means and enjoy Him in what way? It is possible to glorify God by words of praise. We must everlastingly promote this; but we must just as everlastingly insist that God is glorified most of all by likeness to Himself. Tributes without likeness constitute the most shameful dishonor.

Also, we may fall short in developing the right concept of enjoyment. It is possible to enjoy God as the philosopher's object of thought. It is possible to enjoy Him as an admiring subject rejoices in the security of a great and beneficent king. The enjoyment which must be seen as man's supreme good is the enjoyment of fellowship. This involves oneness, love and communion that delightful companionship between friends who know and trust each other well enough to be mutually at ease. In such fellowship is at once perfect bond and perfect freedom.

This was Adam's highest privilege in the garden; its loss was the supreme calamity of the fall. From this rupture of personal relationship came all other evils suffered by man. Note the primitive impulse to hide from God. When "they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day:" the guilty pair "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8, KJV). Thus began the long night of loneliness and estrangement. For the loss of fellowship with God is the loss of life's meaning and value. Human existence becomes a frantic quest for substitute values.

### **Holiness the Moral Basis of Fellowship**

The recovery of fellowship between God and man is the supreme objective of the redemptive enterprise. Undoubtedly the divine honor is an end, as is also the defeat of Satan in the cosmic conflict between God and the forces of rebellion. But man is still the central figure in the unfolding drama, and his redemption is the primary objective. And a redemption which fell short of fellowship would most certainly be abortive.

In our preaching and teaching, have we shown clearly and persuasively the superlative desirability of this blessing? More desirable than good religious feeling, than miracles or gifts of power, more desirable even than heaven itself, is an unclouded walk with God. Enoch knew this, and we may know it too. When once our people acquire a great thirst for this, when this becomes their "magnificent obsession," then holiness preaching will draw them powerfully, for they will see holiness as requisite to the satisfaction of their desire.

They will see this because they will perceive intuitively that just as likeness to God in personhood is the metaphysical basis of fellowship, so likeness to God in holiness must be the moral basis. As person to person, communication was still possible with Adam, but now it was communication with out communion. There can be no spiritual union between a despised God and a consciencesmitten defector. A mutual reconciliation must be achieved. This God made possible in Christ. But a recovery of the moral basis of oneness in subjective likeness must also be effected. This too is a provision of Calvary. Holiness in man then must be seen as the moral necessity for fellowship with God, and as a real possibility for real persons.

### **Elements of Similarity**

At the most fundamental level, the holiness in man which may be like God's is specifically that holiness which issues in right conduct. "As obedient children . . . like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior" (I Pet. 1:1~15, NASB). In God's activities and relationships there is neither wrong desiring, wrong willing, nor wrong doing. Desire, design and deed are one, and together conform to that inherent rightness which belongs to God's perfections.

Likewise man's behavior must have in it that inherent rightness which conforms to the goodness of God. An element of that rightness must be a unity between the behavior and the inner motivation which controls the behavior. Thus while the end product is holy behavior, the root is holy character: "obedient children" is the term describing the kind of persons from whom we can expect holy behavior. Inner desire and intention, with man too, must match the behavior, and determine the final quality of that behavior in God's sight. We therefore cannot separate doing from being; nor does a proper emphasis on dynamic relationship rule out a corresponding insistence on state, in the sense of condition. As John puts it: "the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous" (I John 3:7, NASB).

### **Holiness UnLike God's**

But the holiness possible to man is radically unlike God's as well as like

it. The continuity of fellowship with God depends as much on respecting the differences as on experiencing the likenesses.

Certain of these differences are immediately obvious. Our holiness is derived from God and is therefore an acquirement, while God's holiness is His essential and eternal nature. Our holiness, furthermore, is admissible; God's is not. Not only so, God's holiness includes His majesty and divine glory, His "whollyotherness," and what Rudolph Otto calls the numinous. These elements man can rejoice in but cannot share; to pretend to do so would be the instant loss of holiness not just in the fact of selfdelusion but in the repetition of the primal sin, pride. An infinite difference will forever prevail between the holiness of God and the holiest saint.

These various differences may be summarized by saying that man may enjoy the holiness of the creature, God the holiness of the Creator; man the holiness of a subject, God the Sovereign. These differences are not merely academic, for inhering in them are significant variations in the attributes of holiness itself. If holiness is, in its simplest terms, inward love of and outward fidelity to God, then for man this love and fidelity will accept certain elements which are right for man but not right for God. For differences between God as God and man as man create corresponding differences in propriety and suitability.

Let us be specific. Holiness in man will include submissiveness, humility, obedience, and reverence. When God and man are in relationship, these traits are essential to man's side of the relationship, for they inherently belong to his role as creature and subject. But the same traits do not belong to the holiness of God. In God the exercise of sovereignty, including the drawing of the sword, is perfectly compatible with His holiness, for such sovereignty belongs to His Person as Creator and Governor. God's demand for the throne of our heart, then, belongs to His holiness; our demand for that throne belongs to our iniquity. Indeed the very essence of unholiness in man is a secret resentment of God's sovereignty (Cf. Rom. 8:7). We conclude therefore that while holiness in God includes His sovereign rule over us, holiness in us includes not only our acceptance of that rule but an inner adjustment so thorough that we are happy in it.

These vital differences between the divine holiness and ours become more apparent when we look at Jesus. That as Son He revealed the Father is without question. Today's Christian needs to be reminded that Jesus revealed man too, in the sense that He exemplified what man should be. This is to say that the holiness we see in Jesus is primarily the holiness which belongs to man. He said, for instance, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11: 29). As a youth he subjected Himself to His parents because the Scripture revealed this to be the divinely ordained order. He humbled Himself in public baptism at the hands of John in order to "fulfill all righteousness." He lived in

constant dependence and equally constant obedience. This is witnessed by his long hours and even nights of prayer, His repeated selfsubjection, His declarations such as, "I can of mine own self do nothing" (John 5 :30). Thus do we see the character which belongs to that holiness which is proper for man. It is subordination of self to the perfect will of God. It is dynamic devotion to the Father, constant, fervent, and allconsuming. Traditional righteousness, in the sense of morality, is of course elementary; but Christian holiness is much more than a relationship with man it is a profoundly personal and radical relationship with God. This is why Christian holiness cannot be perfect until the root of hostility toward the full will of God is eliminated. Even though the City of Mansoul has capitulated and the flag of King Jesus flies, the hidden pocket of resistance must be flushed out and destroyed.

If Jesus were preached more often as the exemplar of holiness in man it might be easier for our people to avoid that spurious holiness which tends to arrogate to itself prerogatives which belong to God only. Furthermore, they might see more clearly that holiness can be maintained only by the same constancy of prayerfulness of spirit which we find in Jesus. If fellowship with God is impossible without holiness, then we must foster that kind of holiness which belongs to man as man.

Alongside the elevation of Jesus the Man as exemplar, the holiness preacher should also sound more clearly the notes of God's greatness, the propriety of His sovereignty, His repulsion of sin, and the inappropriateness of an easy and flippant familiarity. A proper sense of awe and reverence is missing in too many lives; but when awe and reverence are missing the holiness is defective. Perhaps we should be bolder in our rebuke of some song texts and some forms of music and some forms of visual indecency in the house of God, all of which reflect (and foster) unworthy views of God.

Admittedly there is a paradox here, for the Spirit prompts us to say, "Abba, Father," which is the artless and familiar approach of a child to his father. Yet impressive are the many references in the New Testament to kneeling before God which is symbolic of reverence and subjection. The writer to the Hebrews exhorts: ". . . Let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28-29, NASB). And in the very paragraph in which Peter admonishes holiness like God's he adds: "And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth" (I Pet. 1:17, NASB).

Ananias and Sapphira, apparently, believed there was no place for fear in the Christian life; like many today they presumed on God's love because they misunderstood it. When God allowed them to become an object lesson "great fear came upon the whole church" (Acts 5:11, NASB). True, when in need we are to come "boldly unto the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:12), but not

with that kind of boldness which forgets that it is the throne to which we are coming. If we would enjoy unbroken fellowship with God we must maintain that holiness which is man's, and avoid equally the distance of distrust and the familiarity of presumption. God by His Spirit will then commune with us, and engender a suitable intimacy which is spiritually satisfying, and at the same time enable us to love in return as a submissive worshiper, never as an equal.

## THE PRESENT POSSESSION OF PERFECTION IN FIRST JOHN

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Debate and discussion have been waged over the subject of perfection. Some writers deny the possibility of an experience deserving of such description and definition. All such find it necessary to explain away many clear, concise, and convincing statements in the sacred Scriptures. An inspired writer in the person of the Apostle John wrote a brief epistle in which he presents perfection a doctrine to be declared, a deliverance to be desired, and a type of deportment to be demonstrated.

For evangelical theology, any consideration of John's teaching concerning Christian perfection should begin with an exegetical study of his First Epistle. In the light of John's position we find it necessary to give attention to the matter of sinlessness. However, the apostle was not a theologian in the strict sense of the word. He does not argue or present an apology for the faith. In John we see an intuitionist and a mystic. F. W. Farrar characterizes John's approach quite well.

The Epistle of St. John differs greatly from most of the other epistles. There is in it nothing of the passionate personal element of Paul's letters; none of the burning controversy of the subtle dialectics, of the elaborate doctrine, of the intense appeal. Nor has it anything of the stately eloquence and sustained allegorising of the Epistle to the Hebrews; nor does it enunciate the stern rules of practical ethics like St. James; nor, again, does it throb with the storm of moral indignation which sweeps through the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude. Its tone and manner are wholly different.<sup>1</sup>

No other book in the Bible deals with so many theological truths. In the few pages constituting this brief Epistle we read about the atonement, sin, confession, forgiveness, and cleansing. However, it is not theology for its own sake, but theological truth as a basis for fellowship with God and man. John is interested in life, the life characterized by perfect love or holiness.

## The Diagnosis Indicates Alarm Over Sin

Sin is more than human weakness, or a habit needing correction. According to John sin is a practice which violates God's law, and such necessitates the forgiveness of God. This practice is caused by a state of pollution which necessitates cleansing. In the light of this Epistle we may properly speak of the twofold nature of sin and the twofold remedy. John makes a definite distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil. This is clearly and forcefully stated in 1:10: "In this the children of the God are manifest and the children of the devil."<sup>2</sup> The verb *ἔστιν* indicates a state of existence, a mode of behavior, a manner of life. The picture John draws is black and white; we find no neutral tints, no intermediate shades. People are on one side or the other. The Church is identified with God, and the world is controlled by the evil one. John states, "We know that everyone having been born out of the God is not sinning, but the one having been born out of God is keeping him, and the evil one touches him not" (5 :18). The absence or presence of sin makes the difference. Men define sin differently, and this causes a real problem. If sin is defined in the absolute sense, complete freedom from sinning is impossible. The best Christian is liable to sin in terms of such a definition. John says, "all unrighteousness is sin" (5 :17). If this were all John said, we would conclude that any act coming short of keeping the law at all times in all things would be sin. However, the apostle also states, "Everyone abiding in him is not sinning" (3:6). In the light of I John motive must be considered. Hear John again, "and the sin is the lawlessness" (3:4). The well known definition, "Sin is the willful transgression of the known law of God," finds strong support in this Epistle. Harvey Blaney writes:

John therefore establishes the definition of sin as a willful act by a responsible person. There is no desire here to dismiss a problem by oversimplifying it. Armed conflict, mental unbalance, lack of judgment in untried circumstances, cultural patterns, and many other elements of modern living prevent a clearly defined distinction between the sin which one has chosen and a wrong which circumstances have thrust upon him. The final judgment alone will give the answer. But a distinction between willful and involuntary evil is present in John's thought and it is a most necessary theological dogma.<sup>3</sup>

The subjects of light and knowledge are often considered by John. So-called sins of ignorance can be avoided by walking in the light.

It is advocated by some evangelicals that John is teaching freedom from the practice of sin, or from habitual sinning. However, the statement, "These

things I write to you in order that ye may not sin" (2:1), does not support such a view. The verb sin is in the aorist tense and indicates an act of sin, not the continuous practice of sin.

We understand John to teach that sin is an act performed freely by a responsible person. Such an act is to be determined and defined in the light of God's revealed will. The Holy Scriptures and the Holy Spirit are available to provide light, knowledge, motivation, and strength.

John also in his diagnosis presents evidence supporting the teaching on the principle of sin. He writes, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1:8). The apostle is combating the teaching of the Gnostics. These false teachers maintained that their bodies were evil, but their spirits were independent of their bodies and therefore free from sin. Material substance could never be free from sin, and sin never attaches itself to the soul, spirit, or heart. Therefore, according to the Gnostics, cleansing was unnecessary. Blaney writes:

Sin is something which we can control something one chooses to accept or reject, but sin is also something which controls us. It is both an evil act and the propensity toward such action. For the act of sin, John prescribes forgiveness: for the propensity to sin, he offers cleansing.<sup>4</sup>

John gives us an enlightening statement on the twofold nature of sin and the remedy. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, that He may forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1:9). John refers to sins as acts. These are to be confessed and forgiven. He also speaks of unrighteousness; this is a principle or a state. It is not something we have done; we can not be forgiven of it. It is a condition which is cared for by cleansing.

### **The Deliverance Through the Atonement of the Saviour**

D. A. Hayes quotes Bishop Warren concerning the atonement in First John:

No book of the New Testament is so pervaded and saturated with the idea of the atonement by blood. The book contains but five short chapters. In each of the first two and the last two is a distinct statement or definition of the atoning work, while the middle chapter has three. Hence there are seven clear testimonies, independent and emphatic; a larger number than can be found anywhere else in the same space.... There is no refining of the language of the Jewish sacrifices.... No intimation is allowed

that Christ's death was an instructive spectacle, a most influential example, a power of emotional effect on the beholder. But it was a real substitution of the death of Christ for the eternal death of man.<sup>5</sup>

A study of these passages reveals the following facts. The death of Christ was universal in its scope, "He is an expiation concerning our sins, but not concerning ours only but also concerning the whole world" (2:2). The purpose of Christ's death is strongly stated and repeated for emphasis. "Ye know because that He was manifested in order that He might take away the sins, and in Him sin is not" (3:5). The verb *arh* is a first aorist subjunctive. The subjunctive is the mood of probability; it anticipates realization. The aorist tense denotes action simply as occurring. It has no definite temporal significance. It does denote time in the indicative, but such is indicated by the augment. The aorist subjunctive signifies nothing as to completeness; it presents the action as attained. It refers to a fact or an event.

All conditions necessary for the accomplishing of the event have been met, and the accomplishment is anticipated. The purpose of Christ's death is thus set forth by John. Note an additional passage, "for this the Son of God was manifested, in order that He might destroy the works of the devil" (3:8). Again we have the aorist subjunctive in the verb *luah*, destroy. Once again John refers to the purpose of Christ's death. "In this we have known [and we still know] the love, because He laid down His life in behalf of us" (3:16). The verb *'ethken*, laid down, is an aorist indicative active; it indicates point action in the past. The active voice indicates that Christ gave Himself; His life was not taken. He did not die as a martyr; He gave himself as the sacrifice for our sins. The sinner's deliverance is through the atonement of Christ.

Reference to the twofold nature of sin was made earlier in our study. Sin as practice, or acts against God and the law, causes guilt and condemnation. The law never converts, it always condemns. In the light of the atonement, God can and will pardon the sinner. This is seen in the statement, "in order that He might pardon us the sins" (1:9). The verb *athh* can be translated remit, forgive, pardon. It is a second aorist subjunctive. It is through Christ's death that God can remit sin's penalty.

The atonement not only provides a pardon for sins committed, but also a cleansing from sinful corruption. In the light of I John and our announced subject the work of cleansing deserves more consideration than time allows. We begin with the statement, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his son is cleansing us from all sin" (1:7). The verb *Katharidzei* is in the

present tense indicating durative or continuous action. This presents the idea of process. Some have looked to this passage in the attempt to disprove holiness or sanctification as a crisis experience. In the judgment of this writer John is telling us that Christ's blood avails to keep us clean. However, this is not all John writes on this important subject. Turn again to the statement, "in order that He may forgive us our sins and may cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1:9). The verb *katharish* is first aorist subjunctive active. The aorist indicates point action, an event not a process. The verb means to cleanse, render pure. Note carefully the phrase "from all unrighteousness." This statement is in the ablative case. Dana and Mantey state the following concerning the ablative:

The name suggests the basal significance of the case: ablativus, that which is borne away, or separated. Its basal significance is point of departure. This idea may be elemental in various conceptions. It is involved not only in the literal removal of one object from the vicinity of another, but in any idea which implies departure from antecedent relations, such as derivation, cause origin, and the like. It contemplates an alteration in state from the viewpoint of the original situation.... the use of the ablative comprehends an original situation from which the idea expressed is in some way removed. Hence, in simplest terms we may say that its root idea is separation.<sup>6</sup>

The cleansing linked with the ablative case clearly indicates the removal of the unrighteousness. The idea of separation, basic to the ablative, is used by John to present a complete change.

John continues the theme of complete deliverance. "I write to you little, children, because your sins have been forgiven through his name. I write to you, fathers, because ye have known Him from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because ye have conquered the evil one" (2:1213). The verbs forgive, know, and conquer are in the perfect tense.

The perfect is the tense of complete action. Its basal significance is the progress of an act or state to a point of culmination and the existence of its finished results. That is, it views action as a finished product. Gildersleeve significantly remarks that it 'looks at both ends of the action.'

Due to past experience those addressed by John are presently living in a state of forgiveness of their sins, knowledge of God, and victory over the evil one. This is the experience of heart holiness.

Once again the apostle writes, "In this the love has been consummated with us, in order that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because just as that one is we also are in this world" (4:17). The verb translated consummated is a perfect indicative passive. The previous statement relative to the perfect tense applies here. However, a word relative to the passive voice is in order. The subject is acted upon; we do not bring our salvation to consummation. Such is accomplished by another; in this case God is the One performing the act upon us. In the inspired record He calls this perfect love(4:18), the destruction of the devil's works (3:8), cleansing from all unrighteousness (1:9). Men dare not call it by any term which suggests that the sin remains.

A brief study of the meaning of *teleiow*, translated consummate, is in order. Phillips translation misses the point: "So our love for him grows more and more, filling us with complete confidence for the day when he shall judge all men" (4:17). This translation fails to do justice to the perfect tense, and it also fails to take into account the sense of completeness basic to the meaning of the term. The attempt to find support here for growth towards maturity is futile and fatal in the light of I John. Such an attempt may be an excuse for the continuing in sin. At least some take advantage of the translation at this point.

The place and time of this consummation are clearly stated by John: "in this world" (4:17). The Bible teaches growth in grace, but this is not stressed by John. However, his emphasis on walking in the light clearly teaches that the perfection received must be maintained. According to John there is a cleansing to be experienced, a fellowship to be enjoyed and a life to be exemplified.

### **The Department Seen in the Activity of the Saints**

We now look at the evidence presented by the apostle. What is the proof of perfection? John is more concerned with conduct than with creed, more concerned with the product than with the process. This is his reason for stressing light, love, life. A high premium is placed upon knowledge. John believes in a knowable salvation. Note the four following statements:

1. And ye know that He was manifested in order that he might take away the sins (3:5).
2. We know that we have passed out of death unto life (3:14).
3. In this we shall know that we are out of the truth, and we shall assure our heart before Him (3:19).
4. And in this we shall know that He abides in us, from the Spirit which He gave to us (3:19).

Light and knowledge are inseparable. We may know because God gives light. It is no mystical experience which John advocates; it is based upon historical

fact. This certainty has a definite bearing upon our conduct.

Love is also a vital part of the evidence. Love characterizes the Christian; hate is a mark of sin. John says that "Cain, who was of that wicked one. . . slew his brother" (3:12).

Life is proof of God's saving work: "we have passed from death unto life" (4: 14). This sounds Pauline; such is evidence that we are no longer dead in sin. Men now walk as Christ walked (2:6).

Additional proof is advanced by reference to the absence or presence of sin. The children of God are free from sin and sinning. John writes, "In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil, everyone not doing the righteousness is not out of the God. . ." (3:10). Sinning is not viewed as an impossibility. Any man may sin, most men do sin, but no man has to sin. John writes, "And he is able not to sin" (3:9). Man's deportment is evidence of deliverance from sin. Christ said, "Wherefore from their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20).

Every path pursued in this Epistle leads to the same conclusion. The Saviour and sin have nothing in common. Relationship with God through Jesus Christ is possible for everyone. Such a relationship makes sinning unthinkable.

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#### Documentations

1. F. W. Farrar, *The Messages of the Books* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1888), p. 479.
2. Except when otherwise stated, all biblical quotations are the personal translation of the author.
3. Harvey J. S. Blaney, "The First Epistle of John" *Beacon Bible Commentary*(Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1967), pp. 358359.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 357.
5. D. A. Hayes, *John and His Writings* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1917), pp. 186187.
6. H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, *A Manual Crammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 81.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

**AN EVALUATION OF JOHN R. W. STOTT'S  
AND FREDERICK D. BRUNER'S INTERPRETATIONS  
OF THE BAPTISM AND FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

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**John R. W. Stott**

The booklet by Stott contains "the substance of an address" by the author to the Islington Clerical Conference on January 7, 1964, "subsequently expanded for publication." After noting the revived interest among churches in the ministry of the Holy Spirit and stressing the need of the Spirit's power, the author points out (1) that one should be governed by Scripture alone and not by the experience of individuals or groups; (2) that historical precedents described in Acts should not be considered normative today (rather one should seek guidance in the Gospels and Epistles); and (3) that his presentation is practical rather than academic in purpose.

While observing that today is the "dispensation of the Holy Spirit," Stott stresses that fullness of the Holy Spirit is a universal privilege (p. 15). At Pentecost the 120 who were baptized with the Spirit prior to Peter's sermon, were previously regenerated, but the same blessing was given to 3000 previously unregenerated hearers soon after. The latter, rather than the 120, are typical and the precedent for us. Although at Samaria the baptism of the Holy Spirit was given to believers in Jesus, this was a special case. The presence of apostles was necessitated by the historical schism between Jews and Samaritans. Furthermore, he reports, the Book of Acts should not be used as a basis for doctrine since it contains no consistent doctrine of the Holy Spirit (p. 18). However, he inconsistently cites the 3000 converts at Pentecost (less the 120) as typical of Christians today in that they were converted and filled with the Holy Spirit simultaneously. In Ephesus the "disciples" were not Christians, but disciples of John who knew nothing of either Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Hence their baptism with the Holy Spirit was their initiation into the Christian Church and not a second stage in their spiritual growth (p. 19).

He apparently assumes that Cornelius was not a believer before his reception of the Spirit's baptism and he ignores Peter's summary of the event as "purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9). All seven references to the

baptism of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16; I Cor. 12:13) he finds to be initiatory, experienced by all Christians at conversion. He ignores passages in which the "gift" of the Holy Spirit is designated as the "promise of the Father" (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33; 38; 39; cf. 1:8; 2:4; 18) and given to His disciples who are said to be "clean" (Jn. 13:10; 15:3) and their names "written in heaven" (Lk. 10:20). He also ignores Johannine passages in which the Holy Spirit is apparently given to believers only (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:715; 20:22). His stress lies rather on the passage in I Corinthians 12: 13 where Christian unity is emphasized: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. . . and have been all made to drink of one Spirit." Since there are four parts in baptism, he argues, (the baptizer, the recipients, the medium and the purpose) Jesus must be the baptizer, here as in the other six passages, because the Spirit could not be both the agent administering the baptism and also the element or medium in which the baptism occurs (pp. 2427). Since I Corinthians 12: 13 clearly applies to all Christians and, since it is consistent with the other six references to the baptism with the Holy Spirit, he concludes that in each instance the baptism of the Spirit is administered initially to all who become Christians thereby and that no further "second blessing" is to be sought.

To the objection that most Christians give no evidence of having been baptized with the Holy Spirit and power, he says simply that they have failed to seek and keep the fullness and the Spirit after regeneration. To those who say that they have received a great crisis experience subsequent to regeneration, he admits the truth of their testimony but adds that these are exceptions, not the rule, and that these persons should not urge other believers to seek any further special gifts or enduements of the Spirit. Beyond further hungering and thirsting for righteousness there remains only "the resurrection and glorification of our bodies" in the Christian's spiritual future (p. 29). The evidences for the Spirit's indwelling he correctly insists are moral, not miraculous: "Be filled," sing, give thanks and be submissive (Eph. 5:1821). Progress in Christian living is seen in terms of "enlightenment, knowledge, faith, experience" (Eph. 1:1519). He concludes by urging a continued hungering and thirsting for righteousness. His argument is most plausible when contrasting the events in Acts with the exhortations in the Epistles. However, even here he is somewhat arbitrary in downgrading the Gospels and Acts as sources of doctrine. He is least convincing when ignoring the many texts which urge the believer to dedicate the entire person to the sway of the Holy Spirit's purity and power (Rom. 6:12; 12:13; Phil. 3: 15; Heb. 6: 1; II Cor. 7: 1; I Pet. 1: 16 and others). Its chief practical effect appears to be that of discouraging evangelicals, among either holiness people or Pentecostals, from seeking anything very specific.

## **Frederick D. Bruner**

This well documented volume is the outcome of the author's graduate studies at Princeton and a doctorate at the University of Hamburg. Bruner, a United Presbyterian missionary, is now Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Seminary in the Philippines. His interest in Pentecostalism is more than academic; during his research he faced personally the question, "Did I want a heart knowledge of the Pentecostal gift?" The resultant theological essay benefits from this dual concern for academic soundness and spiritual certitude.

The study begins with a thorough analysis of Pentecostalism as a 20th century phenomenon. The author traces its origins to the evangelical revival in England. He concludes that prior spiritual life movements are significant, to the extent that they influenced John Wesley:

Methodism is the mother of the 19th century American holiness movement which, in turn, bore 20th century Pentecostalism.... Pentecostalism is primitive Methodism's extended incarnation. . . inheriting Wesley's experiential theology and revivalism's experiential methodology. Pentecostalism went out into an experience hungry world and found a response (pp. 37, 39)

Charles G. Finney is credited with being the major human factor in making revivalism the "major religion" in 19th century America. Wesley's theology and Finney's revivalism therefore merged in the American Holiness Movement and subsequently in modern Pentecostalism (p. 42).

Bruner traces, in a relatively objective and thorough manner, the beginnings of the tongues movement from Kansas (1901) to Los Angeles (1906) to North Europe (1909), to South America and back to the NeoPentecostalism in some of the mainline churches today. Today the charismatic movement is centered at the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship (Los Angeles), the Assemblies of God (Springfield, Missouri,) and the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee). The Assemblies adhere to Reformation theology and two works of grace, while the Church of God is more in the Arminian Wesleyan tradition but favors three stages in the quest for perfection (conversion, sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit).

Bruner then examines the biblical basis for the doctrines emphasized by the Pentecostals. He finds that, as in Wesley and the Holiness Movement, it is not sufficient to receive Christ by faith, but that in addition the believer needs to be filled with the Spirit. While the Holiness Movement welcomed spontaneous physical expressions of joy (shouting, etc.), the Pentecostals demanded physical evidence of divine blessing (tongues), (p. 76). Primitive Methodism made feeling the witness of the fullness of the Spirit, notes Bruner,

while modern Pentecostalism makes glossolalia the basis of assurance. Both have similar conditions for the baptism of the Spirit: regeneration, obedience, confession of need, consecration and faith leading to assurance. The chief difference is that Pentecostalism insists that speaking with tongues is the invariable physical evidence of the initial baptism of the Holy Spirit, distinct from water baptism.

After examining the alleged biblical and historical basis for Pentecostal belief and practice, Bruner undertakes a thorough and critical examination of their validity. In general he rejects as "good works" all conditions other than faith for receiving all of God's grace. Any terms which modify faith such as "fullness" he considers worse than useless. He believes any conditions for receiving the fullness of the Spirit are equivalent to the magical incantations of Simon of Samaria: "both seek beyond faith to get a hold of supernatural powers" (p. 183). All of the "conditions" deemed necessary for this experience: relinquishing known sin, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, seeking with the "whole heart", are termed "works" which imperil

simple faith alone (*sola fides*). Repeatedly his indebtedness to Luther and Calvinistic convictions are in evidence. The Spirit's coming, he writes, is "not conditional." Confession of sin and repentance is equated with "works" which only hinder simple faith. Repentance is "not something to be done," it is God's gift which enables a person to decide to be baptized (cf. Acts 2:38; 11: 18), (p. 166). Man is passive; it is all of grace. Again and again he belabors Pentecostals for seeking more than Christ's forgiveness at conversion and for insisting that the believer has some responsibility for meeting conditions (repentance, obedience, eagerness and the like). His criticism is not against Pentecostalism and the Holiness Movement alone, but includes evangelicals in the Reformed tradition. Thus, Harold John Ockenga is criticized for listing the conditions (confession, consecration, faith, obedience) necessary for the reception of the fullness of the Holy Spirit by the believer subsequent to his reception of Christ as Saviour (pp. 115, 116).

In spite of his efforts at thoroughness and relative objectivity, his insistence on faith alone places him, along with B. B. Warfield (Perfectionism), as viewing a second work of grace as not only superfluous but also actually perverting the gospel of grace alone. He rates Pentecostalism to be as subversive of the gospel of Christ as the legalism condemned in the Galatian letter, the asceticism at Colossal (Col. 2:16-19), the Gnosticism reflected in I John, and the pseudo "spirituals" of the Corinthian correspondence (1 Cor. 12:1; 14:37).

The purpose of the book would have been achieved far more effectively if Bruner had not weakened his case by exaggerating *sola fides*, by emphasizing texts supporting his position while ignoring many which do not, and for minimizing the necessity for spiritual discipline and aspiration for God's best

which usually characterizes Christians who are in earnest. He stresses the objective nature of faith (it coincides with water baptism) (p. 281) and ignores the subjective factor implicit in Luther's emphasis on faith as "trust." For him a Christian is one who accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour at water baptism and is simultaneously baptized with the Holy Spirit. He recognizes no distinction between a "nominal Christian" and one who has experienced the grace of the Lord Jesus (p. 275), no awareness of James' distinction between a "dead" faith and one which is verified by "works" (James 2:17).

Bruner insists that one should seek Christ and not the Holy Spirit as such, ignoring Jesus' encouraging His disciples to ask, seek and knock while assuring them that the Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Lk 11:13).

He is grossly unfair to Pentecostalism (and the Wesleyan tradition) by insisting that they teach that "the believer is required nothing less than the supreme accomplishment the removal of sin and this prior to the . . . full gift of the Holy Spirit" (p. 235). They teach, says he, that "the believer is responsible for the work of cleansing his heart, for the removal of all conscious sin . . . only then will the Holy Spirit be given" (p. 249). The Pentecostal message from which Bruner dissents is "In seeking the baptism with the Spirit we should always remember that the first requisite is to be cleansed from all known and conscious sin" (p. 235).

Actually Pentecostals (and Wesleyans) confess the lingering presence of indwelling sinful inclinations which hinder holiness, and ask for its removal and replacement by the fullness of the Spirit's presence and power; they do not presume to remove sin themselves. This is in accord with Bible messages which read, "If I regard [tolerate, protect] iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66:18); "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6:1); "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to . . . cleanse us . . ." (I Jn. 1:9); "Whosoever abides in Him does not sin" (I Jn.3:6).

Bruner correctly rebukes the Pentecostals for assuming that the sinner seeks Christ and pardon while the believer seeks the Spirit. He correctly insists that every believer who has Christ is born of the Spirit but he incorrectly fails to distinguish being born of the Spirit ("baptized" by the Spirit into the body of Christ), (I Cor. 12:13) and being filled and empowered by the Spirit (Lk. 24:49). He insists that if the believer has Christ there is nothing lacking in his Christian experience. He fails to recognize a distinction between being "in Christ" and being "filled with the Spirit" although he does acknowledge that the apostles experienced fillings subsequent to Pentecost (p. 214).

He, like Luther, feels compelled to adhere to the concept of being simultaneously a saint and a sinner, hence is not an "evangelical" in

the current usage of the term.

Bruner's view of water baptism is more Lutheran or Catholic than Calvinistic; more than a symbol, it is for him the vehicle which bestows Christ's fullness on the participant (p. 263). Accordingly, he criticizes the charismatics (and by inference the Holiness Movement) for emphasizing regeneration as the condition for subsequent water baptism. For him water baptism is also Spirit baptism and nothing specific is to be sought thereafter. He overlooks Romans 6: 11 where, after identification with Christ in baptism (Rom. 6:3), the believer is urged to "reckon himself dead indeed to sin," II Peter 1:10 where believers are urged to "give all diligence to make their calling and election sure," and the exhortation for believers to "press on to maturity" (Heb. 6:1).

He disagrees with K. Barth and E. Brunner (and perhaps with J. Wesley?) by insisting on the identification of water baptism with baptism with the Holy Spirit.

By his emphasis on the simultaneity of saving faith and water baptism he is at a loss to know how to assess infant baptism, but concludes tentatively that its retention is preferable to the alternatives.

An excellent bibliography is added, reflecting, as do the footnotes, acquaintance with works in German and French as well as in English. The volume is commendable in that footnotes are located on the relevant pages rather than gathered in the back. The inclusion of primary sources or "documents" adds much to the value of the book. The printing is carefully done and errors are few ("shame" on page 185 was probably meant to be "sham"). Negatively, the indented portions include both the author's ideas, of secondary importance, and also quotations from others with only quotation marks to distinguish them. To have the quotations alone in the indented paragraphs would facilitate reading and comprehension. The essay would have been improved if condensed and the many duplications reduced in number.

A more thorough study of glossolalia in the Corinthian and contemporary churches would have enhanced the value of the study. But Bruner was preoccupied with the principle of sola fides and other matters were subordinate.

His view toward the trust worthiness of the Gospel records is reflected in his judgment that the Johannine account of Jesus' bestowal of the Spirit an. 20:22) on the apostles is equivalent to the Pentecostal experience reported in Acts (p. 214). In other words, Luke and John disagree about Pentecost.

This volume serves as a reminder of the intimate historical association between Pentecostalism and the Holiness Movement. It contributes little to the debate over the "gift of tongues" and its relationship to contemporary

phenomena and little to the question of the glossolalia in Acts and that in I Corinthians. As observed by a reviewer in *The Scottish Journal of Theology*, Pentecostalism has little to fear from Bruner's attack, because of his harping on the one string of *sole fidism*. But Bruner's study deserves to be taken seriously by any interested in the charismatic movement.

For those in the Wesleyan tradition both books have the wholesome effect of a reexamination of the exegetical and experiential bases of their position. Both present a welcome challenge to careful, responsible con textual exegesis (rather than relying on prooftexts). Among the areas in which further examination is needed are (1) the alleged failure of the Epistles to urge seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to being born of the Spirit, as LukeActs does; (2) whether the "tongues" in Acts are the same as the "tongues" at Corinth; (3) the relative importance of the moral and the miraculous, purity and power; (4) the empty distinction between water baptism and the baptism with the Holy Spirit plus the Witness in the Epistles to the latter, and (5) a reexamination of the exegetical evidence for the need of entire sanctification as a second crisis experience subsequent to regeneration.

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## ST. PAUL'S POSTURE ON SPEAKING IN UNKNOWN TONGUES

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The purpose of this paper is to examine the New Testament passages that make reference to speaking in tongues, especially those which have become pillars of support for the modern practice of "unknown" tongues.

The passage in Mark 16:17 can be withheld from the present study because this section of the Gospel is of doubtful origin, its presence in the text being unsupported by the best Greek manuscripts. Moreover, the reference is to "new tongues" rather than unknown tongues. And if it be construed to mean "unknown tongues," the idea cannot be supported by any of the known teachings of Jesus.

There are three references to speaking in tongues in the Acts. At Pentecost (Acts 2) the disciples spoke in tongues and were understood by their listeners. The phenomenon may have involved both the speaking and the hearing. At Ephesus (Acts 19:6) the speaking in tongues was equated with prophecy and thus was intelligible communication. At the home of Cornelius in Caesarea (Acts 10:45-46) the people who heard the speaking knew that the people were praising God and not talking about some mystery. And in Peter's Pentecost sermon (Acts 2: 14-17) he equated the speaking in tongues with prophecy when he quoted Joel 2:28-32 as being then fulfilled: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." From these passages it can be said that the tongue speaking in the Acts was intelligible and understood.

In contrast, the tongues at Corinth were unintelligible. The church members seemed more interested in demonstration than in communication. Paul wrote them to either pray for the ability to interpret (I Cor. 14:23) or find someone who was able to (I Cor. 14:5,27), for if a visitor heard them all speaking as they did he would think they were crazy (I Cor. 14:23). Thus their practice was speaking in "unknown" tongues, something different from that recorded in the Acts. This is what is perpetuated in the present day tongues movement. Paul's discussion in I Corinthians 12:14 is the only extended treatment of the subject in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

"It was a happy circumstance for the future of Christianity that, in those early days when there were almost as many wild suggestions and foolish opinions as there were converts, that there should have been in the church this one clear, practical judgment, this pure embodiment of the wisdom of Christianity."<sup>2</sup>

## The Corinthian Church

The reputation of the ancient city of Corinth is well known. Many races and religions were represented in the population. It was a great center of trade and commerce and a gathering place for peoples of many countries. The continual influx of sailors with their traditional propensity to vice made Corinth a fertile seedbed for immorality and dissipation. This does not mean that the sins of the city should be attributed to the church, but it does suggest that the distinction between the two was not as clearly defined as St. Paul had sought to achieve. Moral standards and religious practices are culturally oriented and are changed only gradually, not being integral to the personal conversion experience. One must therefore allow for spiritual slip page during Paul's absence from the church, as well as several levels of Christian maturity among the members of the church. Those who were "called to be saints" had not yet arrived at any high degree of sainthood; and some who were "sanctified" were still "babes in Christ." Nevertheless they were "The church of God at Corinth," saints in the making. Actually, there is little known about the Corinthian Church at the time of Paul's writing that can be called exemplary. Most of their known actions were aberrations of true Christian life and conduct.

### I Corinthians 12:13

In the opening phrase of chapter 12 the Greek text usually translated "spiritual gifts" is one word meaning "spirituals," either people or things. "Gifts" was first inserted in the King James Version and placed in italics, signifying that this was thought necessary to complete the meaning intended. But Paul wrote of much more than can be brought under the concept of gifts, and so "spiritual matters" is a more accurate translation of Paul's expression **pneumatikon**.

"Spiritual matters" were in confusion at Corinth. The problems which had developed in this young church are treated by Paul in I Corinthians 11 and give evidence that the church members had retained many traits of their old life, cultural, religious and moral. The fact that they had written him concerning such problems as marriage between Christians and heathen, the relation of slaves and masters, and meat offered to idols all legitimate matters of concern but said nothing about such things as splits and quarrels among the membership, lawsuits, sexual immorality and drunkenness, was an indication of the true spiritual condition of the church.

Paul's concern was that the people did not understand the nature of true spirituality (12:1). They had been idol worshippers and are now Christian, but some of their actions are more pagan than Christian. Paul wrote, "no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is accursed.'" They were still being "led astray to dumb idols," whereas if they had been led by the Spirit

of God they would have said "Jesus is Lord." They had lapsed into a pagan ritual, being carried away in an ecstasy until they did not know what they were doing. Paul recognized what was happening. Having begun in the Spirit they were operating after a human fashion. This would seem to be the beginning of their speaking in unknown tongues.

This form of ecstatic speaking had become a stereotype, which they claimed was evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Paul's immediate response was that the charisma of the Spirit takes many forms. There is always variety (12:4-6) seen in endowments of different kinds: "the utterance of wisdom," "the utterance of knowledge," "faith," "gifts of healing," "the working of miracles," "prophecy," "the ability to distinguish between spirits," "various kinds of tongues," "the interpretation of tongues" (12: 811). All this is done purposefully because God does not act aimlessly (12:7).

Paul carried this thought farther by reference to callings and appointments. In the church there are "first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues" (12:28). Not everyone is gifted in the same manner and Paul exhorts the Corinthians to "earnestly desire the highest gifts" (12: 31). When the two concepts are brought together gifts and calling—we find Paul saying that God calls selected men and women to the essential services of the church and empowers them by His Spirit for their work. In this way they become gifted prophets, teachers, and the like.

In speaking of gifts Paul uses the Greek word **charisma** which means gracegift. If he had meant that each of those listed above was given by the Holy Spirit as an outright gift apart from talents native or acquired which seems to be the connotation of the present day literature on the subject there are more appropriate words which he could have used, and which he does use in other contexts. Either **doma** or **dorea** would have fit. From his discussion and the implications of the total list, he was evidently thinking of the power of the Holy Spirit to anoint and use effectively the energies of the people with their various abilities to fill the necessary offices in the church (12:2831). Gifts then are the capabilities of the people enhanced by the grace of God and thus gracegifts, **charismata**. One man is called to preach, another to teach, another to speak the gospel in other than his own native tongue, and so on. The gifts are human as well as divine and must be cultivated as well as anointed, for the edification of the church and the spreading of the gospel.

To Paul then, the true gift of speaking in tongues must be similar to the other gracegifts a natural ability to speak, developed and improved and lifted to a new level of effectiveness by the Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit does not ignore human talents nor supplant them by something that is magical or unintelligible, He accepts them when dedicated to Him and causes them to

exceed their natural limits of service and effectiveness and in the demonstration of the grace of God.

Speaking in "unknown" tongues, then, would not be a true charisma or gracegift of the Spirit. The Corinthian Christians were demonstrating what had doubtless begun as a work of the Spirit but which had slipped into an emotional pattern, more human than divine, and gone out of control.

### **The More Excellent Way**

If ignorance, or even immaturity, had been the besetting sin at Corinth, a set of instructions could have brought about a correction. Paul does offer some instructions, but these are meant for control and not as a cure. For the trouble lay in the motives of the people. They were motivated by their own spirit (14:2), emphasizing "unknown tongues" at the expense of the grace gifts at their command and the church was divided and unbalanced. The true evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit is to be found, not in ecstatic demonstrations and strange speech, but in allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord (I Cor. 12:3) and in manifestations of **agape**, selfgiving love (I Cor. 13:47). This is why this great essay on love is dropped down in the midst of Paul's discussion of the excesses and aberrations of the Christian faith found in Corinth.

And so while Paul was kindly disposed toward the Corinthian Christians, at the same time he was displeased with what he observed. There is no indication that he considered speaking in "unknown tongues" as an overflow of the Spirit or an experience too sublime for normal expression. He emphasizes its failure to demonstrate spiritual maturity. It is a sign of spiritual childhood (14:20), and he calls the Corinthians "babes in Christ" (3:11) and immature (8:7f.). He preached that they must outgrow their childish ways and become men (13:11). The ability to do something in an unreasonable or mysterious way is to Paul no evidence of superior grace or Christian maturity. When the grace of God through the Holy Spirit touches a man's speech, it comes alive with meaning and effectiveness. It does not turn him inward upon himself, but outward toward others in love.

If it were possible to speak the language of angels (13:1) even that would be something less than a true gracegift, unless it manifested the love which is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Paul is not suggesting that anyone has ever spoken in angelic language, least of all the Corinthian Christians.

Chapter 13 provides the prime evidences of the presence of gracegifts. When love, the gift of the Spirit, is not in control, there may be a flurry of sound and activity having little spiritual substance or real profit (w. 13). The manifestations of the Spirit are spiritual and moral, not physical (w. 47). This same emphasis is found in Galatians 5:22-23 where Paul says that "the fruit of the Spirit is love," expressed as "joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness,

goodness, faith." The true charisma is Spiritanointed service in fellowship with others in love and understanding.

"Chapter 13, the great love chapter, was composed to meet the problem of 'tongues'. Love is the highest 'way' . . . Love is God's excellent and ultimate way. In contrast, tongues 'will cease' (v. 8). Love is God's endless highway; 'tongues' are a deadend street, leading nowhere." **3 I Corinthians 14**

St. Paul is not always uniform in his use of words. For instance, the same Greek word (**pneuma**) is used for the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, and for spirit having the connotation of a mood, quality or inclination. He also uses three different words which are translated "tongues" in most versions of the New Testament. They are **dialekton**, **glossa** and **phonon**. The second is used almost exclusively in the present chapter (14). The last is used to denote mere sound, while the other two are used to denote a language which is peculiar to a people and distinct from that of another. Wherever another meaning is intended it must be seen from the context. Thus **glossa** always means a language unless another meaning is signified. Paul indicated his meaning in the present usage by offering an analogy to the tongues at Corinth.

When a bugler blows an uncertain military call, the soldiers do not know whether to turn in for the night or fall in for battle (v. 8). From this we draw three premises: the speaking in tongues at Corinth was unintelligible (v. 13), it should not be supposed that glossa as Paul used it always means unknown tongues, and the purpose of speaking should always be communication. Whether in prayer or song (v. 15), praise (v. 17), or in public address (v. 27), one should make use of his mind as well as his inner spirit (v. 15) and it should be done for the purpose of mutual edification (v. 26).

Certain phrases in this chapter have become pillars of the doctrine and practice of unknown tongues. They are: "I want you all to speak in tongues" (v. 5); "If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful" (v. 14); "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all" (v. 18). "Do not forbid speaking in tongues" (v. 39); "In the law it is written 'By men of strange tongues and by lips of foreigners will I speak to this people' " (v. 21).

### **That All Speak in Tongues**

In what kind of tongues did Paul wish the Christians to speak? Certainly not the kind in which people cursed Christ, neither that which was demonstrated when no one was able to understand what was supposed to be said (14:2), and which the speakers themselves did not understand, because they were advised to pray for the ability to interpret or translate (14:13). Only God could understand them (14:2). Those who prophesied or preached encouraged and edified the church, while the tongue speaking was consumed upon the speakers (14:34). It is quite evident that Paul wished his converts to

use the kind of speech which could be understood.

### **Praying in the Spirit**

Paul's reference to praying "in a tongue" (14:14) is taken by many as evidence that he prayed in a unknown tongue, and Romans 8:26 is used to support the concept that praying in the Spirit and praying in an unknown tongue are the same. But in the first instance Paul is speaking hypothetically, and in the second there is no reference to tongues whatsoever. He emphasized praying with the understanding as well as within one's spirit (14:15).

### **Did Paul Speak in Unknown Tongues?**

"I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all." This phrase follows closely upon the statement that, if one expresses his thanksgiving with emotional manifestations that are void of meaning, those who listen are not instructed and built up in the art of Christian praise, neither are they able to respond with the customary Amen. The exclusiveness of the Corinthian manner of religious expression (unknown tongues) made them feel superior to those who did not speak that way (14:36). And so Paul decided to boast a little for himself You speak in a tongue which no one can understand and are proud of yourselves; but I speak in languages more than all of you; and five words that I speak intelligently to instruct others is worth more than 10,000 words of what you utter unintelligibly for your own sakes. Paul could say this because he spoke Hebrew, Greek, Latin and probably Aramaic. Also, he had communicated the gospel to multitudes more than all of them put together. And so to credit Paul with speaking in unknown tongues is quite out of keeping with what we know of him and his stress on intelligent speech and the moral and spiritual effects of the Spirit's work. **Forbid Not to Speak in Tongues**

Doubtless it was not always possible to ascertain in the Corinthian church whether a strange speech was a true language or not, because of the multilingual character of the changing congregation. To forbid all speaking except what the leaders could understand would have been unfair to visitors. The simple rule to provide a translation would easily identify the language. To encourage speaking in unknown tongues would have been an invitation to increased confusion. And so Paul's final exhortation (14:39), translated in keeping with his total stand on the subject, reads: "Strongly desire to prophesy (or preach) and do not hinder your proclamation by unknown tongues."<sup>5</sup>

The specific advice which Paul gives concerning conduct in public services is quite familiar to readers of this Epistle and needs little comment (14:26-40). Some of the church members were arrogant, acting as if the gospel started and ended with them (14:26). To them Paul says that, if they

are as desirous of proclaiming the gospel and as spiritual as they claim to be, they will recognize that what he has written is from God and is the truth (14:37). The church is not to harbor anyone who will not accept his regulations (14:38).

### **The Effects of Unknown Tongues**

To emphasize both the cause and the effect of speaking in unknown tongues (14:21-25), Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:11-13. "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." This was originally spoken when the prophet had been scorned by priests and prophets who were "confused with wine" and who "stagger with strong drink." In their drunken stupor they had accused the prophet of babbling petty platitudes, when their own inebriated minds were interpreting the message of God as meaningless inanities. The prophet's reply was that the next time God would speak through an enemy with a strange or foreign language, not only in words but also in deeds. "By men of strange lips and with an alien tongue, the Lord will speak to this people." And they Israel will "fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken." The strange tongues were indicative of God's displeasure and judgment, not of His pleasure and blessing.

St. Paul uses this incident to illustrate what was happening at Corinth where unknown tongues had become a major problem. Tongues were evidence of confusion on the part of the church members and a misreading of the work of the Spirit among them; they were less than genuine demonstrations of the work of the Spirit; speaking in unknown tongues was the mark of their own folly and carried its own condemnation in terms of its self centeredness, and its failure to communicate positive meaning to others.

He went on to say that unknown tongues had no significance for Christians (14:22) because what was said had no meaning to them. On the other hand such speaking did have an effect upon unbelievers (14:22) for, since they heard nothing to which they could respond (14:16), it indicated that the speakers were crazy (14:23). However, if Christians will prophesy, that is, speak with meaning and so as to be understood, people will be convicted of sin and become converted.

The Apostle may have seen a correspondence between unknown tongues and the incoherent speech of drunken men. This could have been in his mind when he wrote, "Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:17-18).

### **Jesus and Tongues**

There is no evidence of "unknown tongues," either by word or action,

in the life and teachings of Jesus. He taught much about the Holy Spirit and gave the promise of His coming at Pentecost. But nowhere does Jesus suggest that speaking in unknown tongues would be associated with any phase of the redemptive work of the Spirit. On the other hand, He deplored the babblings of pagan religions: "And in praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words" (Mt. 6:7).

Of all the great charismatic leaders of all time, Jesus Christ must stand at the head of the line, both in terms of His ministry and its fruit in the three brief years of his ministry, also in terms of its effects in the lives of people throughout the centuries and the great host of people who have responded to His appeal and still follow Him by the millions. If any man on earth ever demonstrated the true **charisma** of the Spirit in the most real and effective sense, Jesus Christ was that man. And yet He never was known to speak in unknown tongues, neither did He encourage His disciples to do so. Jesus always spoke in the simple language of His day, and the common people heard Him gladly. **Conclusion**

"Speaking in tongues" has usually been a controversial issue in the church and an open door to dissensions and irregularities among Christians. As long as the gospel is interpreted in such a way as to allow that there is a gift of the Spirit of unknown tongues, even though the preacher or teacher may not claim it for himself, he is endorsing what is at best an erroneous interpretation of the New Testament, exposing people to precarious suggestions and hazardous risks, and allowing them to major on the bizarre and exceptional. It is certain that, if St. Paul's analysis for the Corinthian Church was understood and accepted, unknown tongues would soon die out and God's Word would be proclaimed more meaningfully and effectively, all other things being equal.

St. Paul believed in a true **charisma** of the Holy Spirit, but not in a **charisma** of an unknown tongue. He recognized that speaking in unknown tongues was practiced in the Corinthian Church, but he did not encourage it or accept it as a work of the Spirit. He was tolerant as he was with slavery, which he did not condemn in an outright fashion (Philemon). In both cases he invoked the principle of selfgiving love to God and man, knowing that love alone can solve such interpersonal problems and at the same time save the people involved.

Paul saw the Corinthian Christians as spiritual children, while he recognized a goodly degree of sincere spirituality among them, He did not deny them the sense of divine communion which they may have experienced, even as a good parent does not reject the child because he is immature and incoherent. He knew that speaking in unknown tongues evinced their lack of

comprehension of the higher grace of God rather than a lofty experience of the Holy Spirit.

Speaking in unknown tongues was a hindrance to preaching and an expression of undeveloped Christian spirituality, in the context of an understandable cultural and psychological background. This is how St. Paul understood it. Rather than a gift or work of the Holy Spirit, it is at best a human response to the presence of the Spirit, a response which may be duplicated by many stimuli both religious and secular.

It is interesting to note that Paul exhausts three chapters in First Corinthians to discuss the gracegifts of the Spirit, because they are so easily misunderstood and perverted in their expression and so readily monopolized by human desires and ambitions. On the other hand, concerning the fruit of the Spirit love and its various manifestations he says that there is no law (Gal. 5 :2223). It is difficult to be fanatical, or arrogant, or unkind, or selfish, or overzealous in the expression of **agape**, selfgiving love.

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#### Documentations

1. All quotations are from the Revised Standard Version. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are from *First Corinthians*.
2. Marcus Dods, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: A.C. Armstrong, 1898), p. 6.
3. Stagg, Vinson and Oates, *Glossolalia* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1967), p. 36.
4. See II Cor. 11.
5. A translation developed by three young Nazarene scholars, with some participation by the author of this paper. They are Charles Isbell of the University of Massachusetts, and Robert Branson and Sherrill Munn, both of Eastern Nazarene College.

## PNEUMATOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE IN EARLY METHODISM

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John Wesley wrote one sermon the burden of which was to convey what he believed to be vital, essential New Testament Christianity. His text was "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 4:31). This sermon was his "Spiritual Christianity," I preached before the University of Oxford, in St. Mary's, on August 24, 1744. Throughout the sermon Wesley gives not the least hint that he thought this fullness of the Spirit something subsequent to justification by faith; indeed, he made it very plain that anyone who was not so filled with the Spirit was not a Christian.

In the introduction to this sermon Wesley makes reference to his text in two passages of the Acts of the Apostles (2:4 and 4:31), observing that in the incident of the second there was no speaking in tongues as in the first. Neither were the gifts of the Spirit listed in I Corinthians 12:9-10 evident in the Acts accounts. He continues:

Whether these gifts of the Holy Ghost were designed to remain in the church throughout all ages . . . it is not needful to decide . . . It was, therefore, for a far more excellent purpose than this that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." It was to give them (what none can deny to be essential to all Christians in all ages) the mind which was in Christ, those holy fruits of the Spirit, which whosoever hath not, is none of his; . . . to endue them with faith . . . ; to enable them to crucify the flesh, . . . and in consequence of that inward change, to fulfill all outward righteousness.<sup>2</sup>

Did Wesley later change his mind about the fullness or baptism of the Holy Spirit? Did he later think of it as something distinct from, and following after, justifying grace? the position taken today by most Wesleyan Anninian scholars and preachers. The answer is no, and it is the purpose of this paper to seek to determine that the Wesleys and other early Methodists did understand about the baptism of the Spirit and to make some general observations on their treatment of the wider soteriological ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Two years after this notable and final sermon at St. Mary's, Wesley

completed the first edition of his Notes on the New Testament. His commentary on Acts 2:38 shows no change in his thinking about the gift of the Holy Ghost. He says, "The gift of the Holy Ghost does not mean, in this place, the power for speaking with tongues; for the promise of this was not given to all that were afar off, in distant ages and nations; but rather the constant fruits of faith, even righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."<sup>3</sup> Here Wesley equates the gift of the Spirit with his usual description of justifying faith.

Concerning Cornelius and his household (Acts 10), Wesley held that they were already justified and the coming of the Holy Spirit after Peter had preached was "a clear and satisfactory evidence that He had accepted them as well as the Jews."<sup>4</sup> On this work of the Spirit in Caesarea, Wesley is more explicit than anywhere else in his writings as to how he interprets the fulness of the Spirit. Also, this is one of the very few places where "baptism of the Spirit" is found in all of Wesley's writings. Of Peter and his involvement at Caesarea Wesley wrote,

He does not say, They have the baptism of the Spirit; therefore they do need baptism with water: but just the contrary; If they have received the Spirit, then baptise them with water. How easily is this question decided, if we will take the Word of God for our judge ! Either men have received the Holy Ghost, or not. If they have not, "Repent," saith God, "and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." If they have, if they are already baptized with the Holy Ghost, then who can forbid water? <sup>5</sup>

Allowing for the somewhat unusual circumstances of these believers in Caesarea, there is no question that Wesley here equated the baptism of the Spirit with justifying grace, although in this instance the gift of the Spirit followed their initial acceptance with God.

If further proof of this interpretation is required, let us examine care fully the following. In his sermon "The First Fruits of the Spirit," preached from Romans 8:1, Wesley says, "First I am to show, Who those are who 'are in Christ Jesus.' . . . For they dwell in Christ, and Christ in them. They are joined unto the Lord in one Spirit."<sup>6</sup> They are indeed justified freely but, although on Wesley's understanding they are "filled with the Holy Ghost," they are not yet sanctified wholly, for inward sin still remains. "Fret not thyself because of ungodliness, though it still remain in thy heart. Repine not, because thou still comest short of the glorious image of God; . . . Let thy continual prayer be,

'Show me as my soul can bear, The death of inbred sin: All the unbelief declare, the pride that lurks within.' "

In 1758 Wesley wrote to The Rev. Potter and, concerning the conversion of the Apostle Paul, says,

It does not appear that his was a sudden conversion. It is true, 'a great light suddenly shone around about him,' but this light did not convert him. After he had seen this, 'he was three days without sight,' . . . And, probably, during the whole time, God was gradually working in his heart, till he 'arose, and, being baptized, washed away his sins, and was filled with the Holy Ghost.'<sup>8</sup> Whether or not we fully agree with Wesley's exegesis here is not the question; what is important to note is Wesley's insistent linking of the fullness of the Holy Ghost with the experience of justification.

Much later in his ministry, in 1770, Wesley wrote in the same strain to Joseph Benson.

You allow the whole thing that I contend for; an entire deliverance from sin, a recovery of the whole image of God, the loving God with all our heart, soul, and strength. And you believe God is able to give you this; yea, to give it to you in an instant . . . If they like to call this 'receiving the Holy Ghost' they may: Only the phrase, in that sense, is not scriptural, and not quite proper; for they all 'received the Holy Ghost when they were justified.'<sup>9</sup> Admittedly Wesley does not use here the expression "baptism" or "fullness" when speaking of the Holy Ghost, but he does make it plain he will not speak of entire sanctification as a receiving of the Holy Ghost.

More evidence could be produced to the same conclusion that Wesley consistently spoke of the gift of the Spirit and justifying grace as one and the same experience but we will restrict ourselves to one further quotation, one brief unequivocal sentence from Wesley's Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion: "I assert that 'till a man receives the holy Ghost, he is without God in the world.'" <sup>10</sup>

Another line of argument must now be pursued if we would do full justice to Wesley's understanding of the gift of the Holy Ghost. For this, let us examine briefly three of his most important written works on Christian Perfection.

The first of these is Wesley's sermon "Christian Perfection," preached from the text "Not as though I had already attained." This is a scriptural, logical exposition of his understanding of Christian Holiness and it is in this sermon that he argues his way to the dictum he was to employ so often in later controversies: "In conformity, therefore, both to the doctrine of St. John, and to the whole tenor of the New Testament, we fix this conclusion, A Christian is so far perfect, as not to commit sin."<sup>11</sup> It is impossible to fully evaluate Wesley's teaching on entire sanctification with a close analysis of this sermon, yet of the baptism or fullness of the Holy Spirit it makes not

one mention; further, the Holy Spirit is barely mentioned at all. Not one of the many scripture passages quoted in defense of Christian Holiness has a direct bearing on the work of the Holy Ghost.

Wesley's sermon "On Perfection" next demands our attention, but here again there is an absence of anything like even an attempt to expound the ministry of the Spirit in the sanctified life. The only approach to the Spirit's work is one short paragraph. "St. Paul, . . . places perfection in yet another view. It is the one undivided **fruit of the Spirit**, . . . 'love, joy, peace, . . .' What a glorious constellation of graces is here! Now suppose all these things to be knit together in one, to be united together in the soul of a believer, this is Christian perfection."<sup>12</sup>

In 1777 Wesley revised for the last time his definitive tract on Christian holiness **A Plain Account of Christian Perfection**. This is the fullest, clearest, and most comprehensive work Wesley ever wrote on this doctrine. He included passages from *The Character of a Methodist*, written in 1739 and from his sermon "Christian Perfection," written in 1741. These are also long extracts from the Conference Minutes of 1744, 1745, 1746 and 1747, all dealing with perfection and included here to demonstrate that in spite of what opponents were saying Wesley had not, in any important way, changed his thinking on entire sanctification. Included here also are extracts from prefaces to hymn books published by John and Charles in 1741, 1742, and 1752. John Wesley also included stanzas from many hymns on Christian holiness. In the Preface to the 1742 hymnbook, he had written: "Whom then do we mean by 'one that is perfect?' ' We mean one in whom is 'the mind which was in Christ,' and who 'does not commit sin.' . . . one whom God has sanctified throughout . . . In other words, to be inwardly and outwardly devoted to God; and we have the same conception of it now, without either addition or diminution."<sup>13</sup>

Not one of the many descriptions given in this *Account of Christian Perfection* makes any reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in the experience of the believer. Likewise in Wesley's choice of seventeen hymns, all from the pen of Charles Wesley, there is little mention of the Holy Spirit and not even a poetic allusion to the Spirit's fulness. This is most important when we remember that Wesley included these particular extracts as expressing his sentiments on entire sanctification. There are prayers and cries for deliverance from inbred sin, but all of them are addressed, not to the Holy Spirit, but to the Saviour, and it is He who is expressly praised when the deliverance is found. There is, however, one stanza which attributes sanctifying power to the Holy Spirit, but it is only one out of a total of fiftytwo quoted by Wesley. It is one verse from the twentyeight stanza hymn, "The Promise of Sanctification" by Charles Wesley, based on Ezekiel 36:25, which John Wesley included in full at the close of his sermon on Christian perfection based on Philippians 3:12. It reads,

Thy sanctifying Spirit pour To quench my thirst and wash me clean: Now, Father, let the gracious shower Descend and make me pure from sin.<sup>14</sup>

This is not the place to attempt a critique of Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection. From the standpoint of this enquiry, however, Dr. Sangster's criticism can hardly be avoided. He says that Wesley does not "link the doctrine enough (as Paul does) with the cross and the Holy Spirit."<sup>15</sup> Whatever deficiency is here in regard to the Atonement, it is not as great as the almost complete absence of any attempt to portray the ministry of the Spirit in the experience of those who are "in Christ." What of the believer's great privileges as delineated in Romans 8? What of the fruit of the Spirit being produced in the life of the entirely sanctified? True, Wesley has occasional references to this fruitfulness, but nothing like a scriptural portrayal of the life in the Spirit. What of the many Pauline references to walking in the Spirit, praying in the Spirit, being led by the Spirit, being made free by the Spirit? On these great descriptions of New Testament Christianity, Wesley is, in most instances, strangely silent.

Wesley is most insistent on the Spirit's presence and power in justification. A few quotations will amply illustrate this. In his sermon "The New Birth" he writes that the new birth "is that great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life; . . . It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is 'created anew in Christ Jesus.'"<sup>16</sup> In the justified experience the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost; they have received the Spirit of adoption and, Wesley adds, "He who is thus justified, or saved by faith, is indeed born again. He is born again of the Spirit unto a new life."<sup>17</sup> What does it mean to be born of God? It implies "a vast inward change, a change wrought in the soul, by the operation of the Holy Ghost."<sup>18</sup> "The life of God in the soul of a believer . . . immediately and necessarily implies the continual inspiration of God's Holy Spirit; God's breathing into the soul, and the soul breathing back."<sup>19</sup>

Some of the finest writing Wesley ever did is found in his *Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*. Arguing for God's prerogative in man's salvation, he says, "There is no more of power than of merit in man; but as all merit is in the Son of God, . . . so all power is in the Spirit of God. And there fore every man, in order to believe unto salvation, must receive the Holy Ghost . . . It is certain all true faith, and the whole work of salvation, every good thought, word and work, is altogether by the operation of the Spirit of God."<sup>20</sup>

To reinforce the meaning of what he calls "the ordinary operations of the Holy Ghost," Wesley quotes Bishop Pearson of the Anglican Church from

his *Exposition on the Creed*: "Whatsoever of holiness and perfection is wanting in our nature must be supplied by the Spirit of God... 'faith is the gift of God,'... and this gift is a gift of the Holy Ghost working within us. And as the increase of perfection, so the original faith, is from the Spirit of God."<sup>21</sup> It must be remarked that the Bishop, in the space of a dozen paragraphs, has more to say about the Spirit's working in believers than Wesley says in one hundred pages. These quotations from Wesley are sufficient to show his clear scriptural teaching on how the Spirit convicts of sin, reveals God's remedy in the provision of Christ, applies to the penitent's heart the great grace of justification, renews his nature, and enables him to cry "Abba, Father." Wesley's further insistence on the witness of the Spirit is well known. But when it comes to speaking of the new life in Christ being sustained by the Holy Spirit, and particularly the Spirit's operation in entire sanctification, Wesley has much less to say and, no matter how fervently we admire Wesleyan theology, we cannot but concede he could have said much more on this important theme.

### **Charles Wesley**

Charles Wesley took the theology of his brother and turned it into stirring poetry, and thereby established himself as the Orpheus of Arminianism. As might be expected in an output as voluminous as his, there is not complete harmony of thought and interpretation, but on examination a number of conclusions can be reached. In the first place Charles, like John had much to say on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the new birth. Justification for Charles means pardon of sin, deliverance from night and from prison, a change of relations with God, all being the work of the Spirit. The emphasis is evangelical, and this is declared convincingly in what is perhaps the greatest hymn in the collection of 1746. The first stanza will suffice.

Spirit of faith, come down, Reveal the things of God;

And make to us the Godhead known,

And witness with the blood:

'Tis thine the blood t' apply,

And give us eyes to see;

Who did for every sinner die,

Hath surely died for me.<sup>22</sup>

The Holy Spirit is given at conversion; again from the same collection we have the following lesser known words, with the same last-line refrain in every verse.

Sinners, lift up your hearts,

The promise to receive;

Jesus himself imparts,

He comes in man to live:

The Holy Ghost to man is given:

Rejoice in God sent down from heaven.<sup>23</sup>

The witness of the Spirit is a cardinal truth in Wesleyan theology, and in the hymns the expressions "assurance," "witness of the Spirit," and "faith" are used indistinguishably. Any one quoting from Charles Wesley's hymns is tempted to quote too much. We will restrict ourselves to one hymn to illustrate the Wesleyan doctrine of assurance. It is a great Methodist manifesto, full of Charles Wesley's spirit and temperament. A few verses follow.

How can a sinner know His sins on earth forgiven?  
How can my gracious Saviour show  
My name inscribed in heaven.

What we have felt and seen  
With confidence we tell;  
And publish to the sons of men,  
The signs infallible.

His Spirit, which he gave,  
Now dwells in us we know;  
The witness in ourselves we have,  
And all its fruits we show.<sup>24</sup>

But what of entire sanctification? What is the Spirit's work in perfecting believers in love? Here we find the same absence of any distinctive exposition of the Spirit's ministry as we found in John's writings. Six representative hymns will serve to point this out. They are: "Come, O my God, the promise seal," "What is our calling's glorious hope," "Lord, I believe a rest remains," "Saviour from sin I wait to prove," "My God, I know, I feel Thee mine," and "O glorious hope of perfect hope." In these hymns there is little mention of the Spirit's work; it is the Saviour, the righteous Lord, and the gracious Father, who are called upon to cast out sin and perfect the seeker in holiness. But there are prayers to the Holy Ghost and indications that Charles Wesley expected the Spirit to enter the believer's heart with holy fire and cast out the plague of inbred sin. Although the Spirit is given in the new birth, prayer is made for a fuller coming of the Holy Ghost. Sometimes the insistence that the Spirit came definitely to fix his home in the Christian's heart at justification is difficult to harmonize

with prayer for his future visitations. The apparent contradictions can be argued too far. Undoubtedly Charles Wesley taught that the Holy Spirit entered the believer's heart when he was born again; yet he prays the Spirit will come again and complete the work begun. Theological niceties are ignored in the holy wonder of being possessed by the Spirit of holiness.

### **Wesley's Preachers**

Under his leadership, Wesley's preachers rode across the four kingdoms of Britain for Christ, with only a Bible and a hymnbook in their saddlebags and the meagerest of remuneration in their pockets. They forded the rivers, braved the mobs, and penetrated the moral and spiritual darkness of eighteenthcentury England. The records of fortyone of them are contained in Thomas Jackson's *The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*. Among these records are fifteen clear witnesses to entire sanctification, and not one refers to his experience in terms of the baptism or fullness of the Holy Ghost. This is very convincing evidence that such terminology was not current among the early Wesleyans. All the classic Wesleyan terminology is hereperfect love, a clean heart, the second blessing, entire sanctification; but, with one exception, not a single mention of the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. The exception is that of one John Furz who testified to having prayed for and received the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit at a time when he thought he was dying.

### **John Fletcher**

John Fletcher does not have much to say concerning the baptism of the Spirit. He sees the promise of the Spirit as applying equally to sinners and believers. The unconverted are warned not to rest because they have been baptised with water, but they must seek the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. Believers need a fresh baptism till the Holy Ghost fills their souls. Fletcher plainly interprets the baptism of the Spirit as applying equally to the experience of the new birth and to the subsequent experience of being sanctified wholly.

Most of what Fletcher says concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit is found in his "Last Check to Antinomianism," the "Check" dealing with the exposition and defense of Christian perfection. He says that the experience of love as described in I Corinthians 13 is the consequence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He sees Christ's prayer, "that they may be perfected," being answered on the day of Pentecost. In answer to the question on how many baptisms of the Spirit it took to cleanse a heart from sin, he replied that if one could do it, alright, but the Lord can repeat it as many times as he chooses. Fletcher clearly relates the work of the Holy Spirit to the experience of entire sanctification and does not hesitate to call it "the baptism of the Spirit."

Fletcher had no question that his interpretation of Christian perfection is identical to Wesley's and he defends his own use of the term "baptism of the Spirit." We should remember that Wesley reviewed all the "Checks" and particularly recommended the last "Check."

### **Adam Clarke**

Adam Clarke's theological productions were immense, yet in them there are very few references to either the baptism or fullness of the Spirit. Such as there are, are found in his two essays: "The Holy Spirit," and "Entire Sanctification." In the former we read,

To purify the soul, to refine and sublime all the passions and appetites, the operation of the Holy Spirit is promised . . . The Holy Spirit, the "Spirit of burning," destroys the pollution of the heart . . . God promised his Holy Spirit to sanctify and cleanse the heart, so as utterly to destroy all pride, anger, selfwill, peevishness, hatred, malice, and everything contrary to his own holiness . . . He is also the sanctifying Spirit; . . . and the Spirit of burning; and as such he condemns to utter destruction the whole of the carnal mind.<sup>25</sup>

Encouraging believers to go on to holiness, Clarke writes:

What, then, is this complete sanctification? . . . It is washing the soul of a true believer from the remains of sin; it is the making one who is already a child of God more holy, . . . Arise, then, and be baptized with a greater effusion of the Holy Ghost, and wash away thy sin.<sup>26</sup>

In his exposition of the passages dealing with the coming of the Spirit in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19, Clarke makes no mention of any distinctive baptism of the Spirit. He says expressly that the Holy Spirit was given to the believers in Samaria, "not for the sanctification of the souls of the people; this they had on believing in Christ Jesus; . . . It was the miraculous gifts of the Spirit which were thus communicated."<sup>27</sup> Clarke had no hesitation in attributing heartcleansing power to the ministry of the Holy Ghost in the experience of entire sanctification, but he hardly ever describes this work as the "baptism of the Spirit."

### **Conclusions**

In the first place, our findings amply verify the statement of G. A. Turner when he writes,

John and Charles (Wesley) said or wrote little about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This emphasis is relatively recent. It is not easy to find Wesleyan writers devoting much space to it or associating it with entire sanctification and evangelical perfection.<sup>28</sup>

This emphasis arose in American, rather than British, Methodism. As Dr.

Turner intimates, one seeks in vain among the Wesleyan classics for a clear interpretation concerning the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In these pages, we have sought to go directly to the original sources and, as far as possible, let them speak for themselves. I am certain a lot more research needs to be done in this hitherto neglected area of Wesleyan theology, and this sketch is presented in the hope that it may stimulate a more penetrating and comprehensive study of the subject.

Second, it is clear that when the early Methodists did write and preach on the baptism of the Spirit, they did not do so with complete unanimity. John Wesley definitely taught that the Spirit is received at justification and he is prepared to go farther and assert that the justified, but as yet unsanctified, are filled with the Spirit. Apparently he did not object to Fletcher's describing entire sanctification as being effected by the baptism of the Spirit, but he never used such language himself. Wesley feared that this use of the term might detract from a scriptural emphasis on the Spirit's presence and ministry in the new birth. Charles Wesley goes even further and speaks about believers receiving the sanctifying power of the Spirit. There is definite progression of thought on this subject from the Wesleys, through Fletcher to Clarke. Clarke has more to say about the work of the Spirit in experience than either Wesley or Fletcher.

Third, it is evident that Wesley had not clearly thought through all the implications of this aspect of perfect love. If, as he asserts, believers receive a fullness of the Spirit at justification, how can one harmonize the contradictory assertions that a Christian heart may, at one and the same time, be Spirit filled and full of "inward sin"? He, of course, saw a scriptural remedy for inbred sin, but his scriptural proof for this was drawn mainly from passages dealing with the atonement, with little attention paid to passages speaking of a sanctifying Spirit.

Fourth, Fletcher and Clarke certainly attribute sanctifying power to the Holy Spirit. The crisis of the Spirit's baptism is not stressed, yet sanctification is not a mere growing in grace; there is a distinct moment when the heart is made pure. Among the early Methodists there is no steady witness that this further purification of the heart is effected by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, early Wesleyan theology did not give sufficient attention to the New Testament distinction between the regenerating activity of the Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit. Neither did the early Wesleyans clearly accept, as would generally be accepted by Wesleyan scholars today, that those instances in Acts as receiving the baptism of the Spirit were already justified believers. This is surely demonstrable with the disciples at Pentecost, the Samaritans in Acts 8, the Ephesians in Acts 19, and when all the evidence is weighed, it can also be advanced for Cornelius and his household.

Relative to this is the further lack, in early Wesleyan theology, to give

proper place to the promise of Jesus, "You shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Neither Wesley nor Fletcher gave due recognition to this mighty promise. It is my personal conviction that the Holiness people, particularly in the present day have, consciously or unconsciously, followed Wesley in their reticence to make full use of that grand, scriptural phrase "the baptism of the Holy Ghost." This reticence has helped twentiethcentury Pentecostalism to practically usurp the term and use it for its own purpose. Surely the distinctive hallmark of those who, in a New Testament and Wesleyan sense, are sanctified wholly, is that they have been baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire.

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## **CONSERVATIVE WESLEYAN THEOLOGY AND THE CHALLENGE OF SECULAR HUMANISM**

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The temper of this article is basically pastoral. The theme arises out of the conviction that very little is being done by the consecrative Wesleyan "camp" in the way of critical and creative response to what is perhaps the best entrenched, most tenaciously held system of philosophicaltheological notions in North Americaalthough it is not always adhered to consciously, nor is it held at any high level of sophistication by many.

The system is secular humanism. And the increasingly large numbers of people who go through introductory courses in liberal arts programs in all sorts of secular or secularizing colleges and universities, in addition to the growing number of our children who are taught by such persons, seem to demand that conservative Wesleyan theology launch a strong, balanced, well-learned, energetic offensive. This is not to suggest abandonment of the ancient struggle with various forms of Calvinist belief nor the pervasive results of nineteenth century style liberalism. But it is to suggest the necessity for a sharp response to the fact that a more virile opponent has entered upon the field, an opponent it is folly to ignore.

The thesis of this paper is that by reason of its proper methodology and the structure of its bases, conservative Wesleyan theology is well equipped both to appropriate from, and to offer unique and basic correctives to, contemporary secular humanism at a level and in a manner not possible to other major Christian theologies. Obviously, this thesis is too ambitious for a short article. Hopefully, its spirit is sufficiently heuristic to pry open doors to much more profound and extended consideration.

The necessary first step in the discussion of the thesis is that of definition.

The term "conservative Wesleyan theology" confronts the scholar with terminological morass. But this is not the creation of some befuddlement with respect to the major tenets of the theology of John Wesley. On these reputable scholars agree. Rather, serious difficulties arise at the point of attempts to make Wesley's thought contemporary and at the point of understanding his intentions in matters of emphasis and balance.

The "holiness movement" has not generally felt that the fact that

Wesley's theology is historically conditioned effects materially its validity across historical contexts. Further, this movement is convinced that Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification is the very tap root of his thought, the formative factor and dynamic of all else, and that this was Wesley's intention. From these bases, it presses its claim to be identified as conservative Wesleyan theology.

In this paper, then, "conservative Wesleyan theology" refers to that particular constellation of concepts, attitudes, and presuppositions which clusters around John Wesley's conviction that there is an experience of grace subsequent to regeneration, instantaneously receivable, which renders the believer capable of acting and being in complete conformity to the Great Commandment.

The term "secular humanism" conjures with fecundity. Definitions range from a militant faith in man which is meant to displace faith in God, to a faith in God which intends to open the door to faith in man. For the purposes of this paper, the term "humanism" is qualified by the adjective "secular" and will signify that attitude toward man and things human which calls on humankind to be selfreliant, to anchor its axiology in man himself, and to pledge allegiance to the scientific method as the surest guide to the discovery of human good and truth.

The clearest statement of this sort of humanism is the *Humanist Manifesto*, which was drawn up in 1933, by a group of distinguished Americans. While the selfassurance of the *Manifesto* now seems almost quaint, the mindset and working assumptions that produced it are far from dormant or effete. Emotionally, the attitude of this type of humanism has been chastened. But the intellectual fertility of the "movement" is demonstrated quite clearly in the force and great popularity of such thinkers as Enrich From, who entitled *his magnum opus*, *Man for Himself*.

What are the working assumptions from which these definitions of conservative Wesleyan theology and secular humanism have arisen?

There has been precious little deliberate attention given to methodology in Wesleyan theologies and among Wesleyan theologians; this is especially true among the conservative Wesleyans. Thus the task of citing the working assumptions of theologians within the holiness movement is difficult. Further, it would appear that since the beginning of the ModernistFundamentalist controversy, there has been a shift in such conservative Wesleyan theological method as is obvious. Probably it is as one result of this shift that conservative Wesleyan theology has been pushed onto a siding with reference to any strong response at the theologicalphilosophical level.

It would seem that the FundamentalistModernist controversy trapped Wesleyan theology, allowing its emotional ties with the aims of Fundamentalism to saddle it with a Fundamentalist doctrine of the Scripture that is

quite out of place in Wesleyanism; for, contrary to the tenor, temper, and intention of Wesley and the earlier Wesleyan theologians, who could not systematically separate the doctrines of biblical authority and inspiration from Christology, our contemporary "Wesleyan" understandings of inspiration and authority may all too often be stated and argued without the slightest reference to the One who is the Word. Fundamentalism is capable of producing and absorbing the doctrine of inspiration authority that it has because, true to Calvinist systematics, Christology plays a secondary role. To be sure, the Fundamentalist believes that Christ is the only savior. But, according to Fundamentalism, He is the only savior not because of who He is, in himself, but He is only savior by divine appointment. He is a sort of divine accessory after the fact.

Wesley would have understood well Luther's hermeneutical principle: **Christus rex scripturae**. In fact, this is the **de facto** methodological governor in both the *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* and the much less known *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament*. The authority of Scripture, for Wesley, arises primarily from the fact that the writers have made a full explication and presentation of the Living Word in soteriological terms. It does not arise primarily from the fact that the writers were inspired. Exegesis, proper exegesis, according to Wesley, begins with Him. Aside from Him, aside from our experience of Him, there is no valid exegesis of Scripture.

Originally, Wesleyan theologies were based upon the experienced authority of Scripture. This is not to say that the authority of every particular precept was perceived to arise only from some personal experience of its authority, though this would indeed be seen as the ultimate desideratum. Rather, it is to say that by way of a graciously given experience which was set in motion by a true hearing of the Word and attested to and explicated by the Word, we came to know the authority of Scripture. Thus, this authority is not propositional only, nor informational only. It relates itself to experience and manifests itself in experience. Further, this experience expands and seeks in the Word both food for growth and channel markers for the expression of that growth. And this growth and guidance simply reinforce the experienced authority of the written Word. Thus, the Scripture becomes authoritative dynamically, not impositionally.

It is true, of course, that Wesley seems on many occasions to sound as if he believed the authority of Scripture to be impositional. And, as Sangster has put it, the Bible sometimes becomes "an arsenal of proof texts" for Wesley. But it seems wise to recall the very practical aspect of Wesley's confidence in the workings of prevenient grace. When Wesley refers to Scripture as authority, he is attempting to awaken conscience and consciousness of that authority which the Word already has by way of the speaking of the Spirit.

It is most important to emphasize the fact that the ultimate authority is

that of the Living Word by way of the written Word. Such passages as II Timothy seem not so much to be prooftexts or demands upon our faith as testimonies as to what happens once we have accepted positively the original gracious claim of the Living Word, heard by way of the preaching of the written Word. Just as there are ever so slight rumblings among holiness scholars concerning the necessity for avoiding pneumatological language which would detract from the essential Christocentricity of the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification, so it would also seem genuinely Wesleyan to avoid pneumatological language in delineating a doctrine of Scripture in a way that would detract from the understanding that we have only one revelation Jesus Christ. Scripture, far from being independent of Him, has nothing to say if it is not of Him.

Hopefully, this has not been simply so much schussing. What we are attempting to show here is that the methodological linchpin for both conservative Wesleyan theology and secular humanism is the authority of experience. It is precisely this fact that places Wesleyanism in a position to say something to secular humanism at a level impossible of achievement to the other major Christian traditions.

Basic to secular humanism is an utter confidence in the empirical method as the way to such truth as there is. Behind this confidence is the even more significant assumption that man is perceiving, and is capable of perceiving truly, a real world. This, in turn, places upon the human intellect the heavy burden of the integration of perceptions and guidance in their utilization. The axiological principles by means of which the intellect does its work arise out of experience.

For the secular humanist, human experience is experience of the natural order. His understanding of the universe is totally naturalistic. Enduring good is attained in this impersonal order by the intelligent control of the natural processes, or, where these cannot be controlled, by careful adjustment to them. Because the secular humanist accepts both the scientific method and the findings of science as proof incontrovertible of the validity of these working assumptions, ideas of God, revelation, and the supernatural in general have no standing in the business of valueconstruction. Religion is simply the integration of personality around that principle which seems best to organize experience in the impersonal natural order. This principle is in no way metaphysical, but is rather selected from experience. And, of course, this means that the principle is not essentially fixed, nor is it final. The universe is in no way taking account of human good or ill, and for this reason it is impossible to believe in terms of the fixed and the final.

Implicit in all of this abides a pragmatism of the sort that says that whatever fulfills human purposes, satisfies human desires, and develops human life is true and good, with fulfillment being understood in naturalistic terms.

Having taken considerable space with definitions and working assumptions, we must now suggest some of the areas of challenge between conservative Wesleyan theology and the secular humanistic bent of our culture. Three will be noted here, but not exhaustively, since their function in this case is heuristic.

First is the challenge laid down by humanism that Christianity is exclusivist and inclined to deny positive value to any but its own concerns and notions. The source of this criticism, within the framework of humanist thought, is the conviction that religion is simply the integration of the personality around whatever principle seems best to organize the empirical data, experience in and of the natural order. To the secular humanist, the empirical data present proofpositive that there are many forms of personality integration that "work".

The conservative Wesleyan might respond to this criticism by pointing to the fact that Christian exclusivism is the result of experience. Those early Christians who declared there is no other way were speaking from the depths of their own pilgrimages. They had tried other ways now they had found **The Way**, or, better, The Way had found them. And, The Way seeks, said they, for all men. The fact that others, nonChristians, also claim to have found the way in no way proves that Christianity is wrong in its claims.

There is compelling, but not definitive or conclusive, evidence for an utter satisfaction in Christianity. And it is here, at an apparent point of weakness, that Christianity steals some humanist thunder. The humanist would point to the claims of the adherents of other religions that they, too, are satisfied (some of them being former Christians). Here, then would appear to be proofpositive of the relativity of Christianity. But the Christian may respond by saying that there is at least some evidence that one aspect of the fundamental experiential data in this satisfaction is the understanding that Christianity is the only way for all men. While this proves nothing, it does point to a fundamental problem with the humanist's acceptance of empirical evidence as the only admissible evidence. However, there is a much more telling response open to the conservative Wesleyan here. He may must concur that there is no conclusive empirical evidence of the absoluteness of Christianity. But he may also work with the humanist insistence upon the freedom of the human being to choose his faith. He may answer that Christianity is, after all, a true faith in that the freedom of neither himself nor the humanist is going to be erased by some absolutely undeniable material evidences of the truth of that faith. On the other hand, the Christian might point out, the secular humanist really wants a faith that empirically is indubitable, and thus, according to the humanist's own standards of what must be believed, takes away his freedom.

The Wesleyan may say even more at this point than other classes of

conservative Christians. The Wesleyan insists that religion is indeed the integration of personality around whatever principle seems best to organize experience in and of the natural order.

In contradiction to Calvinism, Wesleyanism firmly maintains that one of the free aspects of free grace is the fact that the exclusivism of Christianity is a matter of the very CreatorSustainerJudge of the universe revealing the One Way to **all men** in a salvific way. In contradistinction to Lutheranism, Wesleyanism, with its optimism of grace in the experience of entire sanctification, offers a genuine integration of personality. Lutheranism's strong note of justification by grace is gratefully heard, but its preoccupationmaybe obsessionwith sin as a way of magnifying grace leaves a rather pessimistic chord lingering in the believer's ear.

When secular humanism speaks of integration of personality around a principle, and a flexible principle at that, "integration" can only mean either a rather forced systematizing that must go beyond what the empirical evidence allows (such evidence presents no system) and thus contradict a basic humanist doctrine, or a sort of aimless, but constant, searching"searching" itself becoming the principle.

Wesleyanism is free to say that the secular humanist is quite correct in his assertion that there is no fixed principle to tie to, and thus no doctrinal formulation that is a **sine qua non**. Wesleyanism may fault the Calvinist's sovereignty of God, the Lutheran's **sola gratia**, and the Roman Catholic's **ecclesia mater et magister** as dogmas necessary to salvation, though he may hold them otherwise. Wesleyanism insists that there is a center from which all else should radiate and around which our personalities may be integrated and that is, of course, Christ Jesus. This meets the humanist's observation that axiology must have its roots in human experience that value must take its rise from humankind. (Surprisingly, the New Testament indicates that it will be Christ as man who will judge us!) But far from opening the door to a multitude of relative axiologies, the Wesleyan insists that Christ reveals in space we know and time we know precisely what the humanist is afternot merely an example of integration, but a truly human source of value. And He is empirically compelling in that the Church calls herself his and claims to live only because He lives.

Thus, the source of value for the Christian is truly human in that it is the **incarnate** Word. But the Christian is not a relativist in the crassest sense, for the incarnate Word dwells in any and all who will receive Him. The Christian ethic is a matter of responding in experience to the inward presence of the incarnate Word. Christianity avoids the relativism that arises from a purely individualist ethic by insisting that each individual play his role within the context of the community of believers, which community is itself called the body of Christ. This is to say that the Church itself is in some way the exten-

tion or continuation of the Incarnation. It cannot be thought of in totally individualistic terms. Again, Wesleyan thought allows for a completely human axiology. But that axiology is human in the way that Christ was human: its final reference is divine love, which has man for an object.

Another issue over which secular humanism throws down the gauntlet is that of the tendency of conservative Christianity to assert the moral worminess of man. Various humanist authors have indeed recognized that not all Christians so assert. But these humanists also recognize that the normative Christian understanding of the morality of the natural man is very low.

The source of the humanist objection here is not necessarily a high estimate of man on their part. The humanist who argues from a high anthropology, so to speak, is actually being inconsistent with his own insistence that such value generalizations are to be avoided. The empirical evidence is much too ambiguous. The humanist objection to the assertion of man's horrible warp is based primarily upon the understanding that man is the only source of value and the understanding that the empirical evidence has some genuinely good things to say about man.

Conservative Wesleyan theology may respond in three directions here. First, it must assert the working of prevenient grace in a sinful world. By this grace, good is willed and good is done, even by sinful men. Unfortunately, our culture is so soaked with an implicit Freudianism with respect to human motivation that we are almost totally incapable of believing that there are any unmixed motives. And even more unfortunately, there is a tendency in conservative theological circles to utilize this notion especially at the point of the attempt to convince the audience under evangelization of its sin and guilt in spite of its exterior respectability.

Conservative Wesleyan theology need not deny some truth to the Freudian understanding. Rather, it simply affirms that whatever may be the percentage of mixed motives at work in man, genuine good is sometimes willed and done. And, what is more, grace offers "singleness of heart" it holds out the possibility that by sanctification doublemindedness may be banished.

This ending of the divisiveness in the human soul is, of course, a desire of our culture. But our culture sees it only as an ideal, reachable, if it be reachable, only by human effort. (Ironically, the assumption of mixed motivation continues so that the ideal is reachable but only under the influence of mixed motives!) Here, conservative Wesleyan theology insists that not only is the singleness of heart attainable, but the irony of the humanist's problem is shortcircuited by the willing grace of God, who out of his sole motive of love, grants singleness of heart as a **gift**.

Responding more directly to the humanist concern with Christianity's low view of man, conservative Wesleyan theology might agree that the empir-

ical evidence will allow neither a high nor a low view of man as a generalization. This neither affirms nor denies that there is good in man. What it does do is force a decision on the part of every man about himself as he reads his own evidence about himself. Here, conservative Wesleyan theology, with its strong doctrine of prevenient grace including the clear word about the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting may be confident that every man will be spoken to, and that even the good wrought by sinful men will not finally be mistaken by them as being salutary.

Further, conservative Wesleyan theology must insist that the sinfulness of man is a genuine tragedy. It admits that there is sufficient evidence available indicating what man can and should be to make what he is, by comparison, a story that cries out for the entrance of some cosmic and loving redeemer.

In this way, conservative Wesleyan theology may avoid the pitfalls and sloughs into which both Calvinism and Lutheranism fall when they proclaim a position that denies the empirical evidence or explain that such good as there appears to be is really evil impregnated. On the other hand, neither does Wesleyanism lionize man, as does humanism, by assigning to him the role of Source of Values in such a way that it burdens him with a load that all of the empirical evidence says he cannot really bear.

A third area of contention between humanism and conservative Wesleyan thought is the ethical absolutism of Christianity. The source of the humanist complaint is the conviction that we are in need of continual adaptation in a universe that really takes no thought for human values. Humanism is quite sharp in its rebuke of the Christian insistence that there are fixed moral values. To be sure, humanist writers recognize the divergencies among various authors claiming to be Christian. But the secular humanist usually insists that it is the chain of Paul, Augustine, maybe Thomas, Luther, and Calvin, that really constitutes the norm. And here, humanism is quick to point to the inconsistencies along the chain and within the thought of each living link.

Unfortunately, conservative Christianity has responded poorly here, asserting an ethical absolutism and then denying or explaining away the ambiguities, anomalies, and casuistries that seem so obvious to the "outsider". It would seem that conservative Wesleyanism, if it could return to its roots in the experienced authority of Scripture, can speak to secular humanism on its own grounds here as the other major traditions cannot.

First of all, conservative Wesleyan thought already has at hand the dogged Christocentricity of its founder. Dr. Ray Dunnng, in his work on Wesley's ethics, has shown the utter necessity for recollecting this Christocentricity in any serious discussion of Christian behavior from the Wesleyan perspective. Christian behavior, according truly Wesleyan parameters, must

be a response to the love of Christ, not a way to Christ. Thus, the absolutism of the Christian's ethic is not an absolutism imposed by legal Sat, but an absolute giving over of the Christian to responding to the love of God in Christ. It is thus an absolutism in terms of the dynamics of being, not merely an absolutism of assigned duties. Because of this, what is right may change (aside, of course, from the great biblical channel markers which tell people who want to know how to respond because they are already engraced how it may be done). The yearning to do right and to satisfy that yearning by a constant seeking of the will of the Living Word is changeless, except that it deepens constantly.

Under these rubrics, the conservative Wesleyan may say that he neither seeks ethical adaptation for its own sake, nor does he avoid it. He is convinced of the shifting of worldly ethical stimuli, so to speak, as the struggle between Satan's chaos and God's design continues in a fallen world. He also warns the humanist that sheer pragmatism is woefully inadequate, for the adjustment at any particular point may be adjustment and a sense of accomplishment with respect to precisely the wrong element in the stimuli. Or it may be a very shortsighted adjustment. The universe does indeed seem at times to run on indifferent to any human values, the Wesleyan will insist. And at his best, he will not exercise that sort of casuistry or "silverliningism" that cheerily assumes that eventually the moral books will be balanced. He will say to the humanist that the really genuine and adequate ethical adaptation goes deeper than response to empirical assessments. After all, it is empirically verifiable how fickle the natural order is, and how impossible are such assessments on any broad scale, either chronologically or societally. True adaptation lies in the discovery of the real order of the universe which, says the Wesleyan, is not a "what" but a "Who", and a Who who cares enough to submit to the natural order and die, that He might transform it by a resurrection. The final answer that the universe can give to human purpose, so says the empirical evidence, is death. And aside from some idealism or altruism, that is as far as the humanist can go, consistent with his epistemological principles. But, says the Wesleyan, **that** answer becomes a mere prelude to the passing of the entire exam. And because of this, all worldly standards, of whatever sort, are brought to judgment. Allegiance to them as ends is declared unconstitutional, a new and living Way having been established. Thus, the humanist's own hope is not at all demolished, it is fulfilled.

We have tried to show where lie some possibilities for creative response on the part of conservative Wesleyan thought to the dominant philosophical tone of our time, secular humanism. Obviously, responses confined to words and the exchange of ideas are quite deficient. Producing the words must be lives-lives that say in every way possible: True life has but one focus, the love of God, neighbor, and self. There is really no other absolute: not coun-

try, not creed, not system, not Church, not **modus vivendi**. In fact, I refuse to absolutize what I've done. I shan't argue as if it were absolutely good. In an imperfect world, it is impossible to argue thus. But there is an absolutism in my commitment. I've bet my life on one thing (on one person, really). And I've done that not because I bet first, but because I'm responding to a summons to do so from the One who already knows the Winner of the race.

Of course, we did not cover the gamut of Wesleyan thought. Humanism is not a sufficient target to warrant the firing of all of our cannonry. There is, therefore, imbalance here and there. This fact must be recognized, especially by the man who tends to boil all things down to one manageable issue. But we hope we have shown how at least some issues may be met creatively.

Withal, we would never assert that Wesleyanism is simply a better team in the same league with humanism. The difference is between a legitimate and an illegitimate way to "play life's game." But there are points at which we can at least understand each other's game plan. And underlying it all is the conviction that so valid and so capable is conservative Wesleyan theology at its best that we may exercise an old axiom fearlessly in a new way "The best defense is a good offense."